The Bones of Paradise

Bruce Thornton
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I found the peacock's bones
when I turned on the pump
for the first time that spring,
and the water, warmed in the earth,
steamed around by bowed face.
The bird had called all autumn,
its languid falling cries
swirling in my ears with the wind
that smelled of pine and snow.
I saw it that cold dusk
I dragged a calf to the pit;
a dog had opened the throat,
untied the veins and sinews
shining gaily like ribbons.
As I turned to walk home
the bird spread its tail
against the gray failing light,
and it left one shimmering feather
I gratefully carried home.
Sometime that winter it died
and the dogs filched its flesh,
scattering the bones and eyes
trampled by the random herd.

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