Twins

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BRENT ARMENDINGER

Twins

Remus spooned his palm over his twin's night blue knuckles. Unlit by cloud-eaten sky, hushed by black river tongue on the basket meant to drown them. Fugitive longing dug inside Romulus' dreamveins, hiding from fish smell, from jackals shouting whore out kitchen windows, from mother's wrists scarred raw by the rope's fray.

Her knees cut with leaf prints and mud Rhea filled a basket with hatched bird eggs and feathers. A clothed face whispered: egg shells would help the basket float.

She dreamed her sons would fly to the planet their father became, red glow around her sky in circles.

Sex is our molecules in orbit between the husks of self.

A wolf found two brothers asleep against shore-rocks, egg shells all around them. She bit the grief off their necks, she licked the hunger off their eyelids. (suckled by wolf, sacred to Mars) Romulus clotted quick and set the basket on fire to warm his shivering twin. Remus sucked out the hot color of waves breaking inside his brother, Romulus howling music into his bones. Their pores widened
and the air around their bodies throbbed into a flock of woodpeckers. Remus watched them buckle-dance through a window in his brother’s skin. (suckled by woodpecker, sacred to Mars)

Or, I hang my skin on a hook and wait inside you for my lungstrings to open.

At morning a herdsman, wolf blood underground. Romulus strung the animal tooth around his neck and learned the muscle of metal in mud. The whip on cattle back. A new mother called Division. She hid her breast from sodden Remus. Romulus pushed inside his brother until wail clouds thundered quick over him, eyes closed and intention dissolved in the spit of sleep. At swallowed-moon Remus snuck back to the shore, scratched the wolfbite open under water to fill his arteries with sorrow, to trade iron for river companion.

At sunrise Romulus built a city wall.

Remus jumped the rivercliff and split into rock; it spilled what craved inside him. A flock of woodpeckers licked him clean and scattered in nine hundred arrows.