

WILLIAM WOOLFITT

Body Servant

The boy thinks the soldier is kind: he offers
two crab apples the size of a man's thumbs.
For you he says in Cherokee; when the boy
comes close, he crouches, asks the boy

to trim his blond muttonchops with scissors.
Each morning after that, before the soldier
leaves the stockade and goes out to collect,
the boy meets him at his quarters, the boy

trims, combs, and oils him, stands on a stool
and brushes the soldier's clothes. The soldier
gives him buttons, tobacco, a misshapen peach.
Once, the soldier hands him soap, a cup of water,

a knife, teaches him to make lather,
leans his head back, exposing his bristly neck.
The boy saves salt pork fat, begs his mother
for a small rag, asks the soldier if he may

polish his boots. Stooping down to rub
soiled leather, the boy sees flakes of rust,
dark wisps, knots of human hair.



ABOUT WILLIAM WOOLFITT

William Woolfitt is the author of *Beauty Strip* (Texas Review Press 2014) and *Charles of the Desert* (forthcoming from Paraclete Press) and the curator of *Speaking of Marvels*, a blog that features interviews with authors of chapbooks and novellas (chapbookinterviews.wordpress.com). His poems have appeared in *Notre Dame Review*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *West Branch*, and *Colorado Review*. He received a PhD from the Pennsylvania State University and is an assistant professor of English at Lee University. He lives in Cleveland, Tennessee, and can be found online at williamwoolfitt.wordpress.com.

HERON TREE

7 June 2015

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