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Each time I break

Rawdon Tomlinson

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Rawdon Tomlinson

Each time I break

—*Professor O. C. Marsh in the field, 1890s*

the crust, the old earth-musk
of leaves and river bed
runs light dryness dazzling
sucked from thousands of snails
among which I dig for a bat
perhaps unrecognizably
twisted by gravity,
or hope to unfold a fish's
articulated ball
and socket vertebrae
still swiveling current,
where wades a heron hunting
on stick-thin tibias,
broken or whole, orbits
like mine outlining worlds—
intricacies sutured by need.