

The Pronghorn Antelope People

Antholops, a Greek name. Intermediate between goat
and wind. "Little horse" to the academics.

We are mirrors. Let the past imagine us.
It cannot be entertained. It is large, like an owl landing.

In the guidebook, the smooth green snake that crossed
my path is named the Smooth Green Snake,

in the story, which I have been invited to take a part in.
In the circle of intimates, which include the deer.

The Cheyenne word for tea: a flower soup, a soup of leaves.
The antelope mime for us the tragedy

of a language besieged, bounding past our industries,
jumping in the snowmelt stream,

falling back in their efforts to mount the bank. World view.
In theirs, few of us exist. A function of eyes

placed sideways so they have to sidle to see ahead.
Hip tricked against the highline. A solitary atop the ridge.

The blue sage whispers to the rattlesnake, coiled around
its stem to escape the heat.

Breakfast, a brewing fest of coolness. Morning fog, a feather

down. Winter burr. Summer rapids.

The antelope emerge from the seed-holes of evening: gully,
coolie, draw. Loosely beaded, an elastic string.

Their cloud design, all eyebrow. All shade unto themselves.
Color of rabbit tail and bone meal.

We could hunt them down, but then they would be dead.
We don't discover them. They cross our paths,

ancestral members of a world we lost, the terra cotta shards
of a vein. Coal seams set on fire by lightning.