



1987

Sheep Lake

James Papworth

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SHEEP LAKE

At dawn
sucked into the basin
of Sheep Lake
frost releases its hazy hold.
Naked grass bends.
A crow barks its one command.
Goat tracks spray the dirt
with their nonsense,
amble off in pairs
through worn mud.
Nightsounds disappear
over the ridge
fingering poke grass
and rock.
Halfway across the lake
a cutthroat takes a fly.

James Papworth

THE MOLTING SEASON

I take my lizard skin in mouth,
that which was moist,
now transparent and dry.
It once enclosed my being—
held me together.
But it does no longer.
I do not shed it to discard it.
Rather, I retire to a solitude.
Here, under stone,
I eat my veins and scales,
making internal the external.
Listen softly—
behind the hum of cicadas
you can hear the epidermis tear
and my newborn-self scream.

Laura Hamblin