

Three by *John Bradley*

How We Learned to Live With Mourning Doves

After a first line by Aimee Bender

Steven returned from the war without lips. We would hear this whistling, cooing, unguent sound whenever he tried to speak. It must have been all those mourning doves nesting in his pockets. After a few years, we figured out what he was trying to tell us. We thought it a rather odd statement, given all that he must have been through, all he could have uttered, yet this is what he told us, over and over: “Steven returned from the war without lips.”