

Samsara Counts

New Mexico

Rest

Sunbeams breaking in the bus' smudged windows framed
the deteriorating seat I curled up on, arms hugging knees.
The metallic chill numbed my jaw but did not
impede the creeping up my throat. Stop the bus,

stop, stop, my words hanging
in the solid, stale air. The frost
crunched under my knees as I surrendered
my breakfast and dignity to the frozen earth.

Dawn in New Mexico

Drops of melting dew descended the side of my tent,
forming pools on the wool of my blanket,
absorbing the little heat
I imagined shrouding my body.

Every morning I'd rise, and, in lingering slumber,
reach out to the campfire, seeking
the sun as it seeped into the valley.

In the interims between sunset and sunrise
I huddled and prayed to the valley's eastern crest
and the lightening yolks of cirrus and stratus
for the break of dawn.

Ascent

For nineteen miles, I dazed around endless aspens, lichen, cliffs,
and fog. The wind lunged forward as the air thinned:
filling my lungs, pervasive

and echoing. I ascended to clear-watered creeks overflowing
into footprints on muddy paths, pristine white
bone of bighorn sheep and a single fawnlily, all the bared teeth
of a face soft green and grey.

I rested at an overlook, a furrowing of the brow
of the emerald land, pink granite jagged
against mossy hills. On a ledge
I receded, surrounded

by all-white spray, extending

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to mazes of interlocking, toppled conifers,
to rocky trails from sloping forest
to alpine sparseness and mountains,

towards the sun,
slowly rising, covering all there was
in warmth and light and home.