Some night, I will take you into an evergreen forest situated on a promon-
tory. We’ll grow extra long legs and take a few Ent-sized steps to the ho-
rizon. It won’t be able to outrun us with our new legs, you see, and there
we’ll be, dangling our feet off the edge of the world. First ones ever. We’ll
be the giants of the earth, with front-row seats to the universe, pointing to
this or that star with the eternal beams of our flashlights. We will find one
that looks just ornery enough to make a ride to Japan fun but not so wild
as to buck us off and leave us skating on Pluto ‘til the end of time. Staking
the horizon with my flashlight (the night is all ours), I will take your hand
as you slackline that track of light with tintinnabulant precision. We’ll get
nearly halfway to Betelgeuse before we realize that we’d create an entirely
new cosmic order if we rode him to Japan; and, neither of us willing to
risk that, you will turn around. I will see in your moment of repentance,
in slowest motion, that our star’s reddish light has permanently rested on
the apples of your cheeks and will be relieved to realize that convincing
everyone back on earth of how heavenly you are will be even easier now.
We will slide down our track of light, hands in the air, you squealing with
delight, and land on a puff of marshmallows. “I never knew they grew in
the wild like this,” I’ll say, but you’ll not understand a word of it because
I’ll be deep in the throes of defeat in a fierce match of Chubby Bunny.
We will ask all critters to kindly leave us alone for the night and weave a
mattress of pine straw to lie on. We will share your hair as a pillow, which
will smell as sweet as ever. A tootling black bear will ask us if we’d like
him to roast us some marshmallows. “Why, yes, thank you,” we’ll say. He
will build a cozy fire, spread Nutella on graham crackers, and top it with
golden, molten marshmallows. He will serve the s’mores to us on plates
of moonstone with dew in honeysuckle cups and recall tales of him and
his brother romping through the countryside, of his brush with a travel-
ing circus, of his daring escape from it, and of his opinions on the decline
of hand-written letters, especially bemoaning the critical endangerment of
sealing wax. We’ll begin to yawn, and he’ll take the hint. We will express
our appreciation of his entertainment with an alabaster jar of amber
honey, and he will run away, tail tucked, doing an outright terrible job
of stifling his tears of gratitude. The earth will tremble with every stomp
of his gait, and the vibrations will relax us to sleep. Long after that bear
has fallen asleep, snoring wide-mouthed with his paw still in the honey
jar, the earth will continue reverberating with his joy, and our joy, and its
own joy that we managed a fantastic evening without devastating the
universe.