**Earthquake Country**

John Johnson

They’d meet behind the shooting range, well hidden

under eucalypts, shed their uniforms. One impulse rendered another.

"If the Marine Corps wanted you to have a wife

they would have issued one." Deer paths divvied up

the chaparral, its mutable canyons.

That notwithstanding, when orders came

they failed the false belief test, refused to read each other’s mind.

Isn’t it just like devil dogs to forsake paradise

for redshanks and greasewood, yellow dust of swallowtail, sulfur,

three-note trill and downslur of a song sparrow.

**Sky Island Journal, Issue 1: Summer 2017**