

Caribou carcass

I am a child when I meet him in the riverside necropolis: the elk man, rising above the salmon husks—the last bits of red flesh flowering from his spine like moss, maggots blooming in the bone webs of his horns. It is a hot day and there is a sound like the beat of a skin drum—like the pulse of blood in your wrist, pulling as the water does, asking me to lie beside him in the river rock, to be humbled and picked clean but for the last vestiges of decay, but for the rot grown into the very rooted parts of the body—until my father calls me away. It echoes still: an instinctual urge trickling slick down my back, a wanting—to be left dazed and simmering beneath the sky.