

One Night on the Apalachicola

A rigid moon, and wind
that sings to water,
hold the bay of hounds
high in the moist night.
A scream splits the pines,
soars above the chorus
of the seasoned pack.
It is Gypsy Jewel, my favorite;
green, eager, she has rushed ahead.
I track my father's curses.

The smell of blood binds the clearing.
The boar, one tusk sticky with battle,
quivers past death, his skin riddled
with Father's rage. The wounded pup
welcomes his palm with one last lick,
takes the bullet like a beating.
I huddle in the tupelo.

In me, the river sings too loudly.
On the angry Apalach,
I straddle a twisting vessel.
"Heel, Jewel! Home!" I cry.

To my calling, clouds collide.
A boiling sky is webbed with fowl.
Rainbows of thin-skinned fish arc to the boat.
Everything wild is mine.

From the glistening thicket,
the brown boar listens.
In the distance,
against the rush
of fierce dark water,
a headless hound pulls toward me
with steady strokes.

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