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My Cow

Howard McCord

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HOwArd MCCORD

MY COW

The stones rattle on the hillside
in the fog: the brindle cow is lost,
or drunk again on jimson weed.
She wants to fly, thinks
she is flying, but her hooves
run out of air deep in the heart.
She shakes her head like a dog,
and lows with long, dizzy notes
slipping from her throat, the white
depths groaning under the press of flowers.
She is dreaming, and clambering
toward the moon, or a sunrise
spliced into the night.
The light from her bones blinds her,
the soft edges of stones reach out
like bramble fingers, pluck at her ribs,
ache her ears. She’s speaking Chinese
now: “Wan wu chih mu” she bugles,
calling on The Mother to tame
the stones, melt the snow
that burns in her four bellies, get her back to earth.

I follow two miles in the fog,
find her the lee side of a watertank
in soft repose, belching,
smiling like an old man.