

JOSHUA KRYAH

THE LEAST CHILD

Dogs knew him.

Straggler, his clubfoot

always strayed behind, it thrashed as he ran, it writhed.

This is what we came to believe failure to be: a boy, his affliction, what, from the usual shape of things broke free.

His brother shouting above the rest of us,

run, you cripple, run!

~

Such untowardness.

A body made to plead,

repeatedly, for what it had nothing to do. No remedy,

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no explanation. A body in the act of becoming—what? Wastrel, more misshapen, to us a world unbearable even to itself.

And the dogs, how they waited.

*We will take whatever we are given, we will be still.*

~

Then someone calling us back.

Through side streets

and alleys, through backyards and lots. All the while

our embarrassment at what he was, what he carried, always, with him. His struggle, his relentless, his still following after.

The least child.

We held it toward him.