Ghost Trees

*Pointe Aux Chênes, LA*

Toward season’s end when butterfly trawls spill purple-eyed shrimp, and a cool north wind scatters mosquitoes across the bay—moon’s running,

crabs are fat, blowfish surface with hardheads and flounder like minnows to a lantern—under a giant moon like this you can see ghost trees,

a stark statuary across the marsh. You’d think some grave digger tended these lacy roots, trimmed the grass, and whitewashed the skin of their contorted branches.

(If live oaks walked, you might guess these looked back and were quicklimed to their lonely, twisted spots.)

As if through a peephole frame, you see the past—

a ridge of green smoke, the vestige of fresh water through the chenîere—dissolve in the haze. Salt has blanched the bark stone-smooth—no olive-colored leaves hanging like lures—the ghost trees hold only the memory of solid ground, their coiled roots braid nothing but brackish water and air. Storms can’t challenge this specter—frozen in agony or ecstasy, who knows which, and what does it matter when their shining bodies keep forking the darkness?

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