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The Prodigal

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THE PRODIGAL

In the illness of surfeit, I’ve seen through
the legerdemain of doctors, the placebos
they’re forever pulling from their pockets.
I long for sleep, that dark pharmacy

with its shelves of empty bottles.
Dawn hauls its ruddy load over the hill.
Cars rasp along, antagonizing trees.
One can’t escape the past; I know—I tried.

Hard to believe how soon these cups were drained.
I would fain have eaten husks fit for swine.
This split I’ve got down the middle prevents
me from knowing myself. At least the tree

I lean against feels solid. When one gets
close enough to anything, all one sees
are lacunae. It’s good to see the holes,
but not to fall through them, as I do now.

The willow droops its tenebrous crown at me.
As though it told me so—how odious.
Night, that obsidian satyr, has cantered off
to other lands. All day I lie in pieces.

The pulchritude of angels leaves me cold;
their world will never intersect with mine.
This morning, I lost my way in seeking
the scope of forests where branches stutter

in an arid wind’s locust-bearing gusts.
Now a tattered No coils back on itself,
a wastrel shroud scarring the horizon
where clouds pile up like fatted calves on altars.