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THE POOR KNOW THEY ARE POOR

Or we were poor and we did not know we were.

Or we were not poor and we thought we were.

Or we knew we were not poor.

Or just enough we did not deny being poor.

Or others told us we were poor and we believed we were.

Or this is what we told ourselves when we disliked others.

Or it was good to be poor among those who were not poor.

Or we had friends who were poor but did not know they were.

Or the poor were always among us.

Or we wanted nothing to do with the poor even if we were poor.

Or someone somewhere in our family had been poor.

Or it was a story we learned from our older brother who told us we were poor.

Or we told ourselves “at least we’re not poor.”

Or we made up things to make our lives a little less poor.

WE ARE STARVED

Always blood and those who give of it so freely.

The hemophiliac, the martyr.

The meatpacking plant at the end of the street.

Piles of ice dumped out back, soaked with the blood of deer,
their hind legs broken, stabbed through, hung to drain.

And the children, always the children.

Gathering the ice into small handfuls, licking it as one would
a snow cone.

We did this because we loved the deer.

We wanted, somehow, to tell it.

Our mouths full of salt and a senseless speaking.

We thought this was how you brought back the dead.

We thought you would believe us.