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The Cemetery: Savage Repose

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THE CEMETERY: SAVAGE REPOSE

Teri Lavelle

1. Our dead,
precious and still,
are collected like butterflies
and pinned to white satin for display.
At ritual's end,
they are swallowed whole
and sink like frogs,
beneath Earth's loamy pudding.
Their bones become a mystery to daylight.

2. Time,
that weighty changeling,
bears down on them,
as gravity unwinds geology.
There they are settling,
mud-sucked and mold-resplendent,
a fleshy repast
for the small and beastly.

3. Beneath a stone-riddled field,
all of them:
farmers and dilettantes,
anarchists and clergymen,
all are lying
parallel and supine,
unblinking and inert,
refuting a grace that never comes.
"Why practice temperance?"
They call to us.
"Rocks melt, and mountains disembowel.
Igneous begets sedimentary.
Yet in the end,
all is metamorphic and one."