

“Ephemeral”

a poem inspired by Jean Norton Hammett’s Serigraph, *Lucas Cove*

by Carol Russell

This Mid-Atlantic coast, this indolent transition
between North and South—blurring lines in the humidity,
toying with shades of green—
mounts no defense against the invading ocean
It ceded the Susquehanna’s lower reaches
to birth this Chesapeake Bay—its brackish bulk creeping
ever landward into rills and runnels, its unceasing ebbs and flows
masking its summative advance
Each terminus has its own lineage—here: up the river Potomac,
into the St. Mary’s, up St. Inigoes Creek and into this Lucas Cove
where on this warm day the weight of water abides
in liquid and in vapor
And though the air heats, breeding thundercloud embryos
that dream of hail to dash and gales yet to be unleashed,
in this leafy moment, high tide squats against the marsh grass
floating a skiff so still—no hard slaps of water on the hull—
the man and his reflection pole diametrically upright
in windless ease, awash in solitude
above ghosts buried deep in victory’s silt