

THE BEND

Sometimes it becomes difficult
to distill the images of fall
 those grey Oregon days
we perfected coastal climbing,
coordinates marking us as traitors
to the sun-devoured south.

There is reverence in the way we
walked over wet grass the way it
maneuvered around our feet each
green blade intuitively moving to
the culmination of our youth.

Beside the emblem
 that is a river
you shot long shadows through
your fingertip thumb arched back
 so steady
like a twitch would spell doom for
the perched happy hawk.

There are never enough moments
now. Leaves fall governed
only by breeze the tent that
would not be erected and you asked
how to make aluminum poles bend as if
they were being obstinate.

Next season you will be busy
learning how to play the "1812 Overture"
 with residual drunkenness
and I will be memorizing quotations
of generals thinking of you only
 in strides. And years later when

I see you on Mission Avenue
 the shadows of marigolds
will stretch across the hot sidewalk
and I will think
 you look older somehow
that this is just
 some other rendition of you.