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Trace

Out of the drainage ditch
and something

of how the reed
reaches makes the rag

of childhood twist,
the piled-up voices

rising reaffirm
the ditch.

...

ditch:
the flows meet here
and blown seeds from the road's
eithersides and field margins,
the undigestables birds passing drop
and trash passersby
flip out of their rushing side-windows.
A wilderness of small animal
carcasses moves under the water.
Murk and dross in-
habit the surface. Debris sinks.
The surface inhibits reflection while floating oil reflects
obsolete iridescences and the ditch—
the ditch in all its mergings and musings

presents itself—
an incongruous estuary.

...

You're sped past all this.
Your father is driving.
Your mother's asleep in the front seat.

...

Past cattails ditch-ridden
to the place imagined
is the place felt—

the fraught blossom,
the naught and requisite
inkling
of something down there rattles you,

you are the only body
of water.

...

Your mother slept too much and at inappropriate times.
She'd nod off suddenly.
She didn't look at you enough.
She didn't see you when she looked; for you
being invisible became a way of being right.

...

Trace is the scar
itself and the finger tip moving
over the scar's lip.

...

Some bubbles escape from the gassy heart.

What's down there rises,
a fretwork of birds.
The cattails gave birth
in you to the feeling of loss
before loss happens.
Gave you thus:
the beginnings of a romantic imagination

...

and the reeds seen out of the passing window made
a passing landscape but you were the one moving and
where I want to go with this is where you got to—

...

Debris seeks its natural angle of repose

as a word is uttered,
canted to topple,

as a word suffices,
might—oh
when woe won't.