The Limits
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The Limits
for my parents,
Peter Miller and Sue Oakley
They gathered in council
And spoke, carrying objects.
They were credulous,
Their things shone in the forest.

They were patient
With the world.
This will never return, never,
Unless having reached their limits

They will begin over, that is,
Over and over

— George Oppen,
from ‘Of Being Numerous’
skin
Body

It’s strange to want to give someone the earth again. It’s strange to be the same planet but split to forge a new, raw globe, past plundered by lovers and strangers. Forgot the way my own earth cracks and tries to make its half an other’s, forgot old stories re-made to fable, to a minor bible for a plastic land.
We walk our planet and the print of our feet scrawls on to our bodies. Each morning we walk to unearth more mountains. Each day I sing the valleys alive. Each night you find a dark pool, and when you test it with your toe, a green river ruptures. A quiet mirror opens.
Apple

The night the earth’s crust cracked
under us, great
hands reaching

to brush the earth’s skin
to crane red fingers up
and caress the green

we felt the planet wrench herself,
rip soil from rock, split trees
shudder buildings till they broke

and tore our own eyes wider
After battle

This stitching between bodies isn’t skin.
It’s only old rope, easily cut.

Where the seam tears there’s blood.

I found a body under the trees,
thrown from its horse.

I wrapped taut silk around its bones
and watched the rivers roam the roads.

It was just me and the body.

I pretended it lived, and together we listened
to the sly sounds between trees.

*

I want you to come here,
restitch your head to your shoulders,
and form a word with your mouth.

Come here and surrender.
Because there’re still days that my army
loses horses, days I lose sun

and try to saddle up the darkness —

and whenever we ride to battle together, it rains
and we cannot see sky for water,
and the grass becomes dirt, and

waves break the fields, and the bodies
all muddle into the earth.
And although your breath

was once pressed into mine,
I no longer know who’s against me.