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Ablutions in the Dark // Visiting Detroit

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Ablutions in the Dark

She is lowering herself into the tub,
awkwardly with age. Sudden novas
of pain indicating when to pause.
Looking through the window, finally
in water, warm, inviting forgetfulness
she sees her distant husband
bent over, spinning a stone,
sharpening the spade & the harrow
grinding that metal to hot flakes.
Bright shower of fractured steel
dancing around his boots.
Like the idea of root.
In the cool dark morning
in April.
Not for the field or some better capture
of plants unwanted.
But looking defeat in the eye
and saying yes. But like this.
Deeper and slower each day.
Grinding away the effort.
The exquisite tool of living.
Of saying no.
Outside the shed he stops and turns to the still house.
Probably April.
Widening bulbs of hydrangeas tossing in the wind
louder than their abating love.
More fluid than cooling bathwater.

Visiting Detroit

Reading Philip Levine
on a sun-drenched beach
a Wednesday day on Lake Michigan.
This morning a friend had messaged me
offering up her afternoon
shift at the bar we both work.
Reading, reading. Trying ever so hard
to ignore the words entirely.