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## Cleave

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*Simone Muench & Jackie K. White*

**CLEAVE**

*—on a line by Pablo Neruda*

*Two immense blackbirds, two cannons:*  
too many things in twos split by a dark thick

filmstrip: cleave between body and screen.  
A life writ with feathers, with gunpowder

that fizzles or explodes sending scattershot  
into phoenix. We myth-make beak into beam:

a black seam up a burlesque dancer's leg:  
a powder keg of jazzed choreography.

Was it blackbird or mesh stocking? Church  
canon or copulation fainting into blur?

We rapunzel a raven-haired braid  
down a cathedral. Cabernet our way

not home but toward an ideal highway  
though it's just another dividing line

another two-lane blacktop spined together  
in painted vertebrae. We cage the bird, cut

the hand to fodder. We arrive  
halfway which means we never arrive.