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Protean Blame

William Goulet
Cornwall, Connecticut.

To merely stoke pace with more grievance, I hurtle
through slashing thicket, ankles rash
amongst heaving root, condemning mountain laurel buds
and their impending allure. I emerge beneath
a closed stand of hemlock, pursuing the straightest line away
from a certain intimate enagement.

This to confirm unequivocal riddance.

This to keep it exactly behind me.

But what in the canopy's dimmest recess
lacks unassailable form? And how could sunlight flashing the gaps
possibly confront me? As absurd as squat needles beneath my stride
urging a guilty look back.

All but clear of the woods, verging lush, June glade,
I stomp a wispy elm against ledge.
Not far ahead, the phlox quivers, and a red-tail swoop
foreshortens a thrashing squeal.

With no pause or deviation, I reaffirm alignment.

The kill merits no regard despite its blunt proximity.

Such blatant, provoking, chance intrusion

shall not usurp priority.

I trample clusters of tenuous fern

to emphasize the point,

until conceding the sapling thwack

hence forager stealth deprived,

that contingency is riddled with causality,

and that I, at all times,

am an agent of both.

Having slowed to a halt,

I grip my knees,

then catch

the faint honk

of geese

one

mile

up.