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Brimhall: Margaret Garner Explains It to Her Daughter

MARGARET GARNER EXPLAINS IT TO HER DAUGHTER

Traci Brimhall

I saved you, my dark Kentucky child. In soft hours
 we crossed the frozen Ohio, our laps full of snow,

the moon smooth and mournful as milk. Stars knotted the sky,
 ropes of hard light leading north, and we drifted through

a night of pine trees and blue dreaming. The cold breath
 of horses beat the air. Ice murmured with the weight of us.

When men broke our door, I put my finger to the unclosed
 spot on your skull, soft as bruised fruit. I knew

it would knit together, that you'd grow long and beautiful,
 and I knew each hair rooting, each word you'd learn was more

to lose. Someone would buy your body, your low songs,
 a man would call himself master and take you with rocks

in his kisses. The voices of men grew large as trees. I saw
 the knife on the table, thin as prayer, and I thought of lovers

carving initials into bark to say "This is love." This is love:
 I took your throat and I cut it. I cut it. I made you cross a new river

filled with bones, rocks and stars. Cup the light. Carry it north.