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"Hare Song," "Descent"

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Two Poems

TRACY JO BARNWELL

Hare Song

Dandelion stem, nettle leaf,
pine nut, oak bark, dirt bath, ear twitch,
snow flurry, dew claw, wet fur, ditch
weed, meadow hole, burnt seed chaff.

Dog tooth, thorn, owl feather, flea bite,
beehive, cat hiss, poison corn, snare,
mockingbird beak, coyote hair,
ant hill, cocklebur, worm, ear mite.

Flee snake. Hawk. Fire. Sniff night lark
nest. Shake tail. Watch the moon’s white sail.
Chew honeysuckle flower. Be still.
Be fast foot. Yellow eye. Warmth in the dark.
Descent

Hackles falling
on the dog’s back,
ladle disappearing
into the soup — tonight
even the satellites
drop from their orbits,
skipping across
the bruised skin
of the atmosphere
to the amazement
of amateur astronomers,
who consult
their star charts
for some explanation
of these machines
tumbling past,
momentarily masquerading
as constellations
but burning at last
to nothing
or to scorched
beads the size
of sunflower seeds,
so small they can be
carried for months
by the cold blue winds
above the planet
before settling to earth
in lazy coils
like the slow roll
of a wedding ring
down a drain,
landing almost anywhere, skimming the surface of a dark lake, skittering in the headlights on a highway, or falling at the feet of a man who waits with a suitcase, ready to climb the stairs of a bus and hand his ticket to the driver.