

scape



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## DAVID SAM

### AS TART CHERRIES ARE STILL SWEET

Mistaken in waking to an old  
room an old house vacated of  
the same remembered colors  
but waking nonetheless in some  
sound startled from those dreams  
sunlight at the wrong window  
slanting an old way but off kilter  
too angled low or too rose or too  
much in the eyes to allow sleep  
in its rekindling mistakes all lost  
as the dog who tickled me with his  
nose and puppy wriggling is lost  
to a daydream paler than ghosts  
in the night remembering me now  
perhaps if memories can remember

the living we are as quick as this  
sunlight at dawn now lost as well  
in its rising room darkening  
as the shadows of Dutch elms  
long diseased and long hewn to  
their absence there now here  
now with the echoes of my old  
dog barking lonely from his pen  
up on the hillside where the five  
black cherry trees no longer grow  
thick with so many hungry birds

## GEOLOGY OF THE BLUE RIDGE

All these lives have become  
shadows in windows of granite  
and metamorphosed volcanoes  
and the layers of sediment:  
shells, bones and all that's left  
of these ancient breaths that  
cry silence and seas from old  
limestone in their broad uplifts.

All that we are must some day  
be such silent and stony memory.  
All of our crow flying, our black  
silhouettes in brilliant blue skies.

All of our black bear eating  
of black berries on mountain sides.  
All of our doe darting from shadows  
of cove forests, from maples  
and beeches, from hemlocks  
and poplars, from white oak  
and red oak, from yellow birch  
and buckeye. All of our vulture  
soaring and scenting of death.

We who have eyes will catalyze  
what we see in the memory  
of such stone. We who have ears  
will crack vibrations into the seams  
of the uplift. We who have voices  
will echo the morning mist as it rises  
from blue gray valleys. We will mark  
mountains with hoof, paw, claw,  
scale, beak, root, leaf, hand.

We add to these mountains by our  
bones, bodies, and all that is left  
of our breaths turned briefly firm  
before retreating to the essence  
of our ephemera. All of our rutting,  
our running, are waiting, our pouncing,  
our standing on hillsides and valleys  
at morning while watching new mists  
rise from old memories of old lives--  
all in the end return to the rocks,

Thus we must learn to read pages  
long written in layers the Blue Ridge  
has transcribed from all of our living  
and dying beneath their shadow.

David Anthony Sam has written poetry for over 40 years and has two collections, including *Memories in Clay, Dreams of Wolves* (2014). He lives in Virginia with his wife and life partner, Linda. Recently, he was published in *Carbon Culture Review, The Crucible, FLARE: The Flager Review, The Write Place at the Write Time, The Scapegoat Review, The Summerset Review, The Birds We Pile Loosely, and Literature Today.*

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