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The Book of Miracles

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The Book of Miracles

Despite Ursus's approach
the fawn remains curled, delicate
calligraphy attempting to mimic
crinkleroot and leafduff.

Like a held breath, the disguise
falters, and the stream's clapping
masks the bear's shuffled gait.

With three nails, Ursus opens
the book of miracles and reads
the fawn's newly written muscle:
ink the color of ginseng berries,
taste like copper wounded with salt.

The book of miracles, when recited,
sounds like cracked tendon and
cartilage,
snap of shoulder moving
out of joint, slurp of marrow.

Before any of this, the heart,
sweetest and most joyous of meat,
is purchased by the mouth
with singing groans.

Such holy books aren't new.
Ursus himself was resurrected
by the light that grows each day,
that causes everything to climb
upon the back of another
and eat until full.

What's left of the fawn
doesn't squirm in his belly,
but as he sleeps, the doe-mother
forages where she left her child:
nipples aching, rivulets of milk
running down her legs.

Todd Davis

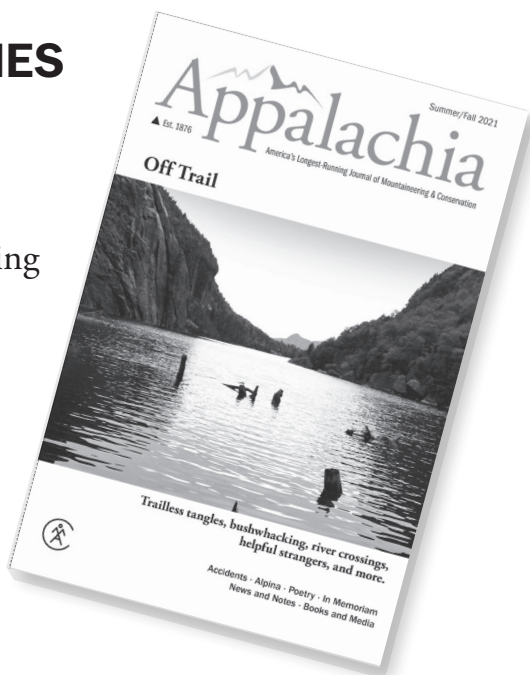
TODD DAVIS is the author of six collections of poetry, most recently *Native Species* and *Winterkill*, both published by Michigan State University Press. He has won the Foreword INDIES Book of the Year Bronze and Silver Awards, the Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Prize, and the Chautauqua Editors Prize. He teaches environmental studies at Pennsylvania State University's Altoona College.

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