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## Pool of Aspen: After Forty Years

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## Pool of Aspen

### After Forty Years

*"Camp where you can hear water."*

*—my father*

The grove in the lake now  
shimmers like hammered gold.  
Farther on, the lake skin darkens, tightened by shadow  
and slate blue light before dusk,  
as though the water striders stitch its surface  
taut enough to be walked upon.

My father claimed he could walk on water as a child  
in hip boots worn by my grandfather  
when he died from a seizure, falling face down  
in a ditch before my father turned three.  
I try to believe now  
in buoyancy—that yearning . . .

which connects to the farm, just sold,  
and to the field pond, gone before I was born.  
That it might someday come back  
was my father's dream and my own:  
his out of memory and drought, mine  
out of romance with bodies of water

like this high unnamed lake where my brothers  
once brought me, where their pebbles turned  
the silt of the south end smoky,  
but the north side over rock stayed clear  
through any weather I've seen.  
We might have spoken names  
like *Slate Water*, *Smoke Cove* . . . .  
Now it's *Gold Lake* below aspen,

and I imagine waking in the dark  
to a pale glow of white trunks,  
autumn leaf-tremble discernible

to night vision, where the outlet  
offers its faint pouring  
over all we name thirst.

—Dixie L. Partridge