Site of Disappearance

Erin Malone
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Sometimes the muse makes a big ask. Revisit the death of a brother, for example, and explore how that painful memory gathers momentum as one's own son comes of age. Muses, Erin Malone knows, are expert button pushers. A Coniston Prize and the Robert Creeley Memorial Prize winner, Malone is a bookseller and lives on Bainbridge Island in Washington.

My Father Wasn't a Hunter

The only time he tried, his brow split open
when the scope kicked back.
Pheasants safe in their grassy hills,
rye in his glass, ice, the shake
of his laugh, recalling.
Recoil the thing that got him.
My father planted a tree between the graves
of my brother and the murdered boy.
Recall. The hunt
for the killer ended on television.
A young man shackled, turning his head away.
Snow on his shoulders.
The sheriff held his elbow,
almost gentle.
The brute syllables of evidence: knife, rope, prints, blood.
Recoil means to shrink from. Recoil means
spring back.
My father furious, talking to the room—
They should take the bastard out and shoot him.

MATT SUTHERLAND (November / December 2023)

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