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BB

Josh Kaminski

The dagwood maples shuddered in  
the breath-seeing morning cool,  
their leaves blood-black  
and their supple trunks taut.

Sand-pipers cut a jagged calligraphy  
above, their daggered voices sweet  
in their ground-nests' reprieve  
from the tractor's chipped dull blades.

I stood  
thwocking 2-liter bottles at twenty  
paces, replacing the labels with faces  
I hated.

Whatever it took to put  
copper pellet through vibrant eye  
and pulsing brain, I didn't have.

Earlier, my father had sat,  
ass in squeaky porch chair, same gun across lap,  
picture of a seat stolen  
from a hillbilly rollercoaster.

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His mustached grin shone brighter  
than the scarlet dawn-lasers that lanced  
down over the house's eaves, as his one good eye  
scanned for ground squirrels.

They were industrious  
yogis, burrowing a secret monastery  
out into the yard and deep under the porch,  
like Texas hounds fleeing heat.

I remember staring at my father, thinking:  
it is so odd what we find  
to keep us young.

Today, he will shoot our rodent Gandhi  
cleanly – flies will land  
on the squirrel's whiskered nose, eking out  
a residual twitch.

My father will swallow his chorus  
of almos'ts, next-times, and dammit's –  
poking his quarry with the gun's  
crooked sight, he will become  
a little smaller,  
a little greyer,  
a little slower.