

Heart Butte, Montana

By M.L. Smoker

The unsympathetic wind, how she has evaded me for years now,
leaving a guileless shell and no way to navigate. Once when I stood
on a plateau of earth just at the moment before the dangerous,
jutting peaks converged upon the lilting sway of grasslands, I almost
found a way back. There, the sky, quite possibly all the elements,
caused the rock and soil and vegetation to congregate. Their prayer
was not new and so faint I could hardly discern. Simple remembrances,
like a tiny, syncopated chorus calling everyone home: across
a thousand eastward miles, and what little wind was left at my back.
But I could not move. And then the music was gone.
All that was left were the spring time faces of mountains, gazing down,
their last patches of snow, luminous. I dreamed of becoming snow melt,
gliding down the slope and in to the valley. With the promise,
an assurance, that there is always a way to become bird, tree, water again.

M. L. Smoker, "Heart Butte, Montana" from *New Poets of Native Nations*. Copyright © 2018
by M. L. Smoker. Reprinted by permission of M. L. Smoker.