

OUT OF SEASON

John Casteen

Early November and the first snow a glaze of nothing
on the tamaracks and the young pines
walking for deer or for walking with the gun
when a sound scrapes across the frozen ground
to me silent as possible easing among the boughs
but again the lick of sound I've never heard
like the creak of an axehead levering free, but urgent
then a rash of rust, slack tail dragging
head low to the ground, eyes hung low and swinging
then Mike *A fox you see in daylight's a sick fox*
running now, she turns, turns, eyes flat and I follow
with the bead dead on her, Jesus, Jesus, thumbflick
it's not possible, the gun bucking up, roar returning,
her jerking down me shaking like rain and I'm sorry
when I bury her the blood steams a hole in the snow
and I want to know what she knows
the fever and the light