

# Birthright

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JOSHUA WEINER

What's over is always under  
you never know it's there  
you keep scratching scratching in the dirt  
you think it might be there  
you need a sharper shovel honey  
what's foul is also fair

Stop looking in the attic  
as if that were somewhere  
that's just a place to store old stuff  
you need to go somewhere  
somewhere where it's never over  
it's never under the stair

Underneath the carpet  
is just some homemade dirt  
underneath the cover sweets  
is another kind of hurt  
in the antique armoire  
hangs a single dry-cleaned shirt

What's over is always under  
dig it up with care  
lay it out under the moon  
tangling your hair  
you're tangled in the ties that bind  
you're bound for the station there

I'll pick you up when you get there  
you may wonder who I am  
yeah you'll wonder who I am  
even though we share a name  
I'm underneath the overgrowth  
I'm over it all the same

## About the Author

**Joshua Weiner** is the author of three books of poetry, most recently, *The Figure of a Man Being Swallowed by a Fish*, and the editor of *At the Barriers: On the Poetry of Thom Gunn* (all from Chicago). *Berlin Notebook*, reporting about the refugee crisis in Germany, was published by *Los Angeles Review of Books* in 2016. His translation of Nelly Sachs's *Flight & Metamorphosis* was published by Farrar Straus Giroux in 2022. The recipient of Whiting, Rome Prize, and Guggenheim fellowships, he teaches at University of Maryland and lives in Washington D.C.



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