As Brancusi Said at an Earlier Hour

Peter Balakian
Ben. I never made it back to that bar in Elmira where you and that thug Fitzie used to end weekends in rage. Where you crowned your girl with broken glass and washed the body from your hands. Every mirror broken and still your face whole in each frame. And that last headpiece you made from rusted lead. They believed you’d pillage every town from Elmira to the border and disappear into the North wood waiting for the second coming.

They say you were unrecognizable. Steel twisted around your arms, handlebars locked around your head. When I went back, your room still stunk of clay and wet cloth. Nothing untouched. Beer cans in the toilet and that selfless portrait without eyes dug into the plaster. Everything was still except one woman on the sill, your hand half-pulled from her head and her eyes still waiting for you to attack them.