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To Ernest Hemingway

Brendan Jordan

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To Ernest Hemingway

By Brendan Jordan

That night I imagine you cradled
your shotgun like the body of
a killed ferret.

It was soft in your hands, so
terrifyingly still and deep—
so deep you couldn't find the
bullet lodged like a heart
in the barrel (looking so much
like a prison)

Your scalp peeled like a fruit-husk.
The red fruit of your brain burst
seeds of withered stories across
a white wall that looked more
like an old, yellowed canvas.

Stories lay on the floor beside
your up-turned boot-toes—they
fell like dropped nickels into the
gutter of your now-gone memory; they

echoed hollowly like the mouthless sighs
of leaf shells too old to drink sunlight.

I don't know if you smiled
or cried at the lifted latch
of the trigger.
You felt the door of your life
open.

You felt prose burst out like blood, all
too watered down to catch, and hold,
but so rich in color you couldn't
help but think of the bricks

in the long-ago Paris walkways.

And I haven't gotten yet to
the moment just before, that second
so filled with your longing
to translate the weight of the barrel into
the truest sentence you knew,
into the declaration of a pain that would
vanish only
if you hunched over the typewriter and bled.