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LAURA KASISCHKE

War with Toy Soldiers

They have fallen off the coffee table
onto the floor. They have slipped
under rugs, lost
their guns, found

themselves in the strange
grey dream between
the floral cushions and the upholstery. They

have been batted all over the house by the cat, dropped
their canteens
down the register grates, forgotten

their homelands, their languages, their names. They

have fallen out of love.
Boarded the wrong trains.
Laughed loud and long late into the night
while digging their own graves. They

have bathed in rain. Trudged through mud. Been
drunk. Driven

in long convoys of trucks without brakes across desert plains.

They have stood at the edges
of swiftly moving rivers, watching

time flounder down to the ocean, singing,
Once, there was not even a plan.
A plan still had to be made.

Now, it's Monday. September.
The children have vanished
from the dream of their summer vacation, and

a mother, on her knees, alone
in the house for the first time in months
could assess this situation, could see

how the pure white deer that always wanders

onto the battlefield
after the violence

stands now at the center
of the wonder in silence.