In the Dream of the Body

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IN THE DREAM OF THE BODY

The cedar took over an hour of digging,
and cursing when the shovel stuck on a root
or a rock, pitifully small when it came out.
There was sweat in my eyes and hair
as I pulled and rocked the trunk,
the ground heaved, a last root snapped
and I hauled up the tangled shape.
It was damp, clay covered both of us
like lovers come back out of the earth.

Sometimes I could just sit in the front yard,
not even reading, only the landscape,
the park across the street in mind.
If I spend enough time here
I'll become calm as an old farmer
watching the branches on a hillside.
Later, when no one's around for blocks,
I'll try to think what the trees were like
and remember trucks passing in the background.

If I had a woman's body, I think
the shadows and the roundness would excite me.
I'd wrap my breasts in thinnest satins,
for the outline, the sheen of myself.
The air would be full of motion.
In cotton I'd walk back and forth past the mirror,
the smooth cloth touching my body,
and know my breasts were perfect.

The dream has only inertia and loneliness.
Sitting here, some days there's nothing I want.
That's a lie. I wish the morning would lead me
into the shade by the porch. I want something
substantial as fatigue to lift my arms toward,
the sunlight present in some other life
beyond the woodpile, the air I could almost hold.