

GEFFREY DAVIS

What I Mean When I Say *Farmhouse*

Time's going has ebbed the moorings
to the memories that make this city-kid

part farm-boy. Until a smell close enough to
the sweet-musk of horse tunes my ears back

to tree frogs blossoming after a country rain.
I'm back among snakes like slugs wedged

in ankle-high grass, back inside that small
eternity spent searching for soft ground, straining

not to spill the water-logged heft of a drowned
barn cat carried in the shallow scoop of a shovel.

And my brother, large on the stairs, crying.
Each shift in the winds of remembering renders me

immediate again, like ancient valleys reignited
by more lightning. If only I could settle on

the porch of waiting and listening,
near the big maple bent by children and heat,

just before the sweeping threat of summer
thunderstorms. We have our places for

loneliness — that loaded asking of the body.
My mother stands beside the kitchen window, her hands

no longer in constant motion. And my father

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walks along the tired fence, watching horses

and clouds roll down against the dying light —
I know he wants to become one or the other.

I want to jar the tenderness of seasons,
to crawl deep into the moment. I've come

to write less fear into the boy running
through the half-dark. I've come for the boy.