

LAURIE D. GRAHAM

THE LARGER FORGETTING (EXCERPTS)

Stands of windy birch tracing themselves like fingers

Birch spear wind-dark coniferous

Approaching rain a mouth of flies, of fireflies

The maple an hourglass, the trunk measuring

The trunk the conduit, the neck, the language

Crows in each treetop, parsing

The threat of other life until you let your senses

meet the moving form and do that hot work

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The cambium layer glows mustard, one sign
you're dealing with an invader.

Berries small, hard, still green.
When they turn purple, they make a green dye.

On the eggshell it's pale chartreuse,
the shade of new grass.

When the berries ripen, you have to compete:
the birds and animals will eat, digest, move on,

their shit making the buckthorn countless new homes.
It keeps repeating the reason for its arrival:

to stop the wind after clear-cut,
to be vigorous and look like home.

The idea was for it to be predictable.
Its roots change soil, build up the familiar, suppress what's there.

The saw is rust red and goes through that bright skin
roughly. I had no thoughts for the buckthorn

until sitting down to write this now. In pieces in a bin,
it must have felt something, to be hacked apart.

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Coyotes howl in the farmyards. Red squirrels trim
the pink of evening and the cicadas broadcast.

The mosquitoes try to learn the insides of my ears.
Property lines faltering, sod laid down all the way to the water

faltering. The western half of the country has caught fire;
they think it'll burn all summer.

I check the branches of the saskatoons
after the waxwings feast.

I keep returning in my mind to the towns
of my parents and grandparents.

The mosquitoes browse.
The loon is convivial and far away.

The spider's tendril flies from the edge of the bowl in firelight.
Thunderheads spin the far dark.

Cattle and coyote and the chest hurling itself up the road,
down the road, stuttering back to the fire.

Blood in the ears each night like a train.
Mosquitoes dancing in search of.

Thunder quakes through water and limestone, rings the lake
and degrades. At first light the birds

will confabulate a jungle. Red mite crossing the back
of a ladybug that circles the rim of the bowl.

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Trunks ice up on one side,
shimmering bronze in late sunrise.

The silence of hard freeze.
The hawk, the grader.

The strength
of oak leaves. The strength

of sparrows. Carrying yourself
around. Hawk looking like

a song sparrow
in the top of the tree.