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## The Fourth Letter

Bruce Smith

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## THE FOURTH LETTER

Harrison: March 30th. Deposit, New York. Where the logs jammed in the river's throat, where the railroads deposited their freight before the railroads washed downstream with vouchers from banks in the depression. Here is where it piles up, the memory's debris, sticks in the thicket and plastic bags that mark high water from thaw and rain. Waters broken; streams subside, slightly, to the swift coursing of your blood. Christ, the shit that piles up. The Sear's Catalog of the soul's flotsam: eel grass on underbrush — the hair of lovers, the submerged baby's trike, beer cans and the streamworthy bottles, car tires in apostrophe to open roads and blondes in convertibles. Those white streaks: milk or spit or sperm. The stuff that piles up. The skeletons of birds and fish — fleshed out, these are the forms you take in dreams. Rinds, crusts, wrappers, coats, peels, skins, shells — which means someone has got the succulent insides, the dark meat, thighs. And those unidentified bits, too, that are shards of remorse or joy that will be carried to confluence. Garbage: our only resource that grows, like these words grow, in heaps. An anthology of detritus: newspapers and funnies — the red letter news. Water logged print that doesn't touch the edge of pages, the stream's poems, I guess. When it's not residue you see, it's reflection: the sun in chunks, the trees reticulation. A face that alternates fat and thin. Falstaff and you father, Emma Goldman and Keats, Benjamin Bunny and the Flathead Chief. Man, beast, androgyne. You're 65% water. Half the time you don't know who you are, the other half is made up in your mind: the well-preserved body of Richard Nixon floats by, face up, like the Lady of Shalott. I'm making this up, out of leavings of the mind, here in Deposit at the end of the month . . . I've looked these letters over: not enough love. Harrison, I'm leaving you this.

Smith