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Survivor

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Survivor

High above the ore mines of Palmerton,
I never expected it, hiking.

But when the air sang in my ear,
I knew the bullet came close.

I hugged the forest floor and shouted
until the rifles stopped popping.

Far down canyon a ricochet of sound
clattered among zinc-rich rock.

One last stray shot out of season,
and a chickadee flushed from rhododendron.

My nose rested on decayed leaves
in the attitude of the routinely hunted—

deer that dodge and freeze—plentiful
among mountain laurel and hemlock.

Who was I to complain? Adrenaline
makes the heart pump faster,

dusts off the complacency of hiking
unguarded into October.

Dave Seter

DAVE SETER's first collection of poems, the chapbook *Night Duty*, was published in 2010 by Main Street Rag Publishing Company. He has lived on both coasts of the United States; he currently resides in Sonoma County, California.

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