

## Wilderness House Literary Review 14/3

*Stan Sanvoel Rubin*

### **In the Country of Grief**

So many dead things  
are born here. There's a cow  
in a pasture of nightshade  
where grass should be,  
there are people tending it  
who are made of bones.  
The sheep have already  
been poisoned, their bodies  
are shaggy hillocks. Insects  
climb them like triumphant  
athletes who have ascended  
to a victory we can't understand  
even though we live here.  
Even though this is our home.

It is always going to be  
too late to remember  
where I came in,  
how I entered one night  
with no moon and no stars  
and took my place  
in this story, this family  
of lost remembrances  
whose shadows still flicker  
across the field  
as if there is someone  
I know there, as if  
there is someone watching.

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Over and over we fail  
to establish why we are here  
in the servitude of shadows,  
an old love song maybe  
from a wedding echoing  
in my head, buzzing  
like a chainsaw that wants  
to rip desire from my body  
the way you pull weeds,  
but its an endless drone,  
a skeleton bugler  
whose anthem of despair  
is a dead bird  
pecking at the heart.