

NICHOLE GOFF

Bluelake

I.

In the darkroom
she pulled a bouquet
from her open throat

The weasels scurried under chairs
and into damp holes in the ground

Her dark hair in the night
her golden hair
two backdrops

And the wind picked up a sound
a baby crying
dropped it at our feet
an empty tin can

Waist deep in the trees
we wade
neck deep

And the red covers everything
a tree burl, a burning eye

Hush, hurry, the forest fire is upon us
like an old starchy apron

II.

Her pale body in the closet
a bluing body
the red and blue bodies
hair dull as dead sparklers
they lean on each other
like molded wood

They sing from the closet
each vowel a mouse-scurry
a beauty garble

The lake rises
a soiled sheet in the wind
The lake rises

Townsppeople hide
in the lake
the water a resin
the water a murkier eye

The townspeople with their soft hands
behind their backs
those goodly people
with their fingers crossed

Teenaged dreamsicles drool
behind their windshields
and in the distended mouths of houses
down the hill
babies sleep like pill bugs

The shadow man waits
at the edge of the bed
in the frame of the closet

And the key sheds rust on the palms
of all who hold it

The closet of bodies
The closet of the lake

The rust

the root invested
in the blood

III.

The girl and her pale body
in the center of the lake
in the dream
a drop of poison
a rimless mirror

I place my body on your tongue
a cradle, a future
I am a drop of poison
though I love you
though I love you
the lye of my skin burns

The chickens hum their night songs
their eggs, brown and white
their eggs, warm, safe
A cluck, a kiss, your forehead
round and glistening
I kiss your forehead

There is a cabin by the lake
the pale girl and her body
a star, in the window
a man, tall and handsome

The forest fire scratches
at our door, a nice knock

When I open
there is my face
pale, desiccant, flaming
my beauty, the betrayer

And the pine cones drop
from their pulleys
onto the roof

And my DNA burns up
and all
like coiled ribbons
synchronized

Let me hold
the part of me
that betrays you
in the deepest part of the water

IV.

At the darkening shore
the good neighbor
drags another through the mud

By the hair
under the arms
the moths in a panic
like newspaper on tree trunks

Another dyed blue
in the lake, which consumes the sky

From the lake which is a bruise
in the lineage of firs

And the weasels climb higher
to see, to hide

From your black beard
a white hair
a heron in the curling reeds
of my pupil, my fish-eye blue
and me a bit of silver
to scoop from the water
wholly tender
a wedding ring, a knife