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tertia

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AMIE IRWIN

TERTIAL

we buried the bird so the earth would eat
the flesh. remember—how we found the body whole—woundless
but struck. we buried the bird to measure our patience
for bones. we planned to dig them up in time. we do not know
it's kind. yellow. not finch. we buried the bird
to steep the question of wuther of yield. two women—
soil overturned with our fingers—pressed seed,
lung sliver. can I breath when you hover your cleft
so close to this hill?

we buried the bird to remake the shape
of the seen, to see what desire transfigures. the gather unspools
the gleam. auxiliaries and secondaries—feathers
can't guard the unfleshing. the tertials, closest to its body
already spreading—we bury the bird to hold it
in the home of our throats. each of us
coupled

already, we do not know
our kind
or what mercy we might need—