



WINSTANLEY LAKE

Tlingits, Haidas, Tsimshians
first came here to trap mink and otter,
hunt seals. We paddle out mid-morning—
sun warming, melting snow on peaks.
Cutthroat trout and Sockeye salmon
swimming about, a lone loon preening,

Dwarf dogwood and Salmonberry
blooming along the shore,
Witch's Hair and Old Man's Beard
whispering from cedars, spruces, hemlocks.

Old stumps and logs blushing with
pale pink Fairy barf.

Surrounded by snow fields, glaciers,
mist, we inhale deeply—all around us
a softness like satin, save for ginseng's
cousin, that thorny Devil's club.
Sitka alders marking shore, avalanche tracks.
Tall Bluebells embellishing stream bank,
wet meadow. Saplings emerging from
nurse logs. Rocks smoothed by mosses
in which seeds germinate. All these
terrestrialized entities working magic
on the heart, I feel at home—everything
familiar, convivial as I'm taken in by a land
so lush and luminous I feel it again,
that sense of insignificance, how it all
will go on without me. Left alone
with cliff face and lake, I could bear
the world's weight, needing only one
Devil's club stick for a charm.