

BOB HICOK

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*The naturalist at work*

The frogs hush when I near, I'm finding the limit  
of their concern, a step forward, back, zeroing in  
on the point they forget me, and have been at this  
fifty two years, even worming on my belly to the rim  
of the lushness of their lust, how blood would sound  
if we sewed our mouths to our hearts and these monsters  
gathered around water to scream they were open  
for business, I feel the frogs' rut-thrumming  
in my chest, a pressure like a V-8 has been strapped  
to the wings of night or a choir locked in a bank vault  
and told God awaits at the end of song, they just need  
to pour their voices out, empty themselves  
of all possible hosannas, I leave their honesty  
more enthused about vowels, the moon, the field,  
the flies that buzz themselves to death against the screen,  
I leave as an honorary frog and come back to the kitchen table  
and thank it for standing up for me, to the sink  
that has held water that has held my face, most of all  
I come back to bed and you in bed determined to remind you  
you exist with the feather of my tongue and the consequence  
of my breath in your ear or what resembles an ear, what listens  
or manages so personally with shy lips to speak