

## THE ROOTS ARE HORIZONTAL LADDERS

across the path

climbing one rung to the other  
my feet find their way

my son is a stranger to me  
his eyes are giant pools  
of wet stones

I want him to be kind.

How can something so tall  
sway and keep its balance?

The birch lean together  
in their turning shade

I find the urge to  
categorize everything  
the names of trees and animals  
what we mean  
to one another

red gooseberry  
red of the fruit that opens yellow  
cleanly broken under a wheel  
red that is swollen and spiny and ripe

Every day you get closer to leaving me  
and it is as terrifying  
as finding  
a cardinal wing