

The Elk
Clayton Longstaff

Clearing amber in the moon-grazed dawn
stumps of felled sequoia
earthen ferns glowing golden in the early light

when the elk
comes into view I've long already been discovered
noted to her three young paused behind
wondered at in the strangeness of my presence

inside:
a silence flowering
raising its petaled coronet from a long dry sleep
under weighted pleats of grief prismatic visions

habitual dreams including some of love and
some of suicide
her grand nostrils flare perhaps at the short breeze
bearing the smell of trout

left overnight a line of them suspended along the dock
or is it some other breeze bearing other smells I know
to exist separate from my knowing
rising from off the water behind the trees

elsewhere