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## Geese Leave Summit Lake

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# The Geese Leave Summit Lake

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*Howard Schaap*

The geese, too, are loath to leave this shore,  
now that the murky depths are unstuck from  
florid algae blooms, the air undraped with humidity,  
the nights unhung with drooping moon face. Now  
the distant shoreline sharpens again, the slight hook  
of silver moon slides up the lake's mercurial mirror,  
the horizon softens to a line of slim colors,  
whites and light oranges and no swollen  
summer reds. So they swim out at dusk,  
bend the pane, linger around reedy points,  
remember the thick weight of summer air  
that made earth and firmament all of a piece  
and blurred edges between warm moist sky  
and warm moist lake, between goose and  
gosling, between life and death. They  
feel the new old cold on their  
rubber stockings. The  
time has come.  
They angle  
off  
south, low  
over water as if  
to languor over the lake,  
as if, should they gain altitude  
too quickly, it would shatter memory.  
They dissolve with few wing beats into  
winter, a wavering goodbye, leaving me to  
the unbroken lake, to the moon hook slipping  
down the sky, leaving me to watch the unity  
of earth, air, and water shiver  
into distinctions.