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## Not Blood

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DEREK JG WILLIAMS

NOT BLOOD

Features of the moon: the craters your fists  
punched-out, spider-webbed plaster,

milky white bruises—your vacant blue eyes  
as I dragged the heavy chains of you  
from our house.

I lived beside you like a prisoner  
after you returned, carrying your chains

as best I could. I wasn't yet prepared for living  
and you were too young to leave  
for good.

Brother, you need more than can be given.  
I learned your rules the hard way

back when I was only trying to make it long  
enough to move out  
and move on.

But I never did find you after that day.  
I carry its weight wherever I go—

our house in aftermath, silent as the moon's  
dead oceans where waves  
once shone.

We're not blood, and the snake of not blood  
coils behind your teeth, waiting

to be unleashed—we're brothers, craters  
filled with teeth, bound  
by a word.