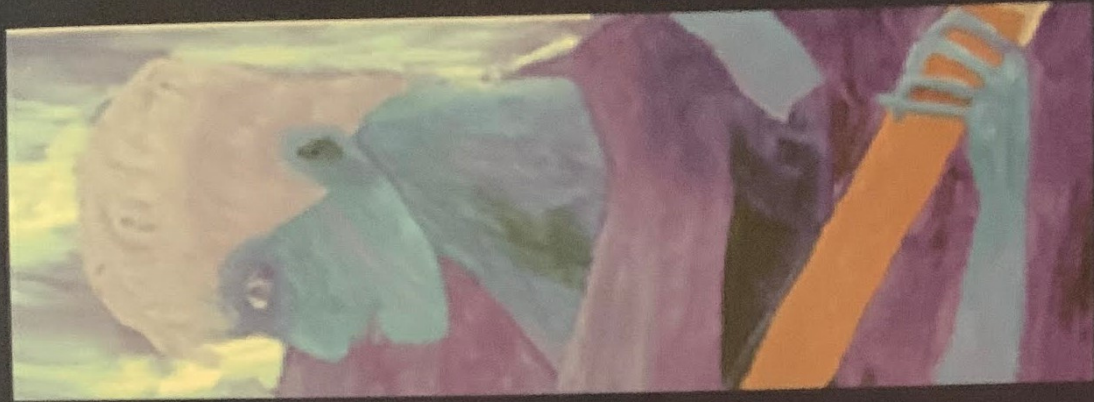


ginger hill



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*The summer I turned 8
my short red curls
framed my face,
and I was too fat to admit
my crush on Jay Stubinsky,
the cutest boy in camp
whose dark hair fell in soft waves
around his olive skin
and who won every relay race
and nicknamed me Gorilla
in front of everyone.
That summer I picked raspberries alone
and scratched my arms with branches
until they bled, so I could cry.*

*It was easy
to make myself bleed.*

*That summer I read Pocohantas.
She died in England, renamed Rebecca,
married to the wrong man, wishing to be home.
All summer long, I dreamt of her,
dressed in the too heavy English gowns
and tight laced boots,
her browned skin paling in the English drizzle.*

*It was easy to cry for her.
Getting older, it gets harder to
make yourself bleed,
harder still to cry
It's like reading Pocohantas again
the summer you turn 30
after picking through the rubble
of you hurricanes.*

*It's hard to dig up pity
for a 300 year old, dead princess.*

*This spot on your neck,
this spot beneath my fingers,
that I feel like my own,
unable to discern which skin is mine,
which yours,
this spot of skin
stretched over veins and muscles and thick arteries pumping viscous liquid,
this spot is where my fingers feel your slow pulse,
relaxed,
head buried in my lap,
no burning madness, just a short respite from the day,
a haven of white thigh for a moment, still in our bathrobes,
this is more a humming that we make than the spiraling cacophony of
night,
the soft and lazy buzz of this mid-morning moment
while you feign sleep and
I stroke the sweet skin on your neck listening
to the rain fall and the rhythm of your heart beneath my hand.*