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## The Bones of Paradise

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## *The Bones of Paradise*

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.

*Bruce Thornton*