

ASHES

Ashes are lighter than love. Your sons and grandchildren sweat them across five rugged miles to this four-acre jewel of clarity held in the lap of granite crags, a lofty prayer circle of dark spires with chattering falcons on their shoulders. Fingers of wind reach down, ripple mirrored water. Knuckles tap gently at our lonely void, fall silent. The gray drift of you shifts and sifts against itself.

Ashes are darker than tufts of snowy goat hair snagged on stunted spruce, quieter than rock clatter kicked down by black hooves.

Ashes are drier than tears, salt rain dimpling the film of you that spreads over the surface like the smear of wildfire haze in the east. Bits of bone are denser than water, brighter than submerged rock. They glitter upward like scales of large trout stalking the shallows for grasshoppers.

Ashes become trout. We catch three for breakfast, fry sheets of white flesh with potatoes and onions, eat from atop a granite boulder, gray shoulder stooping into clear water, into time. Fish become bone. You become.

~Tom Titus