

Notes from Coosa

I find you nowhere that is here or there.
Below the sunken Uchee path—iron ore.
The ridge dividing water, veined with it—
pea vine, wiregrass, short-leaf hickory.
Old fields' flood plains, indigo-dyed.
When the woods were still dense, saw palmetto,
grapes of the hills destroyed by fire
and the haw chestnut by the hatchet.
If it were easy to leave our bodies
in the fork of Red River, two mounds of earth.
If it were easy to leave you behind
in a stream clear with flowering stones—
to find you in the language where I lost you
as if you were a sentence in this poem
and this poem an archive of the forest.
But I have burned the remaining pine.
On the bluffs, strawberries thinly scattered
and in the old beaver ponds, briar root,
a bread made of it for times of famine.

—Jennifer Elise Foerster