

James Grabill

Before Summer Begins

All morning, punctuating our talk,
workers have been feeding Oregon trees
into a yellow grinder.

In the neon-lit café before finals,
another person at a wooden table brags
she doesn't like poetry.

Later, in the night gymnasium,
hundreds of lights flood a man
jumping into the open.

In the locker room, a beardless man
undresses—his back, shoulders,
and chest thick with glistening blond hair.

A small woman in a long flowered skirt
tells how she escaped Vietnam
in a small boat on the ocean.