Sweet Home, Oregon
Cliff Taylor

A picnic table of us staring up at
the stars in Oregon. People who’ve never
met becoming like old friends in just
a couple days. The deep quiet of the
campgrounds lapping around us, our forms
the color of night with our swept up eyes
the only bits of white. Tomorrow while
dancing I’ll see this procession of giant old
beings coming into our space through the
gap between two trees, visitors appearing in
an improvised gateway. In a month I’ll
be another nameless new stranger trying
to make my way in the sweet and rainy city
of Seattle. We look at the gorgeous slow-motion
smear of the Milky Way until our necks actually
begin to hurt. The past a hand that you
haven’t been touched by in months, back half
of America away; the future a woman’s hand that
you hope will be touching you soon, that
you might have to touch first. “I don’t
know if I’ve ever seen the stars like this before,”
an older woman with an accent says. My neck
aches but I force myself to keep looking
up.