The Birthright

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THE BIRTHRIGHT

First the hunter, then the feast. Is that the myth we’re in? A cousin feeling, some kinship in the nerve endings, throws our lids wide open, names our pulse deciduous. The furred and whorling woods go missing in the rearview, new cells thrum at the edge of development, and why would the tamped-down backtrail miss us, the mustardweed grown hip-high, viral, while someone sights the sky in his rifle, claims the whole skittish forest? As if the evergreen world didn’t need us to fall for it, we learn to be artful, to tilt and let fly. Neat heads bit red, pale bellies slung skyward, a heap of harried flesh on which deer season has lost its bearing. Then the white-limbed silence
catches us wide-eyed, blushes

like evening bedecks these bare poplars

and the dogs come hot at our throats.