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# A Lamb by Its Ma

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CHASE TWICHELL

*A Lamb By Its Ma*

Just before it rains, the lilacs  
thrash weakly,  
storm light heightening  
the clusters drooping  
at their peak of scent,  
wind running  
through them like slow water,  
then a splash, mood swing:  
leaves spangled with drops  
of light from inside the storm.  
Mary made us come inside  
if there was lightning,  
flapping a white towel  
to call us back.  
We hung around the kitchen  
drinking tea till it cleared.  
She brought us tea at bedtime.  
*A good cup of black tea,  
and you'll sleep like a lamb by its ma.*  
She told us that our parents  
loved us, that their war  
was theirs alone.  
She said it in the charged air,  
in the scent of their absence  
from the house,  
their clean absence.  
If thunder came at night,  
she told about the brave  
and faithful dogs of Scotland,  
how a shepherd knows  
where his lamb has gone  
by bits of wool in the wire.