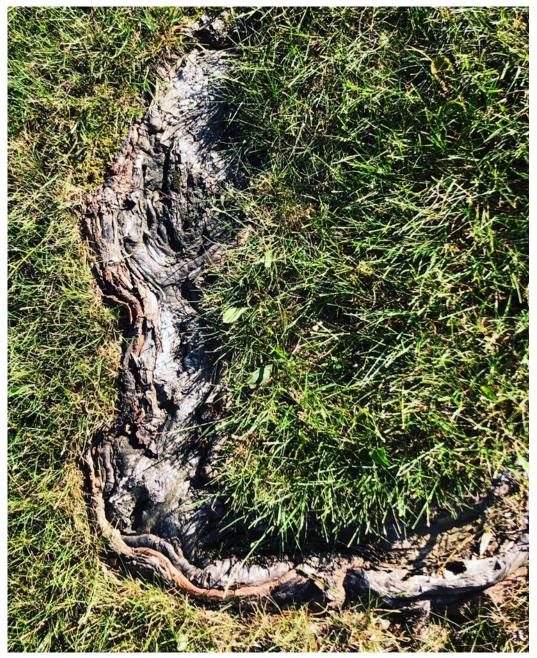
## New Poetry from Sheila Bonenberger: "They Gave Their Lives"



UNDERGROUND FORGETTING / image by Amalie Flynn
The brass buttons are piled in a bowl
that sits on the shop counter
beside the cash register,
so I buy one,
watch as the clerk drops it

into a paper bag, gently
folding the open end over
so the button doesn't fall out.

Such are the tender considerations we resort to when it comes to Union buttons mined from Marye's Heights, the field blood transformed into a massive trauma center, and those many soldiers, hastily tipped into graves scratched higgeldy-piggeldy in the earth and quickly left, without markers, abandoned to the underground, earth's crowded room, to work its magic on the soldiers and their uniforms under the same gibbous moon shining down on life going on, so that one day a treasure hunter turns the detector's sensitivity to high, reaching well past unreadable trash, finally capturing a deeper signal to shovel through grass, past stones and worms, into dreams of wealth or glory, pulling up a solitary, now verdegris button bent slightly as the soldier fell hard perhaps against a rock that would sleep unchanged beside him until the treasure hunter conspired to craft a stranglehold on history proclaiming that this discovery announced an end of sorts to the story of a fallen soldier, one that can be labeled,

one you can put a price on, but the truth is that buttons cannot be counted on to hold a jacket snug, can even loose their hold on the fabric of dignity, on the fable of victory, if what they hold has been released to flourish underground forgetting that perfection is elusive and we are not perfect though we hurl ourselves at it again and again.