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# Lincoln in Love

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## LINCOLN IN LOVE

When we hear the song  
of two tanagers  
and stand in the warm  
shade of an elm  
it's the same as  
it was in my dream.  
But in the dream  
it was night and  
no one was waiting  
for you. It was  
a summer night and  
yet the yellowthroats  
and two tanagers  
were out. We sat  
watching them courting  
across the river,  
chasing each other  
beyond the bank. We  
said nothing and there  
was no need to.  
One bird calling and  
one bird answering—  
but by daylight  
whatever they sing  
is a mystery.  
It means nothing  
at all or whatever  
it was was lost  
in my long ears.

I believe the birds  
must know the words  
but they won't say.  
They like to see  
you and me suffer  
this way. They enjoy  
the chagrin of children  
like us. Of course  
it won't be better  
before it's worse.  
They must cherish  
the anguish of adults  
as much: a man  
explaining his marriage  
to the darkness  
where his dog sits  
silent and the mule  
waits to eat. In all  
the field of natural law  
we wade with our feet  
submerged in sucking  
mud and it seems  
we must stop and  
sink at any hour  
because we are weak  
and the only peace  
is in our sleep  
and the only power  
is in our dreams.