

The Messenger

“I have a leg
that will never heal,”
I said to my friend Jake.
He already knew this
and knew that
I blamed him for
the death march up
an Idaho mountain
in search of wild trouts
that precipitated the collapse.

He would argue
my culpability in this,
that I made a decision
too, but he should have known
such decisions are
proven to be beyond me:
I have proven my recklessness
time and again
like an enormous flightless bird
attracted to shiny objects
whose functions are beyond me.
But Jake was a great
wrestler and although grown
otherwise he still
has a wrestler’s understanding
of things like endurance
and pain,
and so the blame is
really my leg itself’s.

“My leg,” as if
it is a possession,
as if it is
something separate from me –
it is a curiosity of syntax,
and yet I have no other way,

no other choice of wording,
other than “my leg,”
enforcing through diction
the dichotomy of mind and body.
Is this evidence of consciousness
predating language
or something else?

And so the other me
drags me around
until it is no longer clear
who is dragging
and who is dragged.

– Jeffery Greb