

WHO IS THERE TO EULOGIZE THE TREE

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the mason–dixon¹you²

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¹ a shadow extended long enough becomes just
the light

² you've never been tender. (moth wings. tobacco strung up to dry the color of a man). you can't walk to the car without stopping for your father to water the yard. he stares across it, bending over, thin as a country that lost half itself to civil war (a cancer sign), the other half to ashes. he plucks every weed as if they were his children—could be woven to a throne. you leave them be. whatever he believes, he believes. your whole theory of the sky would change if you crossed south of the equator. there, the north star evaporates. like the killing games children play—who would you murder first (or marry) if it meant meandering the stars close to home, keeping them from change? (you can try again to put hands to head to roots and stand, but every little sun is diamond-set into the back of your father's father's land). all that blood played across the innocence (some vote ignorance) of trees. they say yours are your father's eyes. he says *look at steve*, who is army green and bends to the wind like a galaxy. every night sleeping beside him in the ward, your father didn't know your name. your dream is to be terrible (a monster or a worm) and ratchet back history and only afterward, be good. you're american. you could have told him anything but of course you never did. your name unfurls from his name like onion skin. you've never seen your father cry. once, when his brother died, you think you see it. he waters the snow at the place he poured the urn—your father's brother is a tree—or it's a trick of the light. maybe fireworks.

³ a crow's memory is generational

⁴ a wilted kite