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TIMOTHY KRCMARIK

Boll Weevil Ode

You wouldn’t deserve one either, pal, if this scorched morning of sunflowers twenty feet high didn’t mean extinction—if immortal glory didn’t require oblivion on the scale of Russian tsars, the tears of at least one librarian shelving old elegies in the soul. But it does. So what the hell you ginhouse Caligula, you sex-nosed Grendel raping the white cups of great and sometime gods. World’s Smallest Carpetbagger, Rio Grande Rider, Glutton of the Mississippi Delta. Your mouth full of cotton that softly spoke oblivion to so many hardened lives will soon exist only in the Boll Weevil Blues of the great Charlie Patton. You, the winged Troy in destroyed, the Black Ciudad of Scoured Throats. Crossing Centerville, Texas today, my radio says the cropdusters have your number. A twenty-first century hemlock savvy enough to breech your bloody cockpit and fry the Red Baron blitzkrieging through your genes, toxic enough to wind your trillion music boxes into Darwin’s rotten teeth. Oh I spread your onyx exoskeletons unbolted, unhinged, un sprung—over the barbwire fields of praise and sing your epitaph:
You knew a good thing when you'd found it.
You wore down horrible teeth
against the fibrous heart of life
and spent a thousand winters
weaving the old epic in your stomach.
Blind hunger was your innocence.
You bested a century of science
and found glory in a bard’s gut strings.