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## Heath Hen: Tympanuchus Cupido Cupido

Francis Blessington

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**Heath Hen**  
***tympa-nuchus cupido cupido***

This film is 1918 and the extinct male  
turns about in the stubble silently  
beside two females who also scrape  
scraps in the years of The Great War,  
where your great grandfather  
might have worked in his garden  
silently in small circles with your  
great grandmother and grandmother, who  
sickens later this year but defeats  
swine flu, and the lost birds look back at you  
through the camera to now and say  
*et in arcadia ego*, “I, Death, am in paradise, too,”  
but unlike the speckled heath cock ruffed  
about the neck who puffs and bellows,  
stamps, backs, and dances, and fights,  
whose courtships failed and whose run was short,  
you had the luck and the numbers.

*Francis Blessington*

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FRANCIS BLESSINGTON’S poems have appeared *Arion*, *Arizona Quarterly*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Harvard Magazine*, *The Sewanee Review*, *Yale Literary Review*, and *Yankee*, among many others. His forthcoming book is *Euripides: Hecuba, Helen, and Trojan Women: Three Plays About Women and the Trojan War* (verse translations with commentary from University of Wisconsin Press).

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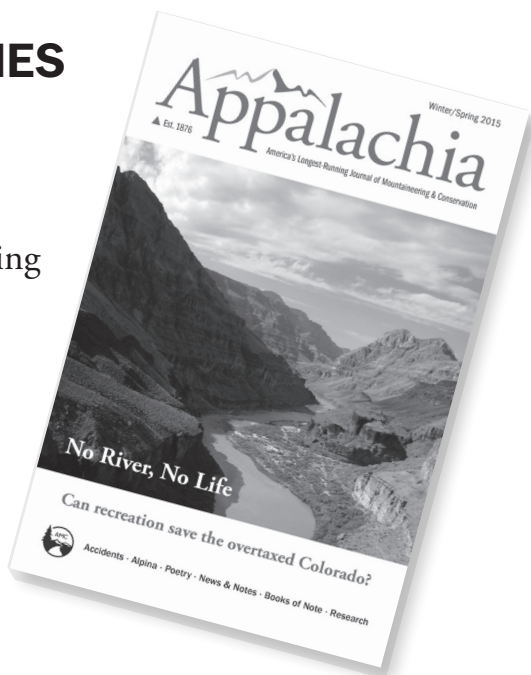
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