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Anamnesis on the Susquehanna

Zachariah McVicker

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Zachariah McVicker

Anamnesis on the Susquehanna

River's shore, dusk time, not yet the hour
of gnat cloud. Bone puzzle of a mallard
in the shallows. With sticks, we disinter
the bleached skin-girders of the drowned

and arrange, what we can, of a skeleton
on the sand. Limbs missing, a whole wing
drug off in the torrent. Yet what's gone
can't obscure the form of the remaining—

we know what we have here. The sodden down
still clings to the bones it knew—I was mistaken.
In the cold water of the brain, even memory decays.

Yet I still have this image skeleton,
the bones' ossein, a damp-feather black pigment:
effigies for remembrance, tinder for flames.