

# New Poetry by Lisa Stice: “Our Folklore”



FIND MYSELF LOST / *image by*  
*Amalie Flynn*

## Our Folklore

Long ago, you were molten rock, and I—  
well, I spoke the language of bears.

But now that I have been out of the forest  
for so long, all the words and grammar escape

me, and I often find myself lost. And you—  
well, you are often mistaken for a statue

in this solid state. No more rumblings and  
agitations. We are both quiet these days.

---

# **New Poetry from Lisa Stice: “Water Cycle”**

No matter where we are, the oceans  
meet us in some form.

I am small  
and my daughter (who is only eight) –  
is even smaller  
and still, our dog is smaller  
yet, then there are those microscopic zoe-  
and phytoplankton  
and the not so micro  
fish that eat them and so on

---

## **New Poetry by Lisa Stice**



Caspar David Friedrich, "The Sea of Ice," (1823-24).

## Headstrong

*I'm sorry* catches in the throat  
and bruises in that wavering  
hesitation like a rock falling  
back to earth. See how it curves  
under the skin, twists and cuts  
as it hugs the voice box.

*I forgive* sways like a tamarack—  
hackmatack, red larch, juniper,  
larix laricina—of the low-lands  
with roots in cool mud and branches  
in the soft air where we hold  
the belief we are stronger than wind.

*The end* is as blue as slag and twice  
as worthless. This is where I say  
I never meant it, and this is where  
you say it doesn't matter anymore  
because words are less than  
clouds and leaves and stone.



Nicolai Fechin, Portrait of Varya Adoratskaya (1914)

## Daughter

we are raising fire  
a shock-headed girl  
in this cold season



when you start a fire  
be to windward, wait  
for it to break out within

mind now what I say  
remain quiet  
for when fire breaks

we call these special days  
nothing to me is sweeter  
than a crackling flame

*\* some words borrowed from Struwwelpeter translated by Heinrich Hoffman ("any thing to me is sweeter," "shock-headed peter," "they crackle so, and spit, and flame," "mind now, Conrad, what I say") "The Attack by Fire;" The Art of War by Sun Tzu ("material for raising fire," "special days," "days of rising wind," "when fire breaks," "remain quiet," "wait for it to break out within," "when you start a fire, be to windward")*



Jacob Hoefnagel, "Orpheus Charming the Animals"

## Homes Will Be Stripped Bare

this is one world

and this is another

the borders merely

traced out on the ground

with a small stick

in one world, animals:

zebras, giraffes,  
lions, horses,  
and dinosaurs

bide their time  
stand together  
quietly encamped

kept in readiness  
for a decision  
made in a single day

to overthrow their kingdom  
cause commotion at home  
the animals know

there is no time to ponder  
just march to the place  
beyond ordinary rules



\* some words borrowed from "Weak Points and Strong" ("the lines of our encampment be merely traced out on the ground," "quietly encamped"), "The Attack by Fire" ("bide your time," "kept in readiness"), "The Use of Spies" ("there will be commotion at home"), "Attacks by Stratagem" ("overthrows their kingdom"), "Maneuvering" ("ponder before you make a move"), "Laying Plans" ("beyond the ordinary rules"), and "Waging War" (the homes of the people will be stripped bare") *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu



Fairy Tales from Hans Christian Andersen (1914), Doubleday

## The Book Closes

words become a strange  
dream            an explosion  
the releasing of the trigger  
another shovelful of earth  
to plant secrets            a storm  
breaking with the momentum  
of a round stone and yet  
no real disorder at all  
just the melodies that can never  
be heard            the colors  
that can never be seen  
just like the little birds  
that fly far away            further  
than we will ever know

*\* some words borrowed from "The Traveling Companion" by Hans Christian Anderson trans. Erik Christian Haugaard ("he dreamed a strange dream," "another shovelful of earth," "the words became a picture," "the little birds flew far into the world," "the storm broke") and from "Energy" The Art of War by Sun Tzu ("give rise to more melodies than can ever be heard," "more hues than can ever be seen," "releasing of the trigger,"*

*“and yet no real disorder at all,” “the momentum of a round stone”)*