Glacial Lake Missoula

Jasper Vanspoore

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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-hearth 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.

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