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After Reading Poems from the New Yorker

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After Reading Poems from the New Yorker

I don't know how to write poems like these
 but I played under a willow tree as a child.
 I made crowns and bracelets from the boughs
 and sold them for nickels,
 until one July it was struck by lightning and taken down.
 I love the smell of old books, like someone else's memory,
 and my Cincinnati grandmother had a water pump—
 a white one—that never worked.
 When I contemplate the feeling of Sunday
 I think of the Bible
 I was given at church in the third grade,
 drinking Coke with lunch, and the background noise
 of golf on television while I decide how to spend
 an empty afternoon. Once, maybe on a Sunday,
 I entered a museum room marked "Warning" and saw
 many pink, unborn babies, preserved and still.
 In second grade, my teacher had a baby.
 Our substitute for six weeks was from a town by Mt. St. Helens,
 so she showed us a tape and told a story
 about a man who died in the ash—
 the only man who didn't believe it would erupt,
 the only man who stayed on the mountain,
 who refused all pleas to leave
 because he would have rather perished than desert his home.

[*Lucy Hester*]