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A Different Wakeful Animal

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About the Author

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Quiver

My body,...
it is not the earth I will miss,
it is you I will miss. – Louise Glück

I say good riddance to my body,
its conspiracy of veins
and bowels and vertebrae.
I can trust a deer to pick its way
through trees, a daffodil
to bully its way through frost. Once,
I saw the silhouette of a baby seal
held inside the translucence of a wave,
like a portrait in a locket. How quartz
threads through rock, and a heron
threads through air then lands
and stills to a piece of quartz.
The way even weeds flower. Just now
the dullest brown bird appeared,
clumsy at our feeder, and picked
at soggy seed. I watched the quiver
of its tail while it fed its hunger.
Need I say bodies must be fed?
I say the earth is the body I will miss.
Even if I could only touch it dis-
embodied, send a shiver
down the outstretched limb
of a single eucalyptus.
Even if I could touch down only
in the linear brittle body
of a dragonfly, one evening,
some rank bog, skim
the skin and flit.

Tips on How to Become a Fossil

Tuck your tusks under a pillow of dirt.

Buzz into the conifers and let resin pin your wings.

Trudge across a lakebed, each foot a stylus scrawling.

Crawl beneath a coverlet of clay

and fire the soil with the last of your heat.

Bristle, every hair an impression.

Harder—textured in stone—you, too,

may become a vestige and outlast civilizations.

Shifting with continents. Trusting to earth.

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California Quarterly: "Credo," "Frangokastello," "Under Two Moons"

Canary: "If You're Reading This, You Might Be a Baboon"

Connotation Press: "To the Brooches My Mother Wore," "To My Fingerprints"

Greensboro Review: "Why Whales Are Poems"

Harpur Palate: "Reportorial" (2013 Milton Kessler Memorial Poetry Prize)

Hunger Mountain: "Starlings"

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Los Angeles Review: "Night's Mouth"

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