



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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