

## Boy

We knew this other boy in town who was brother to nobody—an only child with only a mother and a father and no brother to call his own. So we took him in as brother. We did not call him brother though. We called him Boy. Boy was littler than us brothers. Boy was born years—no, centuries—after we were born. We were down by the river with our fishing man father the day that this other brother was born into this world. This boy, this brother, we were told, was born with teeth and a full head of hair. What he was not born with, we discovered, was a tongue. This boy's mouth was a hole in his face he fed food into. Once in a while, we might hear some mouthy sounds come grunting out. But for the most part, Boy was silent. Some of the time we did not even know he was near, standing close by, his feet—flopping inside his father's boots—buried knee deep in the river, into the river's mud. At times, Boy was more dog than he was a boy. Boy was a dog who always came whenever we called, to do whatever was told. Us brothers taught Boy more than a few tricks. We taught Boy how to walk on water. It's true Boy drowned the first time he walked out. Boy floated face-down the river. But then he walked upriver back. Back to us brothers. Good dog, we told Boy. We scratched Boy's back. We pulled a bone out from Boy's hand and tossed it to the river. Boy, we told him. Go fish. Boy took to the water like he was part dog, part fish. Then Boy swam back to the river's muddied bank and flopped down on the shore. Like a fish. This boy here is a keeper, Brother said. If you say so, I said to Brother. And then we chopped off this boy's head.