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## what lay in shells

Jen Lamb

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## Lamb: what lay in shells

WHAT LAY IN THE SHELLS

Jen Lamb

searching birds' nests for eggs speckled for  
palm full ovals lying end-to-end she will tuck  
them beside her breast carry them unbroken  
down the mountain if there is only one she will  
eat now break it between thumb and forefinger  
hope for yolk fluid hope for new bird embryo  
that won't catch in her throat if there are bones  
beak feathers she will spit them out or perhaps  
grind between molars and swallow anyway

the earth shivers the earth buckles the  
earth sighs and perhaps she calls to  
her sister too far up the rockskinned slope  
perhaps she can't see her sister hungry bold  
climbing a blind cliff to search for eggs  
perhaps she slips three speckled eggs under breast  
hands free for balance free to walk carefully  
down to the shore eggs still whole perhaps  
her sister slides stumbling down eggshells in hand