The Beginning of Terror

ROGER REEVES

The rain lashes the winter
We refuse. Spring’s black calf freezes,
Haunch and head, to the paddock floor.
Bored, the flies of this blood and splinter

Yet eat and eat and eat and eat.
“Bitch better have my money”
Sing the children in their sleep.
The moon goes blind lost in the wheat.

The dogs refuse to beg the dead
For their bright rags and unused bones.
The dead refuse to grave, and roam.
In black gowns, the crows head

To the flu-infected cities.
The beginning of terror: not
Just the angels and committees
But the dew and sun’s pity

For war war war, and yet the sheep
Run, apostles of hunger,
To the shepherd with his hand full
Of blood and grain. The calves weep

For milk and ghost. The trees refuse
To bow their heads for the horses
Carrying the president’s mistress
And coin. In the war fields, we confuse
The bruise of war with the bruise of peace.  
To the geese cowed and cauled in sky,  
Winter does not matter at all,  
They go south, west, north; sleep east.

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**About the author**

Roger Reeves is the author of *King Me*, *Best Barbarian*, winner of the Griffin International Prize and the Kingsley Tufts Award, and *Dark Days: Fugitive Essays*, his first nonfiction book. He is a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship, a Radcliffe Fellowship from Harvard University, and a 2015 Whiting Award. *Best Barbarian* was also a finalist in poetry for the 2022 National Book Award. His poems and essays have appeared in *The New Yorker*, the *Paris Review*, *Granta*, the *New York Times*, *Yale Review*, and elsewhere. He lives and teaches in Austin, Texas.