

Michael McDowell

Coastal Forest Mosquitoes

On our arms and legs constellations form
unique as freckle patterns,
each bite our donation of blood
to the next generation of larvae.

On the Baker Bay trail the bites multiply as fast as
we pull the red huckleberries into our metal cups.
My daughter wears horns on her forehead,
two rounded buttes rising east and west.

At McKenzie Head mosquitoes as big as Anna's hummingbirds
hover by neck and cheek and hand.
My son has itched and scratched and rubbed
his legs into ranges of red-cratered volcanoes.

So we enter the landscape,
leaving our blood living in others,
our human cells flying past sitka and salmonberry
to places we'd never go.

At evening on the porch
as we count and compare our new coins of raised flesh,
mosquitoes wing from the wax myrtles and pines
to our waiting arms and legs.