



image info

INTERIOR LANDSCAPE

My eleven-year-old self tagged along
as my parents hunted for a painting
for the first house they owned. We explored
hushed and stately art galleries,
places none of us had been,
strolled through still lifes and splotches
of color my father said he could have tossed
against the wall, all beyond
our means and often our comprehension.
My mother searched for unobtrusive
elegance to match the new maroon couch,
to distract the eye from the ragged
but too-comfortable-to-be-abandoned
reupholstered armchair.

My parents settled on a landscape
with woods retreating
into a distant river, its muted tones
stumbling into shadows, not quite
grand enough for its ornate gold frame.

My mother came to regret
the painting's gloom, saved for years
to replace it. For me it was respite
from the required smiles
and dust-free contours of everything
in our house. In that scene I found
something as deep as the river
churning inside me. I stared into its haziness,
its lack of explanation, its moody refusal
to brighten up the room.

—Joanne Durham