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## Detour

Dixie Partridge

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## Detour

Before we left our mapped route to take in  
 Yosemite, I dreamed that visit  
 in grey and white like Ansel Adams' photography—  
 those Titanic slabs of granite I'd seen  
 in books. The road simply extended  
 to one such pale bulk and ended.  
 We all got out of our dark, shiny car  
 confused. With their arms entwined,  
 the three girls looked oddly the same age and size,  
 the boys tramped at once back to a dropoff:  
 grey pines so far below  
 they looked like grass sod.

Perhaps it was Ansel's tin moon  
 that made me look up to the cliff top  
 above the car: I was not startled  
 to see my youngest there in shorts  
 and knee socks—which he never wore—  
 and how he got suddenly to the top  
 I didn't wonder; he was simply there and already  
 I knew he would fall: hurling down  
 toward the car with a face  
 that held no surprise, only apology.  
 It was over in a moment, but we could not  
 find his body—no vegetation to hold him.

In the heat of California's drought  
 some of us voted *no* to the detour.  
 We drove into the dull greens and dying grass  
 of Yosemite, into the thin moonlight  
 that would touch us before we could leave,  
 and I wondered which waiting bodies among us  
 were stained as wholly  
 by memories of places we have never been.

—Dixie Partridge