

Winter 1992

Stehekin Light

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Steheken Light

As if skimming bare-skinned on this fifty
mile glacial trough filled with liquid
ice, the girls in wet suits fly by, waving—

tied to their speedboats, they dig
their heels in and ride in circles
around our tourist barge. Just lean

back, lock your knees! their bodies grin.
The lake feeds on delft-blue
springs which seep from rockbed cracks.

Trout sleep in the silt. The common
loon moves through easy currents. Along
the shore, flame-colored moths falter,

fall open-winged, plaster themselves
on shallow pools. The yellow jackets
move in. Swing down, pick up the moths

and carry them, dangling, all the way
to mud nests clenched like hidden fists
in the scrub, high on the talus slopes

that hold this lake in place. The girls
turn graceful flips on the waves, spinning
spiral somersaults, falling, rising,

walking on the lake. The water
is as black as crankcase oil. The sun
pours ropes of molten brass around

the girls as it sinks low, tangles
their feet in silver cords, copper wires,
and braided strands of spun glass light,

tightening the knot as it goes down.