

How Humans Came to Loneliness

Doug Ramspeck

They woke to the primal sway
of grass, cold fire. Here was

a light rain falling from the eyelid
of the sky. Naked or draped in

a sacristy of animal skins,
they understood each ancient

gesture and ritual, studied the land
as though it were an iris of grass

and weeds. Something was calling there,
protesting, death embalming itself

in a language of morning light.
Or maybe they stood watching

a tree stump—broken off
at the height of a man—the aortic sun

dipping low into the evening field.
All night the moon was a gray dove,

and they grew homesick for what
they did not know, for the garrisons

of hours marching out in unison.
And they loved in the manner that stars

watch through narrow slits above
the allusive stillness of the earth.