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The Day Before

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The Day Before

To see crows perched at tops of sycamores,
hear their throaty screeches,
circling, swooping

and then to go out at the hour
of morning when the world belongs to crows
and meet one on the grass, silent,

not scaring the crow half my size
but myself

was to know the day before

was to come home, ten miles away from Davis Besse,
after headlines about Kiev
and letters about my brother

to remember the ten-year-old who
clapped tight fists to his ears
when sirens sounded Fridays at twelve noon,
and shut his eyes to find a Ray Bradbury story
where people are shadows on a wall.

Now I see the fifteen-year-old taller
than I am and still growing,
lean and knob-shouldered.

Today I fear a different Siren he hears
more than the other,
the name of a girl who calls his number and shadows
of female forms under rapid eye movement

until I remember that in the rhyme the crow,
no, a blackbird, snipped off
the maid's nose.