

---

## Wrestlers

*Pete Wolf Smith*

*I ford the river in darkness wading shallows. He squats  
on the east bank. Rocks are smooth and mossy.  
Current tugs. He waits.*

He looks like me as I saw myself, once,  
in a polished stone.  
A scar on his cheek like the one Rachel touches,  
from when I grew careless, was kicked by a mare.

*Wind dries the skin of my legs.  
We close. He is small but fast.  
Crabwise through the chilly air  
he tackles me by the waist.*

*I pull him away and spin him through  
the clearing. He catches on one heel  
balance, scuffing dirt; we circle.*

The light coming up around us.  
I keep seeing things in his eyes.  
Mother dead. Father's hand  
on my counterfeit skin.

He closes off my angles  
and keeps on coming in.  
Stars spin, fade.

*I hurt him, wrench the hip-socket.  
Dirt, and crusted blood. Smell of his dried sweat.  
He laughs. "Is that all you got?"*

Pete Wolf Smith  
lives in New York  
City. His poems  
and short fiction  
have appeared  
in numerous  
magazines. He  
currently studies  
midrash with  
Alicia Ostriker.