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Pool

You tell yourself that the facts are clear:
autism is caused by genetics, or environment, and
even if you were to travel back in time you
could not have done anything, anything
at all to prevent this – you
think of her as a baby so often these
days, you envelop yourself in the before-
ness, in the sweetness of those early months – O
to hold her again in two palms running lengthwise along her body. O
to have the first seconds of her again
in your arms
in the bloodied birthing pool, slick, anchored to you
by a sky-blue rope, both of you naked, her eyes sealed
shut. You slop through images
for signature, and the urge to pin the cause
on yourself, the one thing you can
touch, blame, wound,
is Viking strong. You ache to go
back to that pool, to the moment where she came
swift as a song, you want to lean into
echoes
grasp autism's root
which runs through your fingers
like red water –