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## The Milky Blue Water

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## The Milky Blue Water

1. Outside the rain pours so hard  
It hurts, and the winds gust  
From the west. My feet are wet.  
The shoes grind my ankles raw.

I got a letter last week saying  
It's all coming back. All that's  
Left of it anyway—the place where  
I smoked Marlboros down to their

Filters way past midnight.  
If my half-brother were here,  
He could sit in his old Ford,  
Up on blocks and rusting, until  
His butt hurt.

2. Cold air stung the night they took  
The reservation; steamy breath and a  
Sky lonesome for its moon. My  
Mother, placid and strong, polished

Silver until her fingers wrinkled  
And cracked and oozed blood; all  
The while muttering "It'll be Okay."  
My half brother, once removed, sobbed,

His nose cemented to the bend in his arm,  
His younger brother, eyes empty  
As caves, was too young to understand.  
He lined up whiskey bottles in the sight  
Of his Red Ryder and didn't miss one.

3. I used to have a pony tail black as  
Dirt. I cut it off and let it float  
Down the river the day we moved to  
Minneapolis. I had friends.

They told me to do it. My half-brother  
Drank at night to put himself to sleep.  
He said a plan to bring his Ford to the city  
would come only in a dream. One night,

Probably half drunk on gin, half on  
Adrenalin, he stumbled to the bus stop.  
A man called my half brother Tonto  
and put four holes in his back.

4. Outside it still rains hard. We sit  
By a fire and try to keep warm.  
I tell the boy it's a nice day to hunt  
Ducks on our lake. I say his brother shot

A duck once and it sank  
Like a stone into the milky blue water.  
I say he dove in for it, but the boy  
gazes into the fire for a moment,

Then runs out the door to the Ford,  
And takes a seat on the hump.  
He reaches in the glovebox and pulls  
A bottle of whiskey, and says  
It should be good now.

Mark Livengood