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A Story of War

A nut-chested starling perches open-
billed to mimic the cry of her mother.

Love sits crooked
between her spread

feathers, in the pockets of aprons worn, before
the mother halves the swollen peaches.

But the starling turns
to a girl, barefoot and running, hunting the tails

of the apron strings that vine
around her mother's legs.

The mother halves the fruit, sweet suckled
from the pit—

Forget the peaches, syruped and full.
This is not how the war began.

The fishtail moon guides a moth
through a forest.

That same moth porch-circles,
bashes against a bare bulb.

Here is the moral of the story:
The sky promises us nothing but light.



And light promises
nothing.

A mother-loss grief is only secondary
to a mother-left.

That was too callous.

A mother-left grief is like windows
shattering suddenly

everywhere at the same time.

And what does the starling know
of womb-death and attrition?

The chestnut starling lays her eggs
less frequently. It's sad,
really. She's old

in the young way, which is to say
sorrow plucked her plumage,
left her nearly bare.

