

Boy whose name
I do not remember
who could put both
legs behind his neck,
water so cold we
could barely swim
in it, shooting rifles
at bottles & logs &
feeling my shoulder
buckle.

June Lake

sensation, no blood
running through
veins announcing,
the body. Sure, you
can shoot at what
doesn't move you,
but can you aim at
what does, bag it
like the limb, just now,
you finally found?

In the next ball-field over
a couple rolls in grass. Someone
shouts for me to throw the god-
damned ball. Overhead a Cessna
hums like the sound from a far-off
hive. My brother leaps up, stung
for the first time near to the rest
of his life. Someone is banging
on a door while the air goes out
of his body. On the ride to the hospital
our bare thighs stick to the seats.
I have never stopped holding my breath.

Beside a eucalyptus in Shadow Ranch Park,
October, 1966

Some days I want
flexible, to bend
my body into some
box I've never fit
into just to feel
the freedom in it.
Others, I wade
into glacial waters
losing all faith in

Sun is kin to sap, though
bark is not relative
to skin. You can grow
anywhere. Old age
doesn't look like one
thing. Those old red-
woods like to sing
about height. Trust me,
it's overrated. Try staying
grounded for millennia,
sitting in the same some-
place, growing mostly out
instead of up.

Bristlecone Pine

5,000 years witnessing
what? The way wind
curls around limbs
until they look arthritic?
Gravity stunting growth
like an inactive pituitary?
How humans seem unable
to look past what it means
to be human even when
the lens we're looking
through, for once,
isn't?

Learning to Shoot at Things That Moved



Rick Benjamin

Learning to Shoot at Things that Moved

Soup-cans, tires searing in the summer
air, coke bottles so old the red rubbed
off—these were easy to shoot at, even
while the Winchester bucked back into
my shoulder like his fist bruising my
body near to death. Just hold your
breath, he said, just squeeze the trigger
until it surprises you.

Only after we'd
sped back to the city, sun-stroked,
burned, did I think about what
else I'd learned, aiming at some
stillness that was also sentient—
lizards sunning themselves
on stones, jack-rabbits stunned
as bleached statues staring right
back at who was sighing them—
how it felt to take life away when
someone else seemed to put a gun
to your head forcing you to do it,
& you would to have to find a way
to live with the fact that he hadn't.

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That Moved
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