

## Hoverflies

by [Josh Dugat](#) in the [November 2023](#) issue

November grins her best impression  
of September—warm enough to swim!—  
except her light at noon is long  
and the water pooled atop the falls  
is cold. *So cold*, our son says, almost two,  
and imitating you. His shirt and shoes,  
his shorts and socks are sunning  
on the rocks. Our miniature  
skinny-dipper, giddy for the rush  
of rosy feet—sting made sugary  
by trust of warmth to come.

How can I say I wish this wouldn't end,  
when the aching of the moment's leaving  
gives the wish its breath?

He slides on algaed slicks.

He scatters tiny fish  
and water striders.

Maybe thirty minutes pass  
or pool, what minutes do  
before slipping from the falls  
in mid-November. I scramble down  
the shale to gather up his clothes,  
stopping when I see—  
not yellowjackets—  
*hoverflies*—sentineled above each article,  
steady as the minnow  
that doesn't know it's watched.

Ringed in black and yellow,  
the flies shiver their fly-wings  
furiously, silently,  
not trying to be anything

but flies. Burning  
to be still. Patient  
for the absences  
we practice, fragrant  
with our moisture  
and our salt.