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Ears to the Ground

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Ears to the Ground

By Daniel Persia

It's not the tame murmur of a powered-on television
or the static of the radio, we hear,
my sister and I, with our ears to the ground.
It's not the heat sifting up the vent

or the brass brushing against the strike plate
as the door echoes, forward then back.
It's not the swiftness of the closet rollers
or the metal twang of a hanger dangling from the rod

stretching her wool sweater, like ice.
It's not the splitting of a box spring
or the subtle cling of two magnets
on her jewelry chest, hiding the ring he gave her.

It's not the rush of the creek flowing through the drywall
or the melody of a jay dripping outside their window,
but the window, we hear, shattering.
My sister and I, with our ears to the ground,

hold out for a ceasefire, for some silence to delay.
But it's not fiction, or some made-up game:
Bombs are flying; both are packing;
it has to be this way.

Erosion

By Adrienne Violand

There are streams
in my back yard.
Small and thin, hiding,
until you trip, not looking

where your feet were going,
into a stream, breaking
the hard glass surface.
Bruised body: a testament.

I sometimes wonder
what my backyard looked like
before the dam broke
and flooded the field.

Where there was soft dirt,
grass, tall pines,
there are now streams
violating the earth.

The water worked its way
into my field, forcing itself
from the source.
It rolled through,

washed the layers away,
drowned the earth
and left a permanent mark.
I think about the Grand Canyon

that once was whole
before the streams and rivers poured out,
unending until all that remained
a chasm of red hard rock;

a void, years in the making.

On the walls you can see the layers
washed away by the current.
I wonder

if my streams will grow wide and deep
no matter how I try to contain them.
They might swell and overflow

taking more land away from me

or dry up in time,
a cocoon, an empty shell
of what was once there.
I wonder

if he saw the layers
washing away. Streams
working their way
into the hairline cracks

breaking them open. I wonder
what he saw when he held me down,
hands like water. Underwater
no one can hear you.