

Wilderness House Literary Review 7/1

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On Hunting

in Maidstone, Vermont

The sign said *No Poachin'* which meant things belonged to the person whose name was on the deed. By things, they meant potatoes, alfalfa, hay, the hedgerow, crickets, deer, polywogs, trees, crows, muskrat, raspberries, fox, gravel, coyote, dirt, rocks, fish, butterflies and such. By definition, I had been a poachin' thief in Bert's Field since the age of three, maybe two. Contraband: potatoes (baked), sweet timothy (chewed), mosquito larvae (mistaken for frog eggs until hatched), pebbles (buried), clay (spread), drift wood (burned), clover (fed to sheep), blackberries (consumed), sweet corn (roasted), pussy willows (picked), fiddleheads (boiled), wild rose (plucked), and arrowroot (planted).

On Trespassing

in Maidstone, Vermont

Bert owned Peaslee's Potatoes. He caught me running in his field, below the yellow *No Trespassing* signs, in 1997. I was 20, tall, and fast and I wore flimsy shorts and a sports bra in the heat. His blue truck rattled down along the hedgerow, closing in on me from behind. I ran, waiting for my scolding, but certain I belonged there despite the signs.

Bert rolled down his window, said nothing, offered his wrist-wave, a nod, drove on to inspect the potatoes. It would seem I was a deer that day.

On Separation

in Missoula, Montana

After I pull the rope to hang the deer, after I hold the hide around his body like a robe, after I wrap the meat in neat packages and eat tenderloin and eggs for breakfast, the remains stay in the garage waiting for trash day. After the garbage truck leaves, the hunter says he's bothered. The head and hide still lie on the floor, the bones moving toward a landfill. I didn't want to separate him like that, he says. His spirit, you know. Maybe it's silly, but I feel bad.