

THE ELEPHANT ROCKS

**CLAYTON
CLARK**

grow sumac in their dirt deposits. Rain-filled
depressions harbor tadpoles and mosquito larvae
like half-wombs. Hiking boulder to boulder

and slipping through chasms, the space between
downcut by water like a saw, we are not
alone here. Lichens green the gray-red granite

in crusts of algo-fungal marriage, and our friends
are getting divorced already. I thought we all agreed
to spurn our parents' cleaving, though who hasn't

outlived something he believed in? Scientists posit
the sun, in advanced age, will devour so much fuel
it burns this all to hell. We must rethink the myths

of our engagement: we committed to consume
each other till we're cold. Had I known my body
a natural resource, I would've better tended it

for you. Spring peepers animate the path before us,
so we retreat to barren granite where death is less
probable. These huddled stones, once magmatic,

weren't always outcrop. Overlying rock abrades
in time, but now the overlying rock, Elephant
Rocks are conserved from quarrying but exposed

to rain. I want us to begin by seeing everything
will be exhausted, so on a timeline long enough
no one's jilted. Like the fulsome crop of elephant ears

you admired at the rocks' end, enjoying our distance
from a star, when we start underground we break
the surface sharing our devotion to the sun.