



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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