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Heath Hen: Tympanuchus Cupido Cupido

Francis Blessington

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Heath Hen
tympanuchus 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

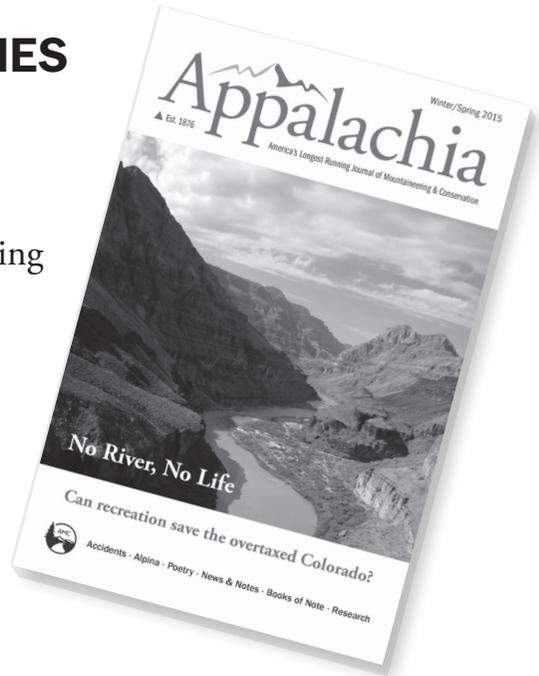
FRANCIS BLESSINGTON’S poems have appeared *Arion*, *Arizona Quarterly*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Harvard Magazine*, *The Sewanee Review*, *Yale Literary Review*, and *Yankee*, among many others. His forthcoming book is *Euripides: Hecuba, Helen, and Trojan Women: Three Plays About Women and the Trojan War*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

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