

A group of related things

Four swans swim

the mother, in the lead

two signets

and their father at the rear.

They move as a wedge,
sending ripples out to each bank,
their feathers reflected in the water.

She looks at me. The front bird,
her black beaded eyes
following my damp footsteps.

The mother is behind me now
her charges safe,
paddling in the currents behind her
the father behind further still,
turning over and over
hunting for worms,
food for the babies.

and me, by their side

sliding along with wet feet

(the rain seeps in
through my boot seams)

I mirror them on the towpath.

But I'm found out by her.

My skin is what gives me away -
the peachy pinky blush of it.

I overtake

and sigh, remembering

what I am going home to:

cereal for dinner again,

and dirty bowls stacked high in the sink,

the silver insides of my spoons

hidden under the soap suds.

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