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## SHAUNA PAULL

### stepping down her porch stairs

soft sough of bough at the joining place, the fence  
 failing into dusk and like a body, the silence gathers me in  
 and not away. there is my old friend I am hurting, the even-  
 breathing of her wakefulness  
 in which is hidden rupture, a child's into sorrow, tears I want  
 to flesh again  
 the way a doe calms an orchard, leaf-edged, mulled in  
 shadow; a woman  
 stepping down her porch stairs to a river, any river, treble  
 stone round  
 stone of her girlhood roughened in undercurrent and not  
 away. there is her granite  
 vigil I share, the lambent bend of water she was watching for a  
 sign, sign of her stopped  
 voice. there was that girl in the women's prison, her up-hill  
 accumulations, the whole  
 body of her death hung in linens, not away this young girl,  
 she,  
 the silence; and that boy on the street in my city, his cardboard  
 roof, his  
 h.i.v., tagged thinning wrist, sculpture of his jaw, its laboured  
 life—his eyes – singing another world;  
 and there is the one who troubles me with ringing throes of  
 laughter,  
 with unanswerable longings, one who would salt this damage,  
 this waste,  
 and stands away, calling—*leaf, now. fruit. fall to earth, heart—*  
 though its silence gathers me in and with it now  
 this answer, sap-serried, not without aching, this  
 hard to hold desire for an apple in every hand.

*Shauna Paull is a mother and poet living in Vancouver. Her poetry has appeared in several literary journals across the country including, Room of One's Own, Dandelion, Event, and CV2.*