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American Pastoral with Warped Floorboards

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DANTE DI STEFANO

American Pastoral with Warped Floorboards

after Frank O'Hara

I don't want to be the bullshit midnight cricket, who clings to the screen and rebukes the door with his chirp. I want what I can't keep: histories that oxidize, shot up with coal dust mainlined through the window of blue moss rotting the tree stump in my backyard. However, nature no longer provides a canvas upon which might be wrought a terrifying self-portrait. It's no longer epidermis meets bark. Nevertheless, Japanese red ferns die here as Dollar Generals proliferate. Last evening as cerulean didn't suffuse the western sky, I wanted to be at ease with the cobalt light of transcendent love, to drift with no weight inside me and be still, but Calliope doesn't teach singing lessons here and the raccoons haven't yet turned to stone. Instead, my amber waves of grain are yellow lines in the Walmart parking lot. I will drive there tonight and ponder asphalt as capital swallows twilight and I plead for the difficult bonds that sing us to distance.