Antidote
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Yield Stress

Before skinned rabbits hung upside-down
from the dogwood. After I lied about
having ever killed a single thing. Before
I lied about whether or not I knew how
to handle a rifle. After all, all I have
are these hands. Only old women can
separate truth from bullet holes. Before
the pocketed knife became a family
secret. After secrets. After a continent
split in two under my grandmother’s
feet. Before the field was razed, not
harvested. Before I was the field,
and allergic to myself. Or you. I am
always forgetting how you permeate
each landscape. After the dam went up
all I could think of was your hand
against my throat. Before my dress
snagged on the barbed wire fence.

Before the ring was purchased, then
pawned, there were mountains still
returning to their first selves after
years of glaciers pinned them back.

I mean held. Who is to say true
form. Here I am, a pilgrim atop frozen knees.

After a decade, here I have gone soft with
new heat. Here I am, thawing,
here is my sex-swollen tongue.
(It was yours it was yours it was yours)