

Dreaming the She Bear

The archaic being teaches me to be the same as myself.

—Gaston Bachelard

One night in my sleep I was out walking deep, wooded hills.
It was October. The maple leaves glowed yellow under my feet,

and for once I was not in a hurry. I left the path
and meandered. It was late morning when I heard snuffling,

saw her suddenly and hid in a hurry.
The wind was right so she couldn't smell me.

It took her all day to go to ground, digging the lair,
pushing out stone. She licked at needles and pitch,

plugged her anus at the last. Glancing around just once
she climbed in, pulling earth down and over. Inside

the floor was padded with moss. Silence thickened like fur.
The temperature dropped. Cold layered upon cold.

I pulled up the covers, smelled both the cotton and
her breath, wild and rank. Her face was so close

I could see transparent crystals glaze her dark lips.
The nose flared. Below the upper lip her yellow teeth

curved back into the cavern of her mouth.
Was it a smile I wondered and how long

would we be here? It seemed eternal.
She was heavy with child. We lay in the deep

darkness of the ground. Her breath like a bellows
came and went. Warmed by her I lost myself

and can't remember the rest. But when I woke
I was spanking new and the sheets were covered with fur.

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