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Levan: To My Infant Son Crawling for the First Time

TO MY INFANT SON CRAWLING FOR THE FIRST TIME
Michael Levan

Your grandmother practices for her death
 scene on the loveseat, her arm limp

 over the velvet cushion and coming so close
 you must know what it is to want

only to be welcomed by the rain. Rain that sounds
 off shingles, tin gutters which usher

 each drop to sewer and stream,
 river and then ocean, which has always

been full of questions: Where is that girl
 from down the street now, the one who always grows

 tall and beautiful one summer and then fails
 to see you? When will the nightly

prayers we whisper turn brittle
 like dried blood? When will quiet become

 all there is to say? I don't want to hurt
 you before you need to be. I don't want

the starling who sits and sings
 on the maple's bare branch to sour

 sun breaking open the long winter's afternoon.
 I know you have no secret to hold

remembering back. No way to keep memory
from coming like tulips or thunder,

sudden and beautiful. All you can do
is crawl to the rocking horse, push down

on the seat, its springs uncoiling a tinny clack
that stirs the living and the dead.

—*Anso Pioneer*