Another Antipastoral

By Vievee Francis

I want to put down what the mountain has awakened.

My mouthful of grass.
My curious tale. I want to stand still but find myself moved patch by patch.
There’s a bleat in my throat. Words fail me here. Can you understand? I sink to
my knees tired or not. I now know the ragweed from the goldenrod, and the blinding
beauty of green. Don’t you see? I am shedding my skins. I am a paper hive, a wolf spider,
the creeping ivy, the ache of a birch, a heifer, a doe. I have fallen from my dream
of progress: the clear-cut glass, the potted and balconied tree, the lemon-waxed
wood over a marbled pillar, into my own nocturne. The lullabies I had forgotten.
How could I know what slept inside? What would rend my fantasies to cud and up
from this belly’s wet straw-strewn field—

these soundings.

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