Swimming Lessons And More

Thin strands of muscle dance along
his forearms as he holds her like a pillow
above the water. My daughter’s eyes are
whitecaps flickering with excitement. The
two of them move across the pool on time
with coach’s whistle. Three feet of water—
an ocean to her—is the quiet crossing of
generations to him. Waves move like
memories to me:

Hunting—we walk through thick forest in red
plaid, rifles held loosely at sides, talking of
women and sex, my face turning the color
of my jacket beneath leaves of orange.

Swimming—an ice-cold May lake stuns us to
life at 5 a.m. as a loon sounds, calling all to life.
This, after a night of playing cards, talking
golf beneath a single white light bulb in a
lake-side cabin.

The night before my wedding—in setting sunlight
outside a stone church, his impassioned voice
speaking of what it means to be a husband
and father.

The salty scent of chlorine brings me back. My
daughter, my dreams for her, move through the
sea of jade in the same arms that showed me all.

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