Winter 2009

A Lesser Domesday Book

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MICHAEL PETERSON

A Lesser Domesday Book

"... and there was no single hide nor virgate of land left out and not put down to record."
• 1085 of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

When the scribe bored the answer became a seam,
   an account not of a field but the riddle of a farmer gone forward
to go between two shores over and over, his sheep a wolf a cabbage
   without motion on gothic land turning over, sent recto on waves
on vellum swinging over, the farmer brought his sheep at the time
   the account swung over seen by a wolf who watched the boat go
to the verso shore, the wolf beside the greens knocked over and
   accounts stayed, the gothic hand held over until county by county
redeemed in full by beast or spade, the farmer his sheep across
   the wolf the cabbage, swinging their heads to seam to see the
ferry swing back, the farmer’s backward motion across the motion
   of lands transferring over eyes toward shore, below the census
turning up who’s left and what a soul might do, a holy order
   turned over in the hand, a kind of handmade hell that rule.