

LESLEY WHEELER

## Laggard

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What a stupid way  
to approach a cherry  
blossom—fearing how spring  
blows away. This April

our son drew rain  
in rapid gray and  
purple dashes. Our daughter  
mailed a lopped honey

ponytail to some charity.  
Now she runs light.  
On the trail or  
keyboard my spouse glints

and goes like sunset  
in the mountains while  
his blue shadow-wife  
slowly lengthens behind him.

He laughs. His first  
gift to me, years  
ago: news that terror  
is funny. We keep

walking past a drowned  
young green snake, curled  
in a spiral, beside  
the yellow creek, all

roiled up by night's  
forked storms. He always  
walks with me, sprinting  
only on his own

time, though the children  
speed off all unburdened.  
*Ah, he admits, I  
slept through the thunder.*