

# THE AFTER

*a poem by* MELINDA MUELLER

*art* KARINNA GOMEZ

*music* KATE OLSON & NAOMI SIEGEL



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**THE AFTER**

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**IN MEMORIAM**

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*Dusicyon australis*  
1876, Falkland Islands

*Conuropsis carolinensis*  
1918, Cincinnati, United States

*Viola cryana*  
1930?, Yonne Département, France

*Glaucopsyche xerces*  
1941? San Francisco, United States

*Incilius periglenes*  
1989, Reserva Biológica Bosque Nuboso de Monteverde, Costa Rica

*And all the rest.*

*...we may feel certain that the ordinary  
succession by generation has never once  
been broken, and that no cataclysm  
has desolated the whole world.*

Charles Darwin  
*On the Origin of Species*, 1859



*Humboldt saw in South America  
a parrot which was the sole living  
creature that could speak a word of the  
language of a lost tribe.*

Charles Darwin  
*The Descent of Man*, 1871

# **BEFORE**

**MONTANA. HIGH SUMMER. A SKY  
YOU COULD STRIKE A MATCH ON. THE CRICKETS TUNED  
TO THAT KEENING YOU HEAR JUST BEFORE THE ETHER  
PULLS YOU UNDER. OH DAY. OH THISTLE SEEDS FLEDGED**

**ON EVERY SLIGHTEST HUFF OF WIND. FROM ITS THICKET  
OF SHADE A BIRD VENTURES THREE NOTES INFLECTED  
AS A QUESTION. AND THEN FALLS DUMB.  
THE MIDGES HAVE THEIR LITTLE DEATHS, ANON,  
ANON.**

# THE AFTER

**SPEAK, GENOA.  
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?**



# SONG FOR DEAD SPARROWS

SOPRANO SASSOPHONE  
TUBA/DRONE

VIOLIN I  
VIOLIN II

DRONE



All  
the words  
have fall-  
en  
(golden  
groves un-  
leaving)  
from  
the trees  
and blown a-  
way

Radio waves roll out to infinity  
bearing their flotsam...

...shall fight in the hills; we shall never...

...Such' ihn über'm Sternenzelt!  
Über Sternen muß er wohnen...

...heavy on the turnpike...

...O dark dark dark...

