

JOHN LEONARD

*L'appel Du Vide*



Whale white, probably a silver blue,  
you took this as your flame of purpose,  
holed up somewhere in the woods like a bandit.

The first time I shot a gun, I heard my father  
shooting a gun, who heard himself being born,  
unexpectedly bathed in a flickering light.

\*

*We must forgive the weak,  
wash them gently like newborns*

I disagree. Forgiveness is born everyday,  
sometimes lost, a heart that doesn't scream.

\*

Once melted, the brass pours slowly over everything,  
and everything is brass, pouring slowly into memory.

\*

A brown bit of cloud tailed after the others, refusing  
the mauve and umber of sundown. Knowing the pattern  
is not the same as having the pattern figured out.

You watched the geese watching me as I watched the sky,  
wanting to ask them, *Was he once one of you?*

\*

When they found him, he was open and silent,  
cold like midnight in the desert,  
flowers tonguing for rain,

teeth all but missing.

\*

Once melted, the gun becomes a cloud,  
a blue flame silent in the woods.