**Heft** *by David J Costello*

Altitude affects them.

Fixes contours in their flesh.

They learn the valleys from their mother’s milk,

assimilate the paths’ worn ink, the brutal rock,

the hoarse voice of the heather.

Every lamb is impregnated with its map.

Each day the shepherd and his dogs

corral them on the lower slopes

but their internal compass

tugs them back into the heritage of rock,

the heather’s cackle,

and the milky-white cartography of snow.

*Footnote: Hefting – the instinct of some breeds of sheep to stay in a small, local area*