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## Appalachian Matins

Carrie Jerrell

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*Carrie Jerrell*

## Appalachian Matins

I.

These three girls, barefoot by the chicken coop, one with a wire cross piercing her ear. These braids of shucky beans. This rifle. This hand. This hog gutted on the gambrel hook. This shrine of lidless dolls, made to the missing wife. This blind horse. These cloth diapers, snapping on the line. This wind. This banjo and this voice. This song, history shaped like a wail. These chipped teeth. These mourners, dressed in flannel. This shanty. These snakes. This holiness boy, holding his jar of poison.

II.

In high summer, my sister and I return to the house on Bell's Hill. Through no window can we see clearly. House slippers wait full of webs in the closet. A belt in a drawer. Two spoons at rest in the sink and my grandfather's tobacco pouch still on the counter. The rose-patterned paper has wept itself off the wall. The hem of my sister's dress is unraveling. There has never been so much silence between us. We have never felt so close to each other. Each room has been stunned by absence, trapped by light.

III.

Here is the quilt on the wall. Here are the bed's rusted springs. Here is the body of memory, ghosting in stains on the floor. Here is the farmhouse and here is the land. Here is the fruit, red and heavy as fists. Here is the tree. Here is the mouth of the mine. Here is the factory smoke drifting. Here is the church. Here is the steeple. Here is the door, opening, opening.