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Two Poems

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THE FOXES

—I saw the pair of them crouched
heads into the wind,
peer down from that ledge.
There was nothing I could do,
but grab cartridges and run.
The chickens were out
and I was alone.

Boots crackling in snow, I waited
eye to sight, until one appeared,
raced ahead of my rifle to grab
one snoutful of feather and run
tail bobbing over snow.

I aimed. Squeezing the trigger
my eyes squeezed black, a love
that throbbed so fast
I could not see.

Minutes after,
I loosed my clutch and looked
for the mound of fox.
It lay there, red on red, feathers flapping.

My bullet had entered the arse
and I found a hole where blood
trickled out the neck.
To laugh, to cry, to bury this thing and run,
I knew its five dollar worth, felt
my veins surge the blood of woman and man
hunter and fox,
this fox and hen.

ORPHEUS

Your skin is the white
of old men, of every
vein visible. I am
dead with you. I take
the color of old sheets, cloth
worn at its center.

I am tired with you,
cold with blankets, tired
of kisses. The moons
of your nails spread
to a pale blue. I am tired
of the face.

Suppose we did bear
four more children, take them
each before the third month.
Then we could count the dyings,
mark them
on that frail flesh
which holds us.

Though I have no daughter,
I have a dog. He guards
this house. He too
is full up
with your honey cakes.