

TAYLOR COLLIER

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## Mutilations: Custer

I.

They weren't the ones who named him  
*Son of the Morning Star*,  
yet upon discovering his body,

their grieving left him untouched,  
passed over his skull, the chance  
to carve shallow gashes

in his pink, limp flesh.  
They knew he needed  
a reminder for the afterlife,

so they plunged awls in his ears,  
hollowed them out,  
so he might better hear his name.

2.

The gated monument,  
Last Stand Hill, buried  
in that ocean of Montana

grass, little white  
headstones dotting its calm, marking  
spots where the mutilated

were discovered. The headstones  
massed around his narrow,  
blistering chaos:

they cannot echo the simple  
sounds of last-minute suicides—  
that cowardly hill where brutes

became martyrs, men became  
boys, and boys returned  
to the earth with flint-tipped shafts  
barbed in their lungs.

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**TAYLOR COLLIER** currently lives in Tallahassee, FL. Poems have appeared or are forthcoming in places such as *Diagram*, *The Laurel Review*, *The Normal School*, *Southern Indiana Review*, *Whiskey Island*, and *Zone 3*.