Isaac

When we had climbed to the top of the mountain
and there was no lamb,
I remember looking at the sky, September blue
and cold, the clouds
rushing together so fast, the ground,
for a minute, seemed to move
they rushed so quickly, I wanted to say
like horses, when
in a voice I had never heard before, he asked
me to lay myself down.

I didn’t feel the rush of sudden wind:
as from a wing, that my father felt,
or hear the voice like silver he said he heard,
I didn’t.
I only remember the clouds rushing across the sky
like horses
and the blood pounding inside me like water
and pushing, stumbling
down the mountain to the far pasture
to the ram that was my favorite
and weeping into its filthy matted wool,
crying out.

--Marie Howe