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The Woodlot

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THE WOODLOT

I practiced on a dead possum
my father and I found on a walk
through the woodlot. After dinner

I snuck back down to the woods
where the skull hung at eye-level
in the knot of a tree and I said
“Marry me.” The possum’s other bones
lay to the side of the trail,
buried under the first fallen leaves.

Other days, I thought
I might ask it with glow-in-the-dark
stars on the bedroom ceiling,
or on the chalkboard if she got a
teaching job. We were, as they
say, not getting any younger. In
the little woodlot in Iowa
under the quiet gaze of bones,
queer theory nagged at me
like yesterday’s nettle in the finger.

There were too many reasons
why I was not supposed to want
to marry her, but we wouldn’t
have to tell. We could just do it.