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LAUREL SNYDER

Forcing the thing to be: For Mose

I had a son, made him myself.
And it was life, not language.
But here I am now, a mother,

forcing the words to be a poem.

He tore through me, ripped we wide.
Widened me bigger. Widened me.
You get it? From if to than.

Front to back. Now do you

get it? So how could I not write
about him, widening me so—
when there was no killing the pain.

The sun of it, blazing in me.

A great round pain, alight
in the darkest recess. A great
and terrible fire in the narrow pass

of my own. Fire tunneling in flesh.

There were no words
to dull the anything. The all.
The violent. The streaming.

Things burst and flooded.

Walls of water and the walls of me,
my very within— and then in the end,
towards the end, a crying from inside
that became the crying from inside.

I was falling from the dark room, from the very world while he was still inside and screaming.

Screaming from inside.

A sharp voice between my tired legs, stuck—a rage, baby, real live person. I made him with my body. Made him

with the parts I can’t see,

can only believe in. Bloody, stretched and still I did it, let him come. What else was there to do? Cry.

I heard him cry, in that instant, loud

between my legs, before he was mine but after he was me, before I saw him and we were severed. Horribly,

wonderfully. From you, all there is.