

Charlie Bondhus

Putting a Body into a Bag

Nobody I know.

I'm supposed to be grateful.

But all I think about is the mess

and why did the bullet have to pierce an artery?

I wonder how much blood the human body contains,
something I learned in science class
and have since forgotten. I Google it
but the cell's signal is too weak.

No wind today
and the sun hangs
heavy as an unanswered question
or meat on a hook.

I light a cigarette,
which doesn't make much sense;
we need to move
the body

into the bag, and I need
both hands.
O'Reilly isn't in a hurry
though; he just stands there and looks,

eyes moving from the body
to me smoking to
the body to
me smoking.

He finally shakes his head
and mutters “Shit,”
like the situation
can be summed up in one word
and I’m about to agree
until I realize he doesn’t mean it that way,
he means it literally. We both smell it,
the stench

breaking through like an explosion.
It’s in our ears,
this desperate stink,
this unavailing assertion of life,

the body, furious
at its destruction, finding
one final way
to express itself.

No point in waiting.

I stub out my cigarette, grasp his ankles.
O’Reilly grabs the shoulders.
We hoist him, blood, shit,
all into the nylon bag.