

CHRISTIAN J. COLLIER

Nocturne

I learned to fly in a crimson field of dirt behind Greenway Farms
the August ■■■ took his life & the rest of summer with him.

In eighth grade, he believed he could survive
anything, even himself & lived long enough to learn he was wrong.

I believed I could be more than man &, for two hours, became
the darkest bird in Hamilton County—barely eighteen,

midnight blue, resting my warm, bare feet on sheets of gale
as fog-sopped night made kindred of me.

The South's always been, at least, half magic.
None of Her children are ever too old to be held or hoisted up.

There's an unwritten rule that hugs the sandy shoulders of Her dust:
what lasts here can own any name it yens for. I called myself lucky

Her piny air gave refuge—
a spectered hand to catch my tears, a hidden ear to heed me confess

mine was & would forever be a mulish, lesioned heart
unable to forgive in full any beloved's being & keeping dead.