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After Reading About the Orca and Its Calf

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**AFTER READING ABOUT THE ORCA AND ITS
CALF**

Maybe it isn't saltwater
that heals—

my mother's theory—

but the mere going down
to the sea, removing your shoes,

a way of humbling yourself

before forces larger than,
deeper than, stronger than.

Once I body-surfed in Lake Superior.

When a wave smashed me,
I crawled out of the water.

Maybe it isn't that we're cruel—

if we believe that all the other
creatures hurt too, what a weight

of grief. I regret killing the spider

on the gray dashboard of my car.
It looked for a home—

The Seattle Times said the orca carried her
calf for a week, refusing to let the dead thing

go. Finally she let the sea take it.