



M. P. Jones IV

Field Grief

Late in the darkness
startled by the sound of what
could have been the bleating
of a young calf the one
my father bottle fed
after we found his mother
at the edge of the field
the hay leaning heavy
with flecks of blood
and the red clay too hard
to bear the paw prints
already the vultures
had assembled for their
wake in the pines
with the sun bending
weary at noon's stalk
her body growing ripe
as we dug the shallow pit
worn handles of the shovel
straining against the clay
with shadows from the field
moving into the treeline
we loaded the truck
and still later heading home
when we discovered
the fledgling owls living
in the oil can that hung
to the left of the cabin door
what little refuge we require.