somewhere near the swamp

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Elaine Mott

Somewhere Near the Swamp

After the leaves have fallen
he puts on his camouflage outfit
and blackens his face with charcoal.
In the car, driving past bonfires,
front yards lit up like war,
he listens to the recorded sounds
of the wild turkey, scraping, sucking
sounds he can feel in his throat
under the wattles of his neck.

Somewhere near the swamp
the wild turkeys are shuffling their heavy bodies
through the brown and silver underbrush
like creatures falling into a deep sleep,
or stones dropping on water.
He can taste the cold on his teeth,
gun metal.
He follows the black snapping branches
that slice the air before him,
the streak of sunset a lantern
disappearing fast.
When that goes there's only the darkness,
his own dull flesh,
bird sounds
looking for a way to get out.