

## RETURNING (FOR DREA)

by Karen Coulter

Returning from a Pendleton Court hearing  
I approached a vast bank of black clouds,  
blue-gray darkness touching the earth  
with no light above or below.  
Entering the driving rain  
slashing against the windshield,  
I emerged on the other side  
to water vapors rising from the wet pavement  
as eerie ghosts reaching arms towards me  
bending, beseeching in my direction  
grasping for my attention.  
Then I witnessed the sheet lightning  
illuminating the entire sky  
in momentary flashbacks of a past life,  
mine, I wondered, or the fate of the Earth,  
other lives perishing in the mass extinction.  
The lightning flared ahead of me,  
all around me, then following me,  
like the vaporous ghosts,  
claiming my attention.  
The next morning a friend called me  
to let me know that our friend has died—  
suicide, returning to the unknown  
natural elements of wind and weather,  
sending me messages.

May 6th, 2023

“DREA-”

by Karen Coulter

Your mind so bright  
flashing sparks of your insights  
your impish grin  
with laughing eyes  
your strength in a slight frame  
moving through the forest  
examining, identifying plants  
recognizing the wonder of high desert  
persevering with dedication.  
yet I can't just remember you—  
I want to talk to you—  
so badly.  
Look, Drea!  
There's six Bighorn sheep rams  
standing so majestically in the rocks  
observing me,  
massive, proud, and steadfast  
as the basalt cliffs—  
maybe you can see me through their eyes.

written May 6th, 2023, still grieving  
I saw the Bighorn rams near where I live  
May 5th, 2023

## TO DREA ON HER FIRST DAY SPIRIT SIDE

by Grebe

I leave the green hymnal  
Of the forest chapel  
Where boughs are our bindings

I do not want to return  
To a world without you

But I walk  
Steadfast  
Carrying this grief  
with all those who treasured you

We hold you close  
in forests  
We wish  
We could have carried your sadness

**EF!J:** Getting to hear about her from your perspective helps me, the grieving, the ways we metabolize or process grief. We all really loved Drea and it definitely was such a shock. I think about that too, what you said, maybe they can see us (through the eyes of big horn sheep), or getting to walk through a forest, I feel close to her in that way, and I hope that or I believe she's found peace now.

**Karen:** When I first heard, I was really stressed... and writing the poems helped me come to terms with it. I read something about this recently, you shouldn't be trying for "closure" or moving on, instead it's a way of coping, not dismissing the person, but coping for yourself and also remembering and making sure others