Once Said

Tyler Kline

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**Abstract**
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with iridescent eyes. the teenager

**Cover Page Footnote**
"Once Said" was originally published at *Booth.*
it comes nocturnal, like all downed wings
   with iridescent eyes. the teenager

lifting a brass mail slot & dropping
   in fireworks to scare the dog—

the shuddered-knocks of attics being born
   at dawn & the woman wishing

for something to tangle her teeth—
   a phone cord to bite on when

the line becomes still. silence like
   when her older sister told her

the instrument she had been practicing
   for months had kept a sheep alive,

that it took all day for the guts to cure
   & spin & make music with the hair.

how then her scars were only pencil marks
   on the doorframe, her body
just tall enough to push the mower,
to sneak a bottle into their room

after dark & play Would You Rather,
always preferring the mess of

pruning shears to kissing the boy,
she’d rather swallow the bed of roses.

to pluck strings—pizzicato. what she
learned before drawing the bow.

it was a simple game. a child forgetting
to dot her i’s. proof, her sister

once said, of the animal still beating.

Tyler Kline is the author of the forthcoming chapbook As Men Do Around Knives (ELJ Publications, 2016) and the current poet laureate of Bucks County, PA. His recent work appears or is forthcoming in BOAAT, the minnesota review, Passages North, Spoon River Poetry Review, Vinyl, and elsewhere. This summer he will begin his candidacy at the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College. Find him online at tylerklinepoetry.com.