Prop Rockery
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Prologue

Where does this start?
   Earth underground, the root-veined loam.

What’s the scene?
   Any square or expanse.

What do we do?
   Conglomerate, calcify, cave in.

How did it come to this?
   The syllables found us rounded.

What’s the petition to say?
   We’re for more jag. Less court.

And if there’s no answer?
   Off to the bigwigs.

How will the king be known?
   By the worms and fleas.

What’s the flip-side of the sun?
   A Caesar-crowned ass, the zero, the melt.

What can be said for us?
   We’re slow. We’re permanent.

When’s the players’ cue?
   When the goat song kicks in.

How does the song go?
   Better a bucket for the ham,
   a stool for the scrub. . . .
Prop Rockery

We were thinking of starting a band, all lined up like ducks in a shooting gallery.

This one would be gem, that one metamorphic, the rest pebbles and some laboratory-grown, semi-precious stones. The trees were in it for the long-run; they swayed or stood stoic, sheltered what they could. We made the cast as an idle grouping: we played the trump, the idiot, the glue. We backdropped with hearts hardly beating, our eyes set straight in our heads: the bombed-out school kids, the oilfields scrubbed in turns. We chewed the fat amongst ourselves. You said, this place should be more festive: a lightning bolt, a snail, a fraud. I set a crumb aside for the local roof rat; you tallied the droppings, the amputees, the gold. I blew my top when you lost "Dominion." You said, what can be done? It’s gone, it’s gone. Wind started in through the rift-way, buzzed over our slate-blue bones. All the leaves have aged with kindness, all our pretend looped and windowed raggedness went largely unseen. We were on stage the whole performance, held our breath for the final moments with cheeks rent and red. No neck was slit on our backs; no distraught lover jumped from our cliff’s edge. There was a stirring backstage
we could sense it: a temptress, some anger, some sin. Weeds came thick around us. The act had been bungled sorely. We withheld our opinions, sat in wait. We were good for a throwing.