

Bottomland

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for my mother, for my father, for my brother

American Rough-Leg

In the dark barn, the real result.
Stripped the tinny tobacco leaves off the split stalk, hand by hand.
For if I lost my feet there. No settling up.
Now, everything in Paris tastes salty. The still rain.
There's the dry leaf crackle, there's diligence.
What is better than the willow branch bending?
You sort yourself out, what doesn't come from cotton.
Tomahawk hatchet, croissant. On the bobbing river or in the row.
Cutting into the sap. Undulate is what her spine does
she dances. Washes salt off her plate.
Everything coming in this back door rushes me.

Someone holds the heels. Every hard ankle is touched in the way of welcome. What wind would tell us if the feet are fixed or whether the spine will twirl the body in two. If you are here—I knew the neighbor's stars over his place better than my own. Is this a man keeping order. Is this the body by satellite. Was the impossible thing awake, to board or cage, *oh come on*. To say my reluctance, a bridle; she had more to do by my count—My loss loss showed, following a dentist drill or hydraulic engine. It all came by diesel, anyhow. Just another warning with stripes around the wrists. Unison: I move in the rhythm I like, this hand battering or her glass bones. What means has the heart; a force by which the horse rises up. Is this a sturdy bit or the relevance of the dish falling from her hands

Left on Locust. Rick expanded his BBQ joint. A man blowing air slowly his tense lips. Left, Locust. The flea market wasn't for her; he is making pots to sell. Full of Lucy, plinth. So wrong she carried it folded up like a love note, one place she was walking home. He lost the farm, almost, the mint by the creek the bank owns.

You don't want—passive feast. Keep it with you, if my gut would let me, swollen beside the house shifting. O but she waited, feet out over bed; he was static and they situated where I left the hatched locust drying. Hickory trees kicking doors to get out.

In the photograph, his grandmother sat on the moon. She resembled dotted daisies, ticked by blushing. Not a moment too soon the red haw. Condense. The family crossed for sixty-eight dollars a person, onerous now her garland nose. They told her all the faults, bay to exhaust the loved, dripping faucet. Before her hands brush her skirt, *will this soothe my new permanent.*

For what yes the day begins
His back, I can tell if bright blue signals the garbage truck
To start work if the what wasn't beeping
Endless dimensions won't match these tucked behind the ear words
My double wheel, an image panting
Sudden black squirrel, as if I remember black
Pileated woodpecker in a body of light on a distant oak
The distance is inside me and viscous

Here's a cloud deciding to decide the place marked birds for boys, small Japanese plates: things politicians are not scared of. Fast you scared of uzi at your nose, just above the Superman pajama neck. You drown on fever. A cold blooming in your left hip. Bothered by the tip of memory you carried its stench on your clothes.

Tonight above your pillow in a room bulging with the disappointment of your mother line. To you she speaks an old language.

Out of war the hair falls, and the sister's. Of the felled and shriveled, pretend the lines, the ones on their faces, smooth to your touch. I am sorry this is not a story where she stands at the window and twirls the curtain in her fingers.

If I say one word I may mean *o my heart* or *o my monster!*

You were elevated by trains I had not seen.

Grasslands came before man, coal swamps before reptiles. Avian, then floral. A million years pressed to stone, as lips, as fins. See: fish specialized for life in quiet waters. Some stories are shapes burned together. The tongue a torch on fire, remember it as a planked platform. We bisect the street, slip fingers out of mittens. Tiny photographs of your turning wrist we piece together. Somewhere a shallow field lobbing rockets, agrees with its verb here, to kill, as if.

I take trips around the world to dream in all the places. I make the prosperous dictionary of images. Keeper of skin, silent, elemental. I go bald as the old man and know the lay before I arrive. Where starvation no longer haunts. The singing springs from my pores. Following ancient, woe. Quietly a necessary task, rivals I carry in a bundle, befuddled. It is silence cloaks my whereabouts. Lost is misunderstanding yes or no. I prepare myself four times, I stutter and swag.

where the heron/has her nest... HD

Who has the healer gone
I took apart the night, stalled it spinning

Beckon green grass
conceal the last time look— bare-branched tree

Wine, spill or have them see
dripped over the border young soldier

On the film to fly
eyes down eyes
apart from night

Drip over *why did they*

Jeweled turquoise on her breast
open as I knew

I flew if to call the dogs

pissing dressed a heron nest

Outside, inside the skin

what you know didn't they tell you

What has incensed in it

hot, you remember—
it is a word

For those who walk out of deadened grass pretending they know how to pronounce *Schopenhauer*, let me say, *I'll have hands like old knobs*. Now I have drawn my life as a map from birth to death, just where sea becomes forest. Never, until now, have I existed apart from this cordial song. The face of someone my mother would trust. What little time we live. Never, before now, has light circled above me—Please open the door, we'll grow like 17-year-old locust. Never has there existed a door. We'll be cold. This, spring; this the little we have. They say let big winds carry. Never before have I heard this song for so many distances.