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Muse

Mike Carson

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Muse

by Mike Carson

Shale. Mud. The sky skidded down
the spilled slag of mountains. Tamaracks,
stunted sycamores. Floating grackles,
green-black as bruises, that clattered
over the hollow. A caved-in barn, shacks,
'50 Pontiac wrecked in the creek bed.

You waited there, surprised me, woman,
with belief. So gaunt I could not work
in your stare, afraid of being haunted.
Like the yellow-eyed thing with fur
that skulked under the slab of rock.
But your voice took me where you wanted.

Those words, iron twang of loss, cut away soft
ideas of beauty. Your raw hand brushing frost
off the cold-frame touched me as you pointed —
dim green sprouts licked up at the light. More than
a kiss your cracked skin told what you intended.
The bottom-land clay under us in thaw,
I held you and became another man.

