Antidote

Corey Van Landingham

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engagement: A pledge, a pawn, encumbrance. The parties that were bound. Covenant. The shadow on top of the shadow of doubt. The shadow of a chicken hawk circling the pasture. We call it redwing to forget talons. We call it engagement, as in, appointment. A festivity. A brief period of occupation. We call it this to forget ourselves, which are on top of our other selves, which can never be joined with another, as a shadow will never merge directly with the body. As in, someone already in line for the dance. Damsel with her book of those in waiting. *We regret to inform you that C was unable to meet her engagements.* Promise of a life with willow branches above the door, and the man left behind. We regret to inform you of the hawk, the fox, the newly-freezing night. We regret to inform you of the unknowable predator, the gravel found lodged in the throat, the year of feathers. An obligation, or bias. The fact of being entangled. The fur found caught in barbed wire, what a fence can’t keep out, and all the animals it tries to hold on to forever. The circle of feathers around the coop. The fact of being entangled, of never being good with hands, or knots. Of never being able to cut along a straight line, of being too inclined to scissors, to the hard beak, the glinting tooth. Dog digging up the potatoes, the miscarriage, the ring of hair. The fact of understanding the predator more than the prey. A battle, a conflict, the act of crossing swords.