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## **Self Portrait As My Father**

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## **Kristy Nielsen**

## SELF PORTRAIT AS MY FATHER

What does it take? I know how to wire a room, to stop an elevator in flight, to go hunting and bring home a puppy instead of a dead duck, I know when to lick the syrup off the plate and when to set down my knife and clean my teeth with a toothpick and listen

so talk already, tell me all about yourself, every little thing

I could tell you a story if you want to hear your old man ramble. Once there was a girl who couldn't cry no matter what and she grew to be a woman with buckets of tears inside, a huge woman who shook the ground when she walked and trembled the trees, a real fatty fatty two by four can you hear me? You got potatoes in your ears? Scrub harder spud farmer

and listen up because it gets really funny. One day the woman goes walking in the woods, trips and falls across a stream bed, blocks the water, creates a dam, the water swells and pools and everything washed downstream piles up against her, trees and shoes, beer cans, shopping carts, parts of cars, waterlogged stuffed animals, amazing, all this stuff you didn't think was around anymore

all surrounding this woman who couldn't cry. She asked to be left alone so she could die, but instead the people came and took pictures.