Self-Portrait

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Emilee Kinney

Self-Portrait

I've crashed into a snowbank outside
the church I only attended for funerals
and birthday parties slept with shadows
of cornstalks rustling the blanket thumbtacked
across my window picked at the insulation foam
exposed and bubbling along the unfinished sill,
collected the bugs that died in it for made-up spells
    I've ridden in beds of pickups with wind pulling my hair
and tears like Fall whisking leaves and late bloomers
from branches I've loved men who spit black
from their lips and wear steel-toed boots
to the grocery store I've kissed women
who button their flannels to the nape of their ribs,
    skin glowing and dewy from lakes and bonfires
I've worked under sun and rain horseback
and wagon-bound I've had a lot of trouble believing
in God why is he a father and also a son?
Why is Mary nothing more than an unsuspecting womb?
They say leaves are for healing but we collect them like ashes,
pull them away from gardens and homes hope
they decay without clogging the creek I've fallen into
    a pile of raked leaves used my body to soak
their damp into my clothes I know the Great Lakes
are most beautiful when they lap at tree roots teeth
    at a muddy bank scatter sheaves of ice and colored glass
in places we can reach I've sat on a bucket in the woods
for hours with snow falling in slow heavy breaths
    and a gun across my lap I've held a doe's legs open
while they gutted her insides pulled organs clean out of a buck
without gloves I've learned the difference
between pulling a bowstring taut as the veins
    in men's necks and how you do not pull a trigger
just as you do not pull your fingers into a fist
    untuck that thumb raise your pitchfork point down
only point at what you want to kill or mark or love.