

F. DANIEL RZICZNEK

from *Leafmold*

Down, waiting for coffee, taken aback and probably exciting. I cigar. I federal. I thumps. Condoning detonators, reels, fools, in the parlor a crack, a minor groan. Tough steak, she says. Corn pone. Unconsciously perplexed, shrugged, squirming the rockslide into grudge, cropping grass plaintively. The horse didn't reckon, grown placid. Ain't that proof. The noise seemed to go on, the cellar uncertain, no difference. Someone spit. Easy reach and he walked away being hit matter-of-factly, content with a bullet of torment in the big pasture. Scatter, pretty – sopping Oklahoma to extend the nice visit, jest in her pocket. He shook his head. Read smart. A flag, a cause, and a death. The fire gave him an ugly mouth. It might not have, thinking that strawberry nipples undulating closed it to sorry. Engineers running out of her Colorado, he'd finally been dug, heels set toward the front door and top buttons, primly expecting smoked whiskey, clothes on a doornail, mostly moving a mark out of reach, flying through the wall. Both watched enough slack to recognize who was for an instant.

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I absorb moss through my ears, through my toes, through my glands. I absorb moss through a taxi cab headlight, through a syringe in my wrist. Music flows from the moss, heavy as steam in the first week of winter – through muscle, through map, through a stiff-collared yellow shirt, music flows unhindered. Sitting on top of the world, I absorb moss where fields have been planted on the graves of trees. I absorb moss through painted eggs, through the bullet-spray of snow and the prayers of the greedy. Music flows: a headland of moss rushing under a mountain of torn raincoats. The moss flows west, then north, then east in me, lakes and pools mirrored by the shadows of moss crossing light, light absorbed through eye, reflected by moss. Music absorbs moss, moss absorbs music: a woman wails gospel until lungs ache. Moss intervenes where water threatens collision, sundering, and vice. Music rushes between these things, bent on disappearance. My cells sing to the moss – the music conquering and thereby conquered.