

STRANGER IN THE MASK OF A DEER

Richard Skelton is a British artist. His work focuses on landscape and other-than-human studies. Between 2005 and 2011 he ran Sustain-Release, a private press music label dedicated to publishing his own landscape-oriented recordings. Since 2009 he has been co-director of the multi-media publishing house Corbel Stone Press, with the Canadian poet Autumn Richardson. Together they curate the biannual journal of eco-poetics and esoteric literature, *Reliquiae*. He is also founding member of the Notional Research Group for Cultural Artefacts and director of the Centre for Alterity Studies.

richardskelton.net

ALSO BY RICHARD SKELTON

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Moor Glisk (2012)

Limnology (2012)

Beyond the Fell Wall (2015)

The Pale Ladder (2016)

The Look Away (2018)

Dark Hollow Dark (2019)

And Then Gone (2020)

Stranger in the Mask
of a Deer

Richard Skelton

Penned in the Margins

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for my mother
for my father

*Stranger
in the Mask
of a Deer*

FOREWORD

that this line appears new & complete & full formed & clear
& perfectly distinct is an illusion a lie a betrayal a trick of
the light that it has been cast down & broken & gathered &
mended is nearer the truth that it is an arbitrary juncture in
the process of endless reassembly is as good a definition as
any as good bad indifferent as any

BEGIN

where do i begin
father
grandfather
ancestor

begin here
four & a half decades ago
the bones cast
a name given
yours

this body
this clot of muscles & blood
skin & nerves

but surely there were other forms
other faces of the dice

how far can you cast your mind back
as far as that hill ridge
or the next

begin with cold
a burning cold

tell me where the cold lives

north of here
the far back of hills
nival rivers
cryotic soils

& what is it
this cold

it comes & it goes
a huge white animal
an unceasing hunger
a quenchless thirst

but surely there are other forms
other faces

whatever form it takes
it is always the same
do not cast yourself in its way
it will take you to your death

& to my beginning

that also

DARK