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## The House of the Wounded

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# The House of the Wounded

by Jason Johnson

The house of wounded  
blue light sifts the garden  
dirt into the corners of the yard.  
Like old trees whose trunks  
have wrinkled in the sun,  
women stand in the open  
doors, brooms in their hands,  
and watch the clothes swing  
back and forth on the line.  
Fences unfurl in long rows  
down both sides of a dirt road  
more red compacted clay than dirt.

Soon enough, they will carry  
coffins into the fields and lay  
the dead under the shade  
trees where old men used to sit  
in cracked gray-slatted  
wooden chairs, mason jars  
of moonshine in their hands, unfiltered  
cigarettes tucked behind their ears.

And when people speak  
of this place and dig new  
postholes and paint the gray slats  
red, the dead will blow white  
smoke into the trees  
and talk of the dead  
they buried, now open  
wounds in red clay.