

Windermere

In the deluge of my beliefs, I drove out to Windermere.

Me and the lake of my body.

The road outstretched like a Dachshund.
I counted seventy-four trees before I nearly
swerved into another car.

Or it was the car that nearly entered me,
spouting white smoke from its exhaust pipes.

†

I was seven when I learned about death.
Dogs die, lovers die, my mother would eventually
die. Though she consoled me, saying that death
was simply the body returning home to the sky.

Fingers on a cross, I vowed that she would never die,
knocked on doors hoping God could be a neighbour.

Behind each door, what the future saw.

I would walk an eternal permission.

†

At the lake, I discovered I was horrible at skipping stones.
The water in the way of my throw.

There were leaves leaning over to cradle me,
or what I could become.

Despite memory.
I was trying to be a person.

The wind, halfway through me,
bent to tunnel the stone into the lake.

I stood among the vast audience of ripples,
wrenching this image from my mind.

The couple on a boat with their drenched laughter.
Tufted ducks swimming towards them.

Split open by the many tongues of grass, I touched
my legs like a stranger.

†

Nights when I couldn't sleep, even with Forrest beside me, I would watch documentaries on salmon migration. Their bellies, jumpstarted by nature, leaping over jagged rocks for miles. Imprinted to the smell of the river that raised them. It's an oversight then, to desire a kerosene dream, or to disappear into one's growth and return the same man. I believed Forrest when he said he would never leave. Phone flickering like a buoyant lighthouse. Freshwater replaced by ten thousand gravel-sized eggs. How they survive on. How they return.

†

I haven't called my mother in months.

†

The blue absorbed the sky. I was small
enough to belong to weather.

I could picture the sheep jumping over fences
into my throat. Dribbled down like a loosened cold.

O, I wanted to return to the sky!

I flung my fingers to the wind.

†

Windermere. Hill cradle. Lantern stitched. A psalm of pebbles scattering.
The surface. Is a murmur, a script. I could evaporate. I was a paused wave.
Widening beyond my depth. How temporary. It was autumn and I couldn't
stomach the leaves. I was disturbed. I disturbed the water.

†

I dreamed, and it was my life.

Locks of rain falling from the sky.
No, my mother's hair

made its way back to me.
Not me, but the solitary field around.

If Forrest reached down to me then,
I must have missed him.

I was sinking the lake with rocks. With wild imprecision.

There were still trees to count.