Angela Sucich

Every Flower Into Memory

Hike to Saddle Rock, the trail abuzz with tumble mustards, swarms of yellow flowers, camouflage for pollinators. Hop over a lone bee, buff and woolly, orange-belted, inching her way into the glorious zone of sound. On this arid slope, spring unfolds like summer elsewhere, color pulled from thirsting ground. Alfalfa vibrates in violet clusters. Cheatgrass feathers red against gray sagebrush. Dry arrowleafs clatter in wind. Up ahead, the hill domes in rhyolite, rocky outcrops look down onto Wenatchee, rural city, human infancy beside aged volcanic ash. Once, magma fingers lifted through sandstone in explosive eruption, petrifying pinnacles. Reach them and run a hand along sharp, ancient crystals. Name and remember the stewards of this place, the tribe whose hands touched first, whose eyes saw bears in the stone: The Wenatchi, still here, and also gone. Recall how bumblebee workers live but four weeks' time. Consider one's own lifespan, a generation's, a culture's, beside the comparable immortality of fossilized land. Back down the steep trail, feet sliding on sand-glazed hardpack, break into a run—slippage an occasion for speed, the mind still humming on bee and basin. Imagine living one's work as naturally as breathing. Finding one's way from nest to bloom, guided by the compass and timepiece of the sun. And to sleep, never worrying about how much life it takes up. An antenna flailing in the first throes of slumber. Then undisturbed, deep rest, the kind that settles the location of every flower into memory. A way of knowing that wrecks nothing, wants nothing but to spend its measureless existence working the tumble mustards, sleeping the sleep of bees.