**An Arrow’s Nock**

Kim Haines-Eitzen

1.

It’s such a small thing, really, just a wooden notch, carved by someone dreaming of flesh and

blood, sinew and bone. In ancient Greece they called this slit, or those holding the feathers

flared near the base of an arrow, the *gluphis*. Try saying that aloud, it isn’t an elegant word.

But uttered over millennia, it becomes *cleave*, a *cleaving*: a searing split, a tremulous embrace.

2.

A warm night’s windthrow and the black cherry calves in the forest like an iceberg—the cleft

trunk cracks, falls heavy onto leaves fecund with rain and rot. With time, leaflitter and gravity

suck at the bark, swallow the marrow the way beetles swarm roadkill in the desert until all that’s

left is a faint whiff, the air’s memory of war and spoils.

3.

It’s November, and a man sits in his blind at the field’s edge, tucked into brambles and hung-low

maple branches. Bow in his lap, he waits. Moses struck the rock and water poured out, he hid in

a clefted stone and the divine hand passed over him. I see the arrow pierce the fog, grass quiver,

the buck stumble, chest alive and trembling as he slips toward dusk.