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Excess

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Excess

On Eaglenest Ridge
I scuff a buried survey square
of 19th-century iron
crowning the valley I grew
up in, carry burley
tobacco and ginseng root
in a pack. My lungs are spent
from bellying through
the vertical thicket below.
Fir trunks cling to slag turf.
Gone in breathing, my chest
balloons where Kephart never
walked. I sit a rock
and vultures float up
from falling water, eager
to fend. On their ledge
I crouch, remedial.

Benjamin Pryor

BENJAMIN PRYOR's work has appeared in *The Oxford American*, *The Southern Review*, *Quarterly West*, *Cimarron Review*, *Subtropics*, *The Wallace Stevens Journal*, and *Best New Poets 2010*, among others. He lives and works in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

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