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 HANNAH CRAIG
 

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*WHEN THE WELL IS DRY*

Let us not begin with the word *brother*,  
 but with Jack to his Jill, a confederate Other  
 with a broader back, a more accomplished skill  
 in witching, divining, whatever. He twirls—  
 the hilltops exact in his mind, a map  
 of vadose water and groundwater. *Up*.  
 The mathematicians begin here, with seconds,  
 with velocity, with the force of the earth  
 and the weight of the bucket. But we began  
 without words or measures—we began with the *idea*,  
 when he took her hand. *Up*. We began with the walk,  
 and the fact that water is always tumbling, grooved deep  
 at the angles of the earth's plates. In constant seepage,  
 drain. Her eyes watered much the same, in the season  
 when they'd mow the fields, and for other reasons,  
 related to whim. For him, yes—because there were  
 some taboos dividing her from him. And for herself—  
 poor girl, when the joints in her bad leg itched.  
 There were many things dividing her from him  
 the way conifers mark the fracture trace, the way  
 the farmers bend their wheels, trying to escape.  
 So she leaned a little to the right when coming 'round  
 the bend, and he leaned after, polite to the last,  
 his body rigid, pulled to the magnet of her voice,  
 which she couldn't help but lift. Sweet bird—  
 there are no words for that. Let us begin again;  
 on the hill alone, Jack to his girl, no mother  
 to hen the house, no elder to stay his grasp on her wrist.  
 She opened; deep as a wetland which had lost its peat.  
 And pale, there, wherever the force of it swayed her,  
 listening for the latch falling on the garden,  
 for the angel with his sword to come along, divide them.

*Sou'wester*

Caught in the seiche between them, the loss and regain  
of balance, the dark eddies, the pulling and pushing,  
the crown of love lost, the head bedecked with horns,  
the split in the bottom of the bucket deemed irreparable.