

DAVID MASON

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## Out Here

N 38° 59'  
W 105° 02'

The tangled trees, some half-alive, grip down  
into the shallow mountain soil. Out here  
no virgin timber's left to catch the light;  
the last of it went into beams for mines  
or homestead cabins melting into grass,  
or burned in wildfires, cleared for aspen groves.

*Traffic backs up on a Friday afternoon.  
The all-night market lights outshine the moon.*

A mall is scheduled for the meadow where  
the remnant of a cattle herd still feeds,  
and up the highway you can buy tooled boots,  
ten-gallon hats, and spin your silver spurs,  
so when I try to tell you what it means  
to live here now, toss in a grain of salt.

*Traffic backs up on a Friday afternoon.  
The all-night market lights outshine the moon.*

To live here now is to efface the fields,  
driving the elk to higher ground, the fox  
into delinquency, the truant puma  
ghosting arroyos when we've gone to sleep.  
Problems no bigger than a hill of beans,  
but that won't change the nature of regret.

*Traffic backs up on a Friday afternoon.  
The all-night market lights outshine the moon.*

## In the Mushroom Summer

Colorado turns Kyoto in a shower,  
mist in the pines so thick the crows delight  
(or seem to), winging in obscurity.  
The ineffectual panic of a squirrel  
who chatters at my passing gives me pause  
to watch his ponderosa come and go—  
long needles scratching cloud. I've summited  
but know it only by the wildflower meadow,  
the muted harebells, paintbrush, gentian,  
scattered among the locoweed and sage.  
Today my grief abates like water soaking  
underground, its scar a little path  
of twigs and needles winding ahead of me  
downhill to the next bend. Today I let  
the rain soak through my shirt and was unharmed.