



POEM CHRIS HOFFMAN | FABRIC COLLAGES MERILL COMEAU

## Weminuche Wilderness

Freshly squeezed monofilaments of spider silk  
link spires of spruce and fir trees  
high above the darksome trail, and glisten  
in slivered shreds of morning sunlight.  
With elevation gained, the trees hunch lower  
avoiding the lush and newer green  
of avalanche meadows strewn with boulders,  
eventually stretching dark green fingers  
along the rills, invading swaths of tundra.

High up in couloirs and under cliffs  
snowfields like beached clouds  
trickle into rivulets that join  
like bird's toes and plunge  
through space with rainbows to the creek below  
that churns and drops, then slides  
as clear as polished air  
over chestnut-colored rocks then drops  
and pools again and drops.

In the meadows, mountain goats  
with puzzled faces have snagged  
and combed away their winter wool  
on twigs and wands of willow.

The shoulders and thighs of the high tundra  
are the old bones of the earth upholstered  
with thin cushions of green and jeweler's flowers,  
some with the scent of healing cleanness.  
Here it becomes clear that everything still  
is also in motion and changing.  
Just as the goats are being goats and browsing,  
the tundra is tundra-ing, the boulders bouldering,  
the creek is present and is also flowing.  
The jagged peaks point beyond the sky.

When the sun is shining  
nothing is more beautiful than this.  
But when the weather changes  
from sunny to sullen in seconds  
and thunder bludgeons  
the great space embraced by the mountains  
we suddenly remember  
each heartbeat as a gift  
that rises up to us unbidden from the darkness.



Photos: Susan Byrne Photography