

INKSOUNDS



Alex Tretbar

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Vertigo

My lover planted a Japanese red maple in the French countryside and named its shade after me. I'm shamelessly in love with the blue

towel draped over the wooden chair and the shutters
haphazard in their candor toward the sun.

This is a photograph.
This is a poem
about a photograph.
These are the planes
of spiderweb
taut across the ovate
and elliptic leaves
of the laurestine, the rake
pitched forward
and drunk in the low
green canopy,

and the brindle cat with panicked jaw-bird
steps over the spring's baked matter
and looks past the camera, presumably
into the eyes of my lover, its writhing
sacrament
in flight
downward
to the belly. Love

is like that sometimes: passing
through teeth & tongue, the red
of the flesh-cave darkening
and your heart a poem

about a photo
about a poem.

Alex Tretbar won the 2022 PEN America Prison Writing Contest in Poetry, and was a finalist for the 2021 PEN/Edward Bunker Prize in Fiction. His work appears in or is forthcoming from *Poetry Northwest*, *Snarl*, *Cobra Milk*, *Coal City Review*, and *Placed: An Encyclopedia of Central Oregon*. He lives in Kansas City, Missouri.

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