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Like Leonardo, Like a Dog

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Sandra Alcosser

Like Leonardo, Like a Dog

I'll sit by the ditch this morning like Leonardo da Vinci
and celebrate water come to nurse the thirsty rubble.
I have neither the painter's eye, nor the patience

of an engineer, but I'll sit on these ten acres
one erratic at a time, not to own them, but to know
the game trails where timothy's broken

by cloven feet, the stumps dismantled by bear,
the riparian zone where aspen huddle near river birch
that cover the rumbling thumping grouse.

I'll follow the counsel of hawk and crow,
of grain-grinding grasshopper, repetition's pleasure,
inadequate personality, the steady wisdom

of flow and flow again. I'll drink a bowl of coffee
among the secretive rocks, soak away the meanness
of a year's duplicity. No one can reach me here—no human voice.

Do other animals tire of their own kind?
Sometimes even singing wears me out.
I'll wash my long legs and crooked toes in frozen water

let it rivulet down hairy flesh. Oh the power of the body
to refresh, to lie down at night and wake again
among the harebell and bees, the ten kinds of clover,

the lichen-speckled boulders. Wading upstream
on hands and knees, I'll bite the icy percussion
like a dog. Once, before we become pets

each animal has sharper features, our complex
behaviors are more complex, and those of us least
afraid of being eaten—sleep best.