

JASON B. CRAWFORD

love; a burning haibun

i once loved a boy and america told me it was a mistake. i once loved a boy and america told me to rinse my mouth out with propane. i once loved a boy and america built him his own collection of wings. i once loved a boy and america set him on fire, gawked at his bones' crystalline glimmer. i once loved a boy and a war started. i once loved a boy and found him strung up by his own mortality; tongue cut into a golden cross. i once thought of love as something i could hold until i discovered my love buried under a pile of blades. i once loved a boy and a stable of horses came stampeding from his mouth; i once loved a complication and didn't know how to name it. i once loved a boy and what else is a boy to do but cower under all of that selfishness. i once loved a boy and had to reckon with the history of lust. i loved a boy and found a way to test the resilience of my body in the same breath. i once loved a boy and under his feet formed a crater, swallowed him into an evaporating silence. i once loved a myth and out sprouted a boy; a row of seashells braided into the side of his scalp. i once forgot how to love a country and never chose to relearn. i once loved a boy and that is it, that is how i wish to end the story, impossibly in love. i once loved a boy and the moon split itself in half to hide him for me. i once loved america, too. i once thought love an infinite until i learned its breaking points. i once loved a boy and the boy loved me back like a dutiful country. we held hands and stepped over a sea of blood we chose to ignore.

a boy [redacted] once [redacted] told me to rinse my mouth out
with [redacted] america [redacted] . i [redacted]
[redacted] gawked at his bones [redacted] found
him strung up by his [redacted] tongue [redacted]
[redacted] buried under [redacted] a stable of horses [redacted]
[redacted] ; [redacted] a complication [redacted]
[redacted] of lust. i loved [redacted]
[redacted] a crater, swallowed [redacted]
[redacted] silence. [redacted] a myth [redacted] sprouted [redacted]
[redacted] a boy and [redacted] that is how i [redacted]
end the story, [redacted] in love [redacted] and [redacted] split [redacted] in half [redacted] . [redacted]
america, too [redacted] thought love an infinite [redacted] breaking [redacted] . [redacted]
[redacted]

i once loved [redacted] a mistake [redacted]
[redacted] i [redacted] found
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] my love [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] in [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] a sea of blood [redacted]