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Steele Creek Journal

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STEELE CREEK JOURNAL

Stephen Knauth

1

The willow has something to say,
dipping her hair in the black
ink of the pond.

2

They're making souls again tonight.
Sometimes the right
cut adds carets to the stone.

3

Reflection of trees along the creek's edge,
as if you could climb
downward into the earth and see.

4

Scatched clean
that which was held dear.
Then scatched out.

5

Who can rest?
No clouds to furnish the sky.
No curtains to close that glass eye.

6

You knew them.
His dark shell.
Her creamy center.

7

Days pass, or were they years,
once-bright fragments
left on a page in a drawer by the sea.

8

That face
reflected in creekwater,
unmoving among moving leaves.

9

Downstairs, in his little shop,
he's sanding away what seems to belong
from what longs to be.

10

Whispers at the bedside,
children clinging
like starfish to a darkened coast.

11

Mild imprint of wind on the water,
windprint, no two alike,
sometimes it calms its victims before claiming them.

12

Fathers don't die.
They're out back, in their heavy jackets,
patiently raking the moon.

13

I am cold and lonely,
please take me with you,
he heard Christ whisper to him in the woods.

14

Stepping out of love's shadow
is a dance we do
with slow, uncertain—yet formal—steps.

15

Last of the poplar leaves,
brass fixtures gleaming in the sun—
even they can't open his heart.

16

Passed out, royally,
between the long slender legs
of the town water tower.

17

That line of trees
along the winter ridge says
go back to her room and sit quietly by the bed.

18

Windy all day
on Little Pisgah Mountain,
leaves falling in full compliance.

19

In the yard he takes a breath:
abandoned hornet's nest
soaked with rain.

20

Old field pine
elongated with yearning,
holding forth a few cones and a crow.

21

Her face at the end,
abdomen filled with dark fluid,
brown velvet paw paw flower on the tray.

22

Furrows in tilled fields
dip out of sight, reappear on the next hill,
headed another way.

23

Clouds eel-green and lavender.
Loved ones, one by one,
untie their tethers and go.

24

Grief pools
in the hollows of the face,
while sorrow sinks, bronzing the heart.

25

All night at sleep's edge,
the small-leaved linden
rubbing herself along the shakes of the house.

26

That last thousand feet,
where hikers become climbers,
reading the cold braille with both hands.

27

To learn the language
of leaves, please
fall silent.