

Well Then There Now

Juliana Spahr

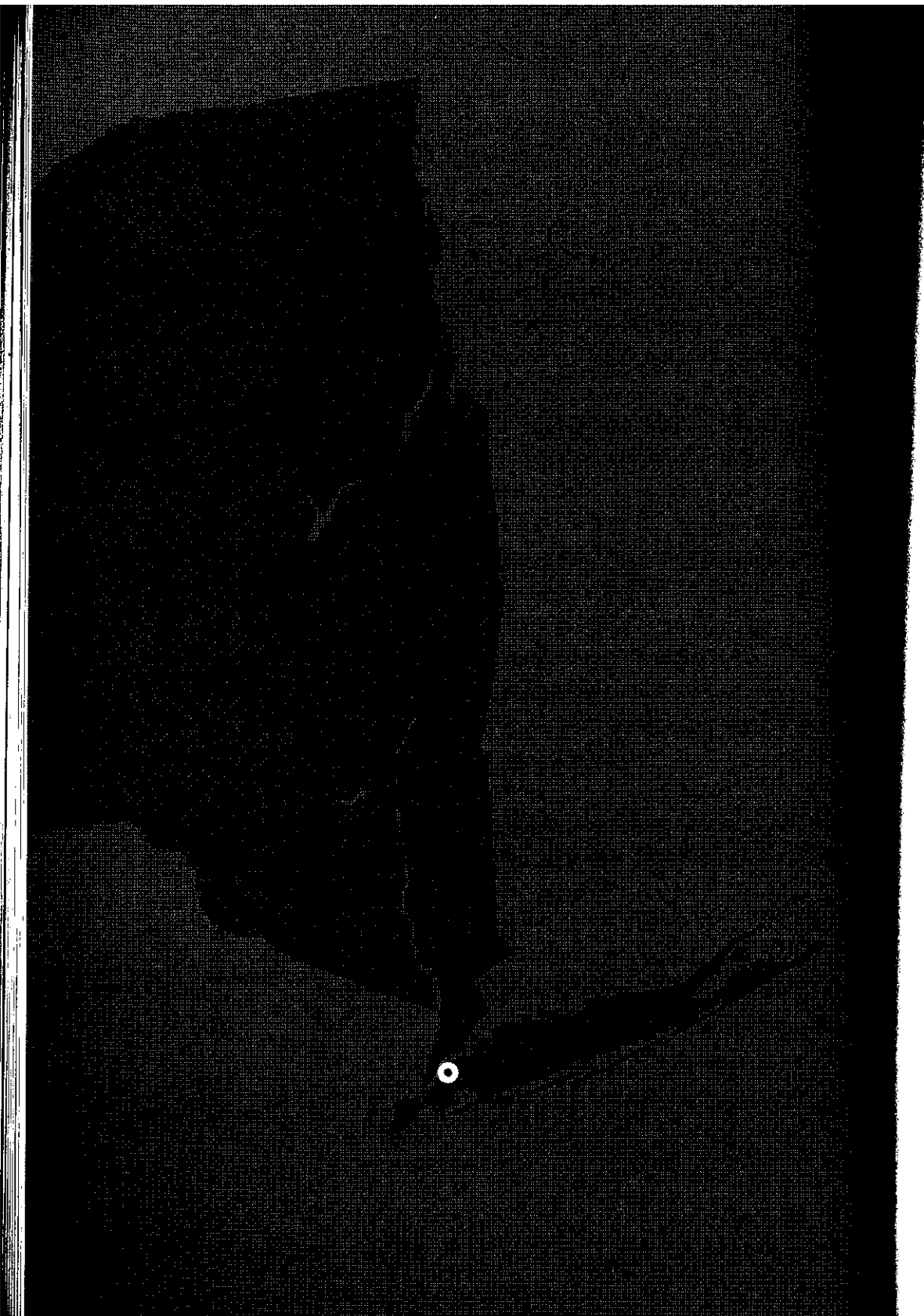


A Black Sparrow Book

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N 40° 41' 5" W 73° 58' 8"

Unnamed Dragonfly Species

The city of Rotterdam sent over daffodils. **A Noctuid Moth** The daffodils bloomed in the first weeks of April. **Allegheny Woodrat** They were everywhere. **American Bittern** They were yellow. **American Burying Beetle** It was April and then the temperature was 90 degrees and all the daffodils died immediately. **Arogos Skipper** All at the same time. **Atlantic Hawksbill Sea Turtle** This happened right where they were living. **Atlantic Ridley Sea Turtle** It was early April. **Bald Eagle**

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In November of the previous year a big piece of the Antarctic Pine Island glacier broke off. **Banded Sunfish** A crack had formed in the glacier in the middle of the previous year. **Barrens Buckmoth** And then by November the piece had just broken off. **Bicknell's Thrush** It had just taken a few months from crack to breaking point. **Black Rail** The iceberg that was formed was twenty-six miles by ten miles. **Black Redhorse** Then in the following March, the March of the same year of the 90 degree early April, the Larsen B ice shelf shattered and separated from the Antarctic Peninsula. **Black Skimmer** All of this happened far away from them. **Black Tern** They had never even been near Antarctica. **Blanding's Turtle**

They heard about all this cracking and breaking away on the news and then they began to search over the internet for information on what was going on. **Blue Whale** On the internet they found an animation of the piece of the Antarctic Pine Island glacier breaking off. **Bluebreast Darter** After they found this, they often called this animation up and just watched it over and over on their screen in their dimly lit room. **Blue-spotted Salamander** In the animation, which was really just a series of six or so satellite photographs, a crack would appear in the middle of the glacier. **Bog Buckmoth** Then a few frames later the crack would widen and extend itself toward the edges and then the piece would break off. **Bog Turtle** They wondered often about the details. **Brook Floater Buffalo Pebble Snail** What does this breaking off sound like? **Canada Lynx** Or what it was like to be there on the piece that was breaking off. **Cerulean Warbler** Did waves form? **Checkered White** Was there a tsunami? **Chittenango Ovale Amber Snail** What had it been like for the penguins or the fish? **Clubshell**

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On the internet they realized that Iceland's Vatnajokull glacier is melting by about three feet a year. **Common Loon** That the Bering Glacier in Alaska recently lost as much as seven and a half miles in a sixty day period. **Common Nighthawk** That the European Alps lost half their ice over the last century and that many of the rivers of Europe were likely to be gone in twenty to thirty years time. **Common Sanddragon** That the Columbia Glacier in Alaska will continue to recede, possibly at a rate of as much as ten miles in ten years. **Common Tern** That thirty-six cubic miles of ice had melted from glaciers in West Antarctica in the past decade and that alone had raised sea levels worldwide by about one-sixtieth of an inch. **Cooper's Hawk** That on Mt. Rainier warmer temperatures were causing the ice to melt under the glacier and this caused water to suddenly burst out of the glacier and race down the mountain. **Cougar** That tropical ice caps were disappearing even faster. **Deepwater Sculpin** That a glacier on the Quelccaya ice cap is retreating by five hundred feet per year. **Dwarf Wedgemussel** That Kilimanjaro in East Africa has lost eighty-two percent of its area in eighty-eight years. **Eastern Box Turtle** That Pakistan was thinking about melting their glacier so they could get some more water for their people although this was not recommended by the United

Nations and might not actually happen. **Eastern Hognose Snake** They learned that all this melting began to accelerate in 1988.

Eastern Sand Darter That the rate of ice lost had doubled since 1988. **Eastern Spadefoot Toad** That 1988 was a sort of turning point year as it was the beginning of each year being the hottest year on record year after year. **Eastern Spiny Softshell**

They had been alive in 1988. **Eskimo Curlew** They could not even remember thinking at all about the weather that year. **Extra Striped Snaketail** When they really thought about it, they had no memory of any year being any hotter than any other year in general. **Fat Pocketbook** They remembered a few hot summers and a few mild winters but they were more likely to remember certain specific storms like the blizzard of 1976. **Fence Lizard** They did not remember heat as glaciers remember heat, deep in the center, causing cracking or erupting. **Finback Whale** They had spent 1988 living in various parts of the country. **Fringed Valvata** None of them knew each other in 1988. **Frosted Elfin** Some of them were involved with other people. **Gilt Darter** Some of them thought about finishing college and getting jobs. **Golden Eagle** Yet some just thought about hitting baseballs. **Golden-winged Warbler** At various moments they joined each other and many others in thinking about Pan Am flight 103 that had exploded over Lockerbie, Scotland. **Grasshopper Sparrow** And then again they all noticed on the same day when the U.S. shot down Iran Air Flight 655, supposedly by accident, in the Persian Gulf. **Gravel Chub** And several of them did not go to the beach in 1988 because the beach near them was in New Jersey and that year beaches in New Jersey were closed because of medical

waste coming ashore. **Gray Petaltail** Some of them were trying to rid themselves of drunk boyfriends and thought so much about this that there was little room for thinking about other things like the warmth or beaches. **Gray Wolf** And some of them were living for part of that year right at the edge of where the Wisconsin glacier had ended thousands of years ago and the town in which they lived had a flat part and a hilly part as a result but even though the geography of their daily life was so clearly formed by a glacier they didn't really think about the warm year and things melting. **Green Floater** Some of them worked at an anarchist bookstore. **Green Sea Turtle** Some of them had tans that summer that they got from walking around outside because they needed to be outside walking around in order to think about how best to be somewhat content in this life right now. **Grizzled Skipper** Some of them drove cabs. **Harbor Porpoise** None of them really fell in love but some of them had lovers. **Hart's-Tongue Fern**

After the piece of the Antarctic Pine Island glacier broke off, they could not stop thinking about glaciers and the way they thought about glaciers the most was by reading about them on the internet late at night, their eyes blurring and their shoulders tight. **Hellbender** There they sometimes found arguments from the side that the oil drillers celebrated, the side that said the melting did not matter. **Henry's Elfin** Sometimes, if it was really late at night and if they had written on a small notepad beside their computer an especially long list of things that were melting as they tended to do, they would read this argument liked by oil drillers and try to be reassured by the information that if the Antarctic Pine Island glacier melted away it didn't matter much because it would only raise sea levels by a quarter of an inch. **Henslow's Sparrow** A quarter of an inch they would think. **Herodias Underwing** A quarter of an inch does not matter. **Hessel's Hairstreak** Then questions would surface through this blurry comfort of small amounts of rising ocean. **Horned Lark** Would the Antarctic Pine Island glacier melt just on its own, they would wonder? **Houghton's Goldenrod** Wouldn't the Vatnajokull also be melting at the same time? **Humpback Whale** And the alps and the tropical ice caps and the poles? **Indiana Bat** And then they read that while a quarter of an inch does not seem

like much, a rise of one foot of ocean level typically means that shorelines end up one hundred feet or more inland. **Ironcolor Shiner** A sea rise of just three feet in Bangladesh would put one half of that nation underwater, displacing more than one hundred million people. **Jair Underwing** Already on the nine islands of Tuvalu farmers must grow their plants in containers because the rising sea level has seeped into the ground water. **Jefferson Salamander** The four nations of Tuvalu, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, and Tokelau Islands, each made up of many islands, will most certainly be entirely displaced in the next thirty years. **Karner Blue**

They themselves tended to live on islands and thinking about what this meant had provoked them to think so much about this rising ocean level and then to feel that the breaking off of the Antarctic Pine Island glacier was all about them, or not all about them but as having a scary relevance to their lives. **King Rail** They often lived on an island in the Pacific and they often lived on an island in the Atlantic. **Lake Chubsucker** They thought of these two residences of theirs as opposites although both were places of great economic privilege and resources, places that themselves consumed large amounts of resources and consumed more and more resources all the time. **Lake Sturgeon** One preferred to think of itself as local and often as in resistance to the United States and one preferred to think of itself as international and often as the center of finance and culture for the United States. **Least Bittern** One had a smallish city and one had one of the largest cities in the world. **Least Tern** One was six hundred square miles and one was twenty-six square miles. **Leatherback Sea Turtle** Both were likely to feel the effects of the rising ocean although many of the residents of both were pretending that what was happening to the nations of Tuvalu, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, and Tokelau Islands did not really foretell anything relevant to them at all. **Leedy's Roseroot** Often late at night to allay their worries, they tried to see climate change as just

one more tendency of life towards change. **Little Bluet** They tried to look forward to the new fjord that would be created by the receding Columbia glacier in Alaska. **Loggerhead Sea Turtle** They were fascinated by fjords and there will soon be a new one to visit in ten years they would say to themselves. **Loggerhead Shrike** Perhaps even new plants would evolve there. **Longear Sunfish** Or they tried to be comforted about how they grew up in a town that was located right at the edge of where the Wisconsin glacier had ended its journey. **Longhead Darter** And because it had ended there the soil in this area was especially rich as the glacier pushed topsoil before it as it moved, then dumped it right where the town was now. **Longtail Salamander** For years they had eaten off the wealth of the glacier as their family had lived in the hilly section of town and had grown a vegetable garden in the backyard in the rich topsoil. **Marbled Salamander** Or they liked to think about the scientist who claimed that in terms of patterns of heating and cooling on the earth's surface, the earth should be entering a new ice age. **Massasauga** It is long overdue he claimed. **Mooneye** Yet, according to him, this ice age has been perhaps counteracted by human climatic interference. **Mossy Valvata** So maybe we were better off, maybe better fire than ice although who knew what gods or demons were being angered and what they would do with their anger. **Mottled Duskywing**

They were not scientists and could not figure out what to blame or what the long term consequences might be and even if they were scientists they might not be able to figure this out. **Mountain Brook Lamprey** They made no claim to answers they just noticed things. **Mud Sunfish** And the more they read the more confused they became. **Mud Turtle** And at this moment in their lives there was more to read than ever before and it was easier than ever before to acquire as it came through their computers and all the time the computers had newer and better search engines making more and more specific information easier to find. **New England Cottontail** They knew there were certain enemies in this story, such as Bush with his refusal to sign the Kyoto Accord, and certain industries. **Northeastern Beach Tiger Beetle** But they also knew that the Kyoto Accord was too little too late. **Northern Cricket Frog** They also knew that they didn't want to let excessive information paralyze them. **Northern Goshawk** Or excessive guilt. **Northern Harrier** They felt they had to say that they knew that they were in part responsible for it, whatever it was that was causing this, because they lived in the place that used the largest amount of the stuff most likely to cause this warming. **Northern Wild Monk's-hood** They lived among those who used the most stuff up, who burned the most stuff, who

produced the most stuff, and other things like that. **Olympia Marble** And even if they tried to live their lives with less stuff than others, they still benefited and were a part of the system that produced all this stuff and because of this they had a hard time figuring out how to move beyond their own personal renewed commitment to denial of stuff and yet their awareness of how they benefited daily from being a part of the system that used up the most stuff. **Osprey**

So glaciers were not near them but they obsessed them. **Peregrine Falcon** They wondered if it was because of a story a friend had once told them. **Persius Duskywing** She had gone hiking with her uncle and her sister. **Pied-billed Grebe** They had hiked up to a glacier. **Pine Barrens Bluet** On the way there she got tired and her uncle had picked her up and put her on his shoulder. **Pine Pinion Moth** She was tall when they arrived at the glacier. **Pink Mocket** They arrived at the glacier and she could see it and it had a special light she said. **Piping Plover** It had a special light and this special light and its coldness had been so intense to her. **Pugnose Shiner Pygmy Snaketail** The sun in her eyes. **Queen Snake** The special light. **Rayed Bean** The coldness. **Redfin Shiner** All of it had comforted her. **Red-headed Woodpecker** And when she told this story she had started to cry and they had not understood why she had begun to cry in her telling of a story of comfort. **Red-shouldered Hawk** She had told them her story before they began to stay up late at night encountering glaciers on their computer screen, before they watched over and over the animation of the Antarctic Pine Island glacier breaking off. **Regal Fritillary** Before they began to enter the word "glacier" into Google over and over. **Right Whale** Before they thought about their relationship with things big and cold and full

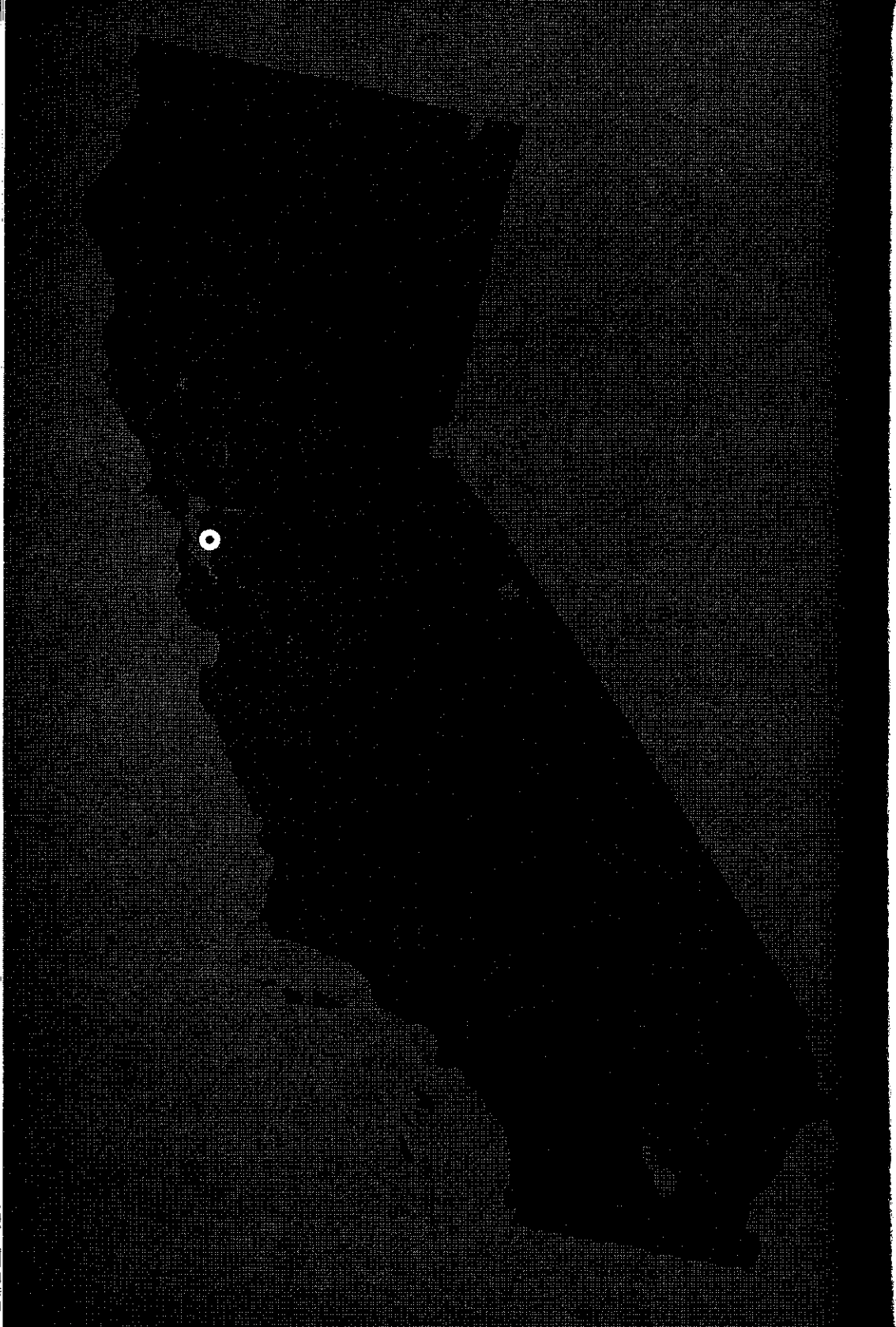
of fresh water. **Roseate Tern** Now they found her story intense and moving and often dwelled on it while looking at the animation of the Antarctic Pine Island glacier breaking off. **Round Whitefish** They envied her for touching a glacier, something that mattered so much in everyone's lives even though so few people had had actual contact with it. **Sandplain Gerardia** She knew this thing that was about their life, about everyone's life, in a way they did not. **Scarlet Bluet**

Sometimes they thought that glaciers interested them because glaciers are like zombies: slow moving and full of stuff, full of stuff and can't be stopped. **Seabeach Amaranth** Like how in movies you can put a bunch of knives and bullets in a zombie and it keeps on moving. **Seaside Sparrow** That is how they thought of glaciers. **Sedge Wren Sei Whale** They move and no one can stop them whichever way they go. **Sharp-shinned Hawk** You can't pin them down and hold them in place. **Short-eared Owl** Nor can you deter them when they start moving. **Shortnose Sturgeon** And they have history. **Silver Chub** They have water in layers sort of like a tree's yearly cycles. **Small-footed Bat** As they melt, things embedded in them are uncovered. **Southern Leopard Frog** In one, a British warplane. **Southern Sprite** In others, various tools or buildings or humans from other times. **Sperm Whale** And glaciers have sixty-six percent of the world's fresh water. **Spoonhead Sculpin** That also interested them as many political struggles of the early part of the previous century involved fresh water and they also figured this was going to be true of the current century as fresh water was getting to be more and more necessary as more and more people lived on the earth and as they lived they polluted more and more of the fresh water and used up more and more of the fresh water stored

in various underground water tables and developed more and more sophisticated pumps. **Spotted Darter** Already, but a few years into this new century, there were water riots in various parts of the continent on which they lived. **Spotted Turtle** Water is a force and a resource. **Spruce Grouse** Glaciers are water. **Streamline Chub** And it was April and it was in the 90s. **Swamp Darter** How could they not think about things melting all the time? **Tawny Crescent**

They tried to balance out all their anxiety with loud attempts at celebrations of life. **Tiger Salamander** They tried to do this in often ineffectual ways. **Timber Rattlesnake** They might make out in public while standing in line at the grocery or just drink too much with friends and thus stay out late chatting happily in a dark smoky room where there was no evidence of any glacier or any rising ocean level or even any air really or maybe they would just go home and smoke some pot and lie on their bed watching shows about nature on the television with the sound off and think about how soft the bed can feel at such moments, how deep it could let them enter at such moments, or they might talk loudly and excitedly with friends about the latest blockbuster summer movie as if that really mattered to them and they could live with the changing landscape because they had things like movies and books and friends and drugs, things that were common in cities and when in the cities they liked to tell themselves that this was enough, that these things were good enough so that the melting didn't matter. **Tomah Mayfly** They were anxious and were covering things over. **Unnamed Dragonfly Species** They were anxious and they were paralyzed by the largeness and the connectedness of systems, a largeness of relation that they liked to think about and often

celebrated but now seemed unbearably tragic. **Upland Sandpiper** The connected relationship between water and land seemed deeply damaged, perhaps beyond repair in numerous places. **Vesper Sparrow** The systems of relation between living things of all sorts seemed to have become in recent centuries so hierarchically human that things not human were dying at an unprecedented rate. **Wavy-rayed Lampmussel** And the systems of human governments and corporations felt so large and unchangeable and so distant from them yet the effects of their actions felt so connected and so immediate to what was happening. **Whip-poor-will** They knew this but didn't know what else to do. **Wood Turtle** And so they just went on living while talking loudly. **Worm Snake** Living and watching on a screen things far away from them melting. **Yellow-breasted Chat**



N 37° 46' 57" W 122° 11' 8"

Gentle Now,
Don't Add to Heartache

one

We come into the world.

We come into the world and there it is.

The sun is there.

The brown of the river leading to the blue and the brown of the ocean is there.

Salmon and eels are there moving between the brown and the brown and the blue.

The green of the land is there.

Elders and youngers are there.

We come into the world and we are there.

Fighting and possibility and love are there.

And we begin to breathe.

We come into the world and there it is.

We come into the world without and we breathe it in.

We come into the world and begin to move between the brown and the blue and the green of it.

two

We came into the world at the edge of a stream.

The stream had no name but it began from a spring and flowed down a hill into the Scioto that then flowed into the Ohio that then flowed into the Mississippi that then flowed into the Gulf of Mexico.

The stream was a part of us and we were a part of the stream and we were thus part of the rivers and thus part of the gulfs and the oceans.

And we began to learn the stream.

We looked under stones for the caddisfly larvae and its adhesive.

We counted the creek chub and we counted the slenderhead darter.

We learned to recognize the large, upright, dense, candle-like clusters of yellowish flowers at the branch ends of the horsechestnut and we appreciated the feathery gracefulness of the drooping, but upturning, branchlets of the larch.

We mimicked the catlike meow, the soft quirrt or kwut, and the louder, grating ratchet calls of the gray catbird.

We put our heads together.

We put our heads together with all these things, with the caddisfly larva, with the creek chub and the slenderhead darter, with the horsechestnut and the larch, with the gray catbird.

We put our heads together on a narrow pillow, on a stone, on a narrow stone pillow, and we talked to each other all day long because we loved.

We loved the stream.

And we were of the stream.

And we couldn't help this love because we arrived at the bank of the stream and began breathing and the stream was various and full of information and it changed our bodies with its rotten with its cold with its clean with its mucky with fallen leaves with its things that bite the edges of the skin with its leaves with its sand and dirt with its pungent at moments with its dry and prickly with its warmth with its mushy and moist with its hard flat stones on the bottom with its

horizon lines of gently rolling hills with its darkness with its dappled light with its cicadas buzz with its trills of birds.

three

This is where we learned love and where we learned depth and where we learned layers and where we learned connections between layers.

We learned and we loved the black sandshell, the ash, the american bittern, the harelip sucker, the yellow bullhead, the beech, the great blue heron, the dobsonfly larva, the water penny larva, the birch, the redhead, the white catspaw, the elephant ear, the buckeye, the king eider, the river darter, the sauger, the burning bush, the common merganser, the limpet, the mayfly nymph, the cedar, the turkey vulture, the spectacle case, the flat floater, the cherry, the red tailed hawk, the longnose gar, the brook trout, the chestnut, the killdeer, the river snail, the giant floater, the chokeberry, gray catbird, the rabbitsfoot, the slenderhead darter, the crabapple, the american robin, the creek chub, the stonefly nymph, the dogwood, the warbling vireo, the sow bug, the elktoe, the elm, the marsh wren, the monkeyface, the central mudminnow, the fir, the gray-cheeked thrush, the white bass, the predaceous diving beetle, the hawthorn, the scud, the salamander mussel, the hazelnut, the warbler, the mapleleaf, the american eel, the hemlock, the speckled chub, the whirligig beetle larva, the hickory, the sparrow, the caddisfly

larva, the fluted shell, the horse chestnut, the wartyback, the white heelsplitter, the larch, the pine grosbeak, the brook stickleback, the river redhorse, the locust, the ebonyshelf, the giant water bug, the maple, the eastern phoebe, the white sucker, the creek heelsplitter, the mulberry, the crane fly larva, the mountain madtom, the oak, the bank swallow, the wabash pigtoe, the damselfly larva, the pine, the stonecat, the kidneyshell, the plum, the midge larva, the eastern sand darter, the rose, the purple wartyback, the narrow-winged damselfly, the spruce, the pirate perch, the threehorn wartyback, the sumac, the black fly larva, the redbside dace, the tree-of-heaven, the orange-foot pimpleback, the dragonfly larva, the walnut, the gold fish, the butterfly, the striped fly larva, the willow, the freshwater drum, the ohio pigtoe, the warmouth, the mayfly nymph, the clubshell.

And this was just the beginning of the list.

Our hearts took on many things.

Our hearts took on new shapes, new shapes every day as we went to the stream every day.

Our hearts took on the shape of well-defined riffles and pools, clean substrates, woody debris, meandering channels, floodplains, and mature streamside forests.

Our hearts took on the shape of the stream and became riffled and calmed and muddy and clean and flooded and shrunken dry.

Our hearts took on the shape of whirligigs swirling across the water.

We shaped our hearts into the sycamore trees along the side of the stream and we let into our hearts the long pendulous polygamous racemes of its small green flowers, the first-formed male flowers

with no pistil and then the later arriving hairy ovary with its two curved stigmas.

We let ourselves love the one day of the adult life of the mayfly as it swarms, mates in flight, and dies all without eating.

And we shaped our hearts into the water willow and into the eggs spawned in the water willow.

Our hearts took on the brilliant blues, reds, and oranges of breeding male rainbow darter and our hearts swam to the female rainbow darter and we poked her side with our snout as she buried herself under the gravel and we laid upon her as she vibrated.

We let leaves and algae into our hearts and then we let the mollusks and the insects and we let the midge larvae into our heart and then the stonefly nymph and then a minnow came into our heart and with it a bass and then we let the blue heron fly in, the raccoon amble by, the snapping turtle and the watersnake also.

We immersed ourselves in the shallow stream. We lied down on the rocks on our narrow pillow stone and let the water pass over us and our heart was bathed in glochida and other things that attach to the flesh.

And as we did this we sang.

We sang gentle now.

Gentle now clubshell,
don't add to heartache.

Gentle now warmouth, mayfly nymph,
don't add to heartache.

Gentle now willow, freshwater drum, ohio pigtoe,
don't add to heartache.

Gentle now walnut, gold fish, butterfly, striped fly larva,
don't add to heartache.

Gentle now black fly larva, redbreast dace, tree-of-heaven, orange-foot pimpleback, dragonfly larva,
don't add to heartache.

Gentle now purple wartyback, narrow-winged damselfly, spruce, pirate perch, threehorn wartyback, sumac,
don't add to heartache.

Gentle now pine, stonecat, kidneyshell, plum, midge larva, eastern sand darter, rose,
don't add to heartache.

Gentle now creek heelsplitter, mulberry, crane fly larva, mountain madtom, oak, bank swallow, wabash pigtoe, damselfly larva,
don't add to heartache.

Gentle now pine grosbeak, brook stickleback, river redhorse, locust, ebonyshelf, giant water bug, maple, eastern phoebe, white sucker,
don't add to heartache.

Gentle now whirligig beetle larva, hickory, sparrow, caddisfly larva, fluted shell, horse chestnut, wartyback, white heelsplitter, larch,
don't add to heartache.

Gentle now white bass, predaceous diving beetle, hawthorn, scud, salamander mussel, hazelnut, warbler, mapleleaf, american eel, hemlock, speckled chub,
don't add to heartache.

Gentle now stonefly nymph, dogwood, warbling vireo, sow bug, elktoe, elm, marsh wren, monkeyface, central mudminnow, fir, gray-cheeked thrush,

don't add to heartache.

Gentle now longnose gar, brook trout, chestnut, killdeer, river snail,
giant floater, chokeberry, gray catbird, rabbitsfoot, slenderhead
darter, crabapple, american robin, creek chub,

don't add to heartache.

Gentle now king eider, river darter, sauger, burning bush, common
merganser, limpet, mayfly nymph, cedar, turkey vulture, spectacle
case, flat floater, cherry, red tailed hawk,

don't add to heartache.

Gentle now black sandshell, ash, american bittern, harelip sucker,
yellow bullhead, beech, great blue heron, dobsonfly larva, water
penny larva, birch, redhead, white catspaw, elephant ear, buckeye,
don't add to heartache.

Gentle now, we sang,

Circle our heart in rapture, in love-ache. Circle our heart.

four

It was not all long lines of connection and utopia.

It was a brackish stream and it went through the field beside our
house.

But we let into our hearts the brackish parts of it also.

Some of it knowingly.

We let in soda cans and we let in cigarette butts and we let in pink
tampon applicators and we let in six pack of beer connectors and

we let in various other pieces of plastic that would travel through
the stream.

And some of it unknowingly.

We let the run off from agriculture, surface mines, forestry, home
wastewater treatment systems, construction sites, urban yards,
and roadways into our hearts.

We let chloride, magnesium, sulfate, manganese, iron, nitrite/
nitrate, aluminum, suspended solids, zinc, phosphorus, fertilizers,
animal wastes, oil, grease, dioxins, heavy metals and lead go
through our skin and into our tissues.

We were born at the beginning of these things, at the time of
chemicals combining, at the time of stream run off.

These things were a part of us and would become more a part of us
but we did not know it yet.

Still we noticed enough to sing a lament.

To sing in lament for whoever lost her elephant ear lost her
mountain madtom

and whoever lost her butterfly lost her harelip sucker

and whoever lost her white catspaw lost her rabbitsfoot

and whoever lost her monkeyface lost her speckled chub

and whoever lost her wartyback lost her ebonyshell

and whoever lost her pirate perch lost her ohio pigtoe lost her
clubshell.

five

What I did not know as I sang the lament of what was becoming lost
and what was already lost was how this loss would happen.

I did not know that I would turn from the stream to each other.

I did not know I would turn to each other.

That I would turn to each other to admire the softness of each
other's breast, the folds of each other's elbows, the brightness
of each other's eyes, the smoothness of each other's hair, the
evenness of each other's teeth, the firm blush of each other's lips,
the firm softness of each other's breasts, the fuzz of each other's
down, the rich, ripe pungency of each other's smell, all of it, each
other's cheeks, legs, neck, roof of mouth, webbing between the
fingers, tips of nails and also cuticles, hair on toes, whorls on
fingers, skin discolorations.

I turned to each other.

Ensnared, bewildered, I turned to each other and from the stream.

I turned to each other and I began to work for the chemical
factory and I began to work for the paper mill and I began to work
for the atomic waste disposal plant and I began to work at
keeping men in jail.

I turned to each other.

I didn't even say goodbye elephant ear, mountain madtorn, butterfly,
harelip sucker, white catspaw, rabbitsfoot, monkeyface, speckled
chub, wartyback, ebonyshell, pirate perch, ohio pigtoe, clubshell.

I replaced what I knew of the stream with Lifestream Total
Cholesterol Test Packets, with Snuggle Emerald Stream Fabric
Softener Dryer Sheets, with Tisserand Aromatherapy Aroma-

Stream Cartridges, with Filter Stream Dust Tamer, and Streamzap PC
Remote Control, Acid Stream Launcher, and Viral Data Stream.

I didn't even say goodbye elephant ear, mountain madtorn, butterfly,
harelip sucker, white catspaw, rabbitsfoot, monkeyface, speckled
chub, wartyback, ebonyshell, pirate perch, ohio pigtoe, clubshell.

I put a Streamline Tilt Mirror in my shower and I kept a crystal
Serenity Sphere with a Winter Stream view on my dresser.

I didn't even say goodbye elephant ear, mountain madtorn, butterfly,
harelip sucker, white catspaw, rabbitsfoot, monkeyface, speckled
chub, wartyback, ebonyshell, pirate perch, ohio pigtoe, clubshell.

I bought a Gulf Stream Blue Polyester Boat Cover for my 14-16 Foot
V-Hull Fishing boat with beam widths up to sixty-eight feet and I
talked about value stream management with men in suits over a desk.

I didn't even say goodbye elephant ear, mountain madtorn, butterfly,
harelip sucker, white catspaw, rabbitsfoot, monkeyface, speckled
chub, wartyback, ebonyshell, pirate perch, ohio pigtoe, clubshell.

I just turned to each other and the body parts of the other suddenly
glowed with the beauty and detail that I had found in the stream.

I put my head together on a narrow pillow and talked with each other
all night long.

And I did not sing.

I did not sing otototoi; dark, all merged together, oi.

I did not sing groaning words.

I did not sing otototoi; dark, all merged together, oi.

I did not sing groaning words.

I did not sing o wo, wo, wo!

I did not sing I see, I see.

I did not sing wo, wo!