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Glacial Lake Missoula

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GLACIAL LAKE MISSOULA

Jasper Vanspoore

I'm daydreaming about a 12,000-year-old lake
and about a 16,000-year-old fire-herath
found last summer
just on the other side of the Bitterroot Mountains,
a place not so far away. I wonder then
if anybody was *here*,
to watch the floods
the moment the ice dam cracked and
I wonder if it looked like a cleansing.

I'm on a hillside, looking south
across the city in a grey November.
The green haze of industry
clinging to the edges of the valley,
silt in the bathtub after draining,
I'm wondering what it all looked like underwater,
wondering if this hill was an island.
This

is what I'm doing
hours before my best friend
tells me she needs
to be away from me.
Eyes rimmed red from tears
she leans against the sink.
Rice steams on the stove
do you even know what sadness is?
she asks and I wonder if to tell her
that sometimes I dream
of a glacial lake
to flood us all.

I'm on a hillside, looking west
and at my feet, a granite plaque
marking an ancient shoreline.
I place my palm against the Ponderosa,
to twirl myself in and bury my face into thick
rivulets of vanilla bark, cracking small twigs in my palm
to remember the ancient comfort of fire.
I bend my neck to the sky,

lusting for water.