

ASSAULT F-150

**ALISON
PELEGRIN**

I never draw on tombstones with pieces of brick.
I'm careful about who at the beauty shop

sweeps up my hair—because of voodoo, because
God don't like ugly, and because I'm spooked

—even in daylight—of the ghosts I might conjure.
In New Orleans, voodoo would get blamed for deer

played open and hung inverted from trees, for an owl's wing,
its white underside lifting from asphalt to speak

the language of the fan. But in the rural south, across
Lake Pontchartrain, no one's sneaky about violence.

Blacktop bears the smear of an endless game of assault
F-150. A pattern—every other mile yields a dead dog

pounded by ritual wheels, the bright entrails spilled
like a gallon of paint. Shooting skeet and shooting stray wild piglets

that remain after pit bulls pin the boar down for the blade—
no worries if your aim is off, because all creatures

surrender eventually. All creature-fur is rained on,
swells until the hind leg lifts and the tanned skin splits—

a feast for articulate crows, and buzzards, mute,
hunched like tombstones among wasp-haunted fruit.