Silent Living by Patrick McGee

A field stabbed with switchgrass, patches of Virginia wild rye gathered at the fringe,

sent away waving their feathered heads like a timber rattler

twists through creek water.

The sun stamps in its stall, nostrils flared, the predawn covered in skins of breath up to the collar of my boots and the sage roots under them.

This earth is so quiet the dead throw open their doors and breathe the cold of twilight, my father sitting on their porch, eager to join me

just this once.

Crouched here, he sings to me while I write it out loud, cover up this sound of isolation.

A rotted split rail slouches next to a grove of walnut trees, slows the stretch of earth, points fingers at silver sparks looking on. The sage bristles as the wind makes its escape in all of this, no one listening.