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SUE SINCLAIR

NOTES ON EMANCIPATION

I wrote to my mother, but she didn't write back.
It's not true that you can begin anywhere.
I was born in a church.
I was born in a high-school gymnasium.
I was born in a shoe store during a summer sale.
Any of those could be what I mean / an explanation.
Then the church/school/store closed.
Then I befriended the ants.
Then it was winter and I was alone and being alone took.
Would it be okay if I asked you to write this down?
There were signs my mother had forgotten her best pair of
shoes, but there were also signs she'd stopped wearing them
years ago.
There were signs she had been feeling out of practice.
There were signs I was weakening.
My mother stared into space when ironing, but she didn't complain.
I converted her silence into a boat and seized the oars.