

Appalachia

Volume 70
Number 2 *Summer/Fall 2019: Hitting "Reset" in
Wild Lands*

Article 30

2019

Hawk Feathers

Wally Swist

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Recommended Citation

Swist, Wally (2019) "Hawk Feathers," *Appalachia*: Vol. 70: No. 2, Article 30.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.dartmouth.edu/appalachia/vol70/iss2/30>

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Hawk Feathers

Mid-February snowmelt mud,
the field's expanse.

At the southern edge, a porcupine
barks and bristles, edges away

into a clutch of winterberry.
Hemlock forest, blight

of wooly adelgid, green club moss,
browed bracken along the border.

Beyond, the trail winds amid trees;
blowing mist spreads through branches.

Here, hawk feathers litter the ground:
one cluster, then another . . .

Bending down in the drizzle,
I gather one feather, another,

and another, reaching
each time for an answer.

Wally Swist

WALLY SWIST's books include *The Daodejing: A New Interpretation*, with David Breeden and Steven Schroeder (Lamar University Literary Press, 2015), and *Candling the Eggs* (Shanti Arts, 2017). His new books are *The Map of Eternity* (Shanti Arts, 2018), *Singing for Nothing: Selected Nonfiction as Literary Memoir* (The Operating System, 2018), and *On Beauty: Essays, Reviews, Fiction, and Plays* (Adelaide Books, 2018). He is recently the winner of the 2018 Ex Ophidia Press Poetry Prize for *A Bird Who Seems to Know Me: Poems Regarding Birds & Nature* (Ex Ophidia Press, 2019).