

Portrait: Parsing My Wife As Lookout Creek

My wife sits, wipes, stands, zips, forgets to flush.
Rushing,
the river's every agenda. We pull at our clothing,
all day, humans, us,
all of us.
Try not to touch it.

I stand at the mirror, tuck a tail, a tag, tug a collar, flinch.
What face is that?
Dry
outside, there are pines pushing against every reflecting sky
in their own grim time.

My mother, tough one, British stiff. *Sit up straight. Excuse
you. That's a dessert spoon.*
Butler's fool,
ambassador for a childhood of rules. One tough one.

Language gets us in its grip with its little links and latches,
clasps, clamps,
padlocks,
and we're lost: grappling.

Close your mouth when you chew.
In these river days,
what floats for me to find is the tissue, wet, a red filmy swirl
the symptom of a drifting of cells
alluvial shift
in a body I know.

(stanza break)

