

POTATOES

by Ace Boggess

At the car next to mine, a man
loads his trunk with sacks of potatoes.
He laughs, says,
“I didn’t think I’d make it out.”
The lot has been scraped to a layer of slush.
Snowmelt soaks our shoes:
his brown loafers,
my once-white sneakers
now resembling a face too long in the desert.
“Roads aren’t bad off the hills,”
I reply, storing my parcels
of cereal, bread, American cheese &
coffee: survival kit
for a younger man, which he is,
though he chose potatoes.
He stacks them like bags of mulch for Spring
as if he anticipates the first bud,
then lilies with their saintly halos.
When he loads the last bag &
turns to push his cart away,
I still hear his laughter:
the sound of a man freed from prison,
the sound of escape
when all seems blessed,
until that newness settles like snow
into heaviness over all he sees.

Ace Boggess is author of the novel *A Song Without a Melody* (Hyperborea Publishing, 2016) and two books of poetry, most recently, *The Prisoners* (Brick Road Poetry Press, 2014). Forthcoming is a third poetry collection: *Ultra-Deep Field* (Brick Road). His poems have appeared in *Harvard Review*, *Rattle*, *River Styx*, *North Dakota Quarterly*, and many other journals. He lives in Charleston, West Virginia.