

SUSAN APRIL

Drift

Many of our most valuable of
precious stones are found in drift—
the diamond, the sapphire, the topaz,
as well as bold metals: platinum, gold.

I hold
rubies in no settled order and if we
suppose ourselves in a meadow
under a hill under a rocking stone—
a type of boulder characteristic of drift—
equally poised such that a child
pressing against it or even the wind
could make it fall, words fail,
and (we are) denuded to bone.

ABOUT THE POEM

“Drift” was created from *Elementary Geology* by Edward Hitchcock (1854 edition). About the poem and the process of composing it, Susan April writes:

This poem was sourced from the classic science textbook Hitchcock’s *Elementary Geology*, a text used by both Henry David Thoreau and Emily Dickinson. My process involved a close reading of Section I, “A General Account of the Constitution and Structure of the Earth and of the Principles on Which Rocks are Classified,” and Section III, “Lithological Characters of the Stratified Rocks.” I made lists of key phrases and was struck by the sensual language that at times recalled a love letter or a forlorn postcard. “Drift” was created from such lifted phrases with linking words of my own.

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