

Tlaxaneis'

The kingfisher is either looking at me or away.
Between dusk and twilight the lines soften and run together.

There is a knot in the tree where all my thoughts reside;
a shadow in aging cottonwood,
beginning to freeze even as a pretend season gives way to the thaw:
“the cold is coming, son, the day when i let go of your hand”
 I never wanted to see you this way,
 I never even thought about a time to release.

“She is walking with the ancient ones.”
It was all I could say to my big brother, over the phone, in the night,
it was all I could do: reach out to all corners of the known world,
in one instance I am a child again, protected beneath a powerful wing.

The kingfisher is too far away.
I think I know the shape, but my eyes fail me at this distance.

Sometimes we know when we are alone,
even when surrounded by love and growth
the moments turn into themselves,
an eddy where the salmon used to gather.
 I thought at one time I had the strength.
 I thought at one time I knew where to go.

My grandmother once dreamt of a hill,
her two sons played happily but would not look her way,
her husband's parents were with them, looking back at her,
over the distance, letting her know her time had not come.

The kingfisher is gone when I look back,
but why do I feel like it is in my cupped hand?