

DANEEN WARDROP

Stir the Lake

—*Puget Sound Guitar Retreat*

I waited a year to sleep.

In this lake timed with all lakes
you see water crenellate with the rain you don't see.

My book reads: God in the minimal and the maximal.

My mother in the branches.

My nephew can't figure out how to feed his Nintendo kittens.
He goes out the cabin to mush around in snow.

The trip back will lie at the center of an allegory pill.

Thomas Merton rubs my leg, foible of squirrel runs a fir,
rain in the stomach.

Sad I can't help my nephew figure out how to feed his kittens.

^

When we sleep the trees will walk up to the cabin doorstep.
(They pivot their hips.)
The lake will take on the hue of snowflakes unembarrassed by nakedness,
declarative sentences stir the lake.

In the woodpile, a one-eyed orange cat rummages.
Mice would be nice.

How many clocks in Sea-Tac airport?—
yes, include the watches, yes, the cellphones.

Point a body at a white.

You overcame your departure time.

^

Around the perimeter of the lake, waterlily's
doiled edges spin,
tiny laser-surgery incisions surface it.

When a possum crosses porch snow
it may wish it had someone else's
footprints to step in.

What can you spare?
Everything.

Everything but what you have borne.

Black mixes with the black under the cot,
give it an emoticon.

Purple finches sling through breaks in the bushes
as guitars raze gradients. A finch sings down a porch
corridor choosing his location, surely
for the acoustics.

^

At the center of the spirit maze my sister and I stop walking:
on the outside of the circle

too-large pawprints lead off into weed tangles.
There are mountain lions around here.

Shadow tastes a bit like fig.

From their paws mountain lions might watch us, mostly disinterested.

The Nintendo cat is out here looking for bits of raisins or bacon.

^

Boundaries slim to poses the way a child will find distributive complaints
when she is tired.

Clocks can be rented.

In the afternoon, a mountain lion comes down the trail
blazing for a second against the firs
in the guise of the one-eyed orange cat.

I fall into a lively sleep.
Condiment of warmth.

^

In the evening the lake turns into something else,
bowl of dipped matter, mercury-heaving,
moving of itself

as animals creep up to curl at the margins
of songs, three-chord and other.

The darkness is a liquid you can wash your body with,

benevolent as a thing
given with no forethought—