



## Spit

**Daniel Lassell**

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Daniel Lassell was raised in Kentucky with llamas and alpacas, and his poetry has been published in *Prairie Schooner*, *Colorado Review*, *Southern Humanities Review*, and several other publications. He is currently a resident of Colorado along with his wife and children.

How to Pet a Llama

*Let him sniff you first. Breathe easy.  
Look him in the eyes  
as you would your mother.  
Don't pat the head.  
He doesn't take being treated  
like a dog. Keep your hand  
at the neck, your palm down,  
as if smoothing out  
wrinkled linen. Let your words  
slowly out like twine,  
like pulling colors from a sleeve,  
like a sharing of troubled history.  
Llamas carry conversations  
as if seated in a row boat  
before fog has lifted, as if pausing  
to hear the long echo after  
a good shout. Welcome him.  
Tenderly, a llama hums—not as if  
recalling the tune to a song,  
but something longer lost.  
Call it a lullaby if you like.  
Stand, just the two of you.  
Let your breath mingle  
as in cold, the air on tiptoe.*

MATT SUTHERLAND (July / August 2021)

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