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Weeds are flattened beneath last year’s tire tracks
others lay burden by the winter’s heavy snow.
The crocuses labor through this thick blanket.
I am sun drained from the bleakness
of the weeks before. Now a tick
I've carried in my hair runs up my neck,
festers on my chin.
I show it no mercy.
The lake-ice is rotting diamonds
where water seeps hungrily through its cracks.
Beneath the birdfeeders
goldfinches and juncos scratch.
Two mallards strut
crane their necks for the roving dogs and cats.
Sharptailed grouse lay low in the thicket believing
they cannot be seen, their rust-colored wings
match the frost-bitten ground.
This morning we were woken by a knocking
on our skylight, the yellow feathers
of a flicker splayed against the window.
I cradle a striped gopher, it heaves so slightly
against my palm, a leg broken
and one eye bloodied shut.
I lay it against the mountain ash and beg
it not to suffer.
This afternoon I have my hearing
for Truth and Reconciliation.
I must confess my years of sleeping
in those sterile, cold rooms where the hiss
of water heaters were devils
in the dark.
I want to walk these thickets
to that far horizon and not look back.