

as the shoring of his mangled rows.
He'd mow off the road banks for
miles to work off anger,
and scythe the cemetery, churchyard,
and the big pokeweeds below the hogpen.

Urn / Robert Morgan

Back in the flatwoods miles from any
road or clearing I came on this little
branch running black in the level without
a bed, just swelling rubato behind leafdams
and dropping over sticks through the woods.
And beside it a rusting chamber,
bottom loose as the lid of an old hat,
tipped over half-full of duff and moss. Who
would have brought this far from any
habitation a pisspot and left it to crack
and shed its enamel in the humanless
traffic of weather? The only action near was
the trickle-run. Had someone carried it
along to boil stolen corn, or as a pail
for ginseng root? Or might it be
the only relic of a homestead; no
cellarhole or lilacs, forest-smothered apples,
just this ruined convenience they used
cold nights and sloshed to empty
in the weeds, left salting with its rust
the ground they've already fertilized with waste
and sweat and maybe flesh. Through its
clairvoyance I look into the potted absence
at reefs of decay and soil sharks circling
in currents. This scrubbed
bucket orphaned to the open.