



Lullaby

Claire Wabmanholm

The loon's eye is a carmine moon.

Is a Mars. Stirs

in its orbit as the wind stirs the loose face

of the lake into haloes whose

arcs swell against each other until they disappear or

are blown into new diagrams, battle plans, lessons

for a war that cannot

reach us here, in this pocket of pine forest I tuck you into.

Hush. Thrush

and snail, moth and bat, are reconciled, held

in the same dark mouth.

When you ask for a story, I

hum the names of lunar seas — *Nubium, Imbrium,*

Vaporum, Crisium —

which are not seas, whose

water is a dark silt, basalt

shallows empty enough to look like

a nose, eyes,

a mouth.

(continued – no stanza break)

When you ask for a song, I sing about the hole in the bottom of the sea,
a lesson in
microscopy, in vertigo. O

*Little eye, little eye, there's always a further layer,
an infinite splitting, a tunneling. Sung,*

this is

just soft enough to sleep by. Is almost comfort. Almost rest.

The loon's eye gleams and drifts on the lake like

a broken beacon

above a slow drain. Like a body orbiting a black hole. Wool

being drawn from a cloud to a thread to the pupil of a needle's eye.

Hush-a-bye,

hush-a-bye, I

didn't mean to make you cry. The lake is a lake, the loon a loon, the eye

was only ever an eye.

A red-throated

morning yawns in the sky.