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## Deferring to the Assertion of National Security: The Creation of a National Security Exemption Under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

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## **Hanging Rock**

*William Keener\**

Stranded by the glacial melt,  
an oblique block, fifty tons,  
canted, tipped, not yet slipped  
into the abyss, in mid-morning  
stretch, practicing poses:  
naked warrior, reclining hero,  
postures altered by the angle  
of light, its routine of ancient  
praise, a thousand thousand  
salutations to the sun:  
downward rock, followed by  
lord mountain pose, a balanced  
erratic—Sierra granite paused  
between long geologic breaths,  
holding asanas for centuries.  
Yoga perfected by stone.

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\* William Keener (J.D. 1977, University of California, Hastings College of the Law) practices environmental law in San Francisco.

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## **Gold Leaf on Granite<sup>1</sup>**

*William Keener*

Light  
on this vast Sierra scarp  
is an easy path to reverence.  
Yes, the flat Punjabi plain  
has its own holy shrine,  
the gleaming Gurudwara  
that dazzles devotees  
with walls of hand-struck gold.  
And balanced on  
a Burmese mountain top  
is a great rock, held  
by a strand of Buddha's hair.  
Pilgrims climb for miles  
to illuminate  
their sacred boulder  
in lavish golden paint.

We face east on Glacier Point.  
The sun reaches out  
with its last glinting hammer  
to beat gold leaf on granite—  
the incendiary mica,  
the crystalline quartz, ablaze.  
As far as our eyes can see,  
the world gone gold.  
How malleable our lives,  
to let sight ordain the temples  
we defend, true believers  
reading from a gospel  
of earthly light.

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1. "Gold Leaf on Granite" was first published in *Camas: Nature of the West* (U. of Montana).

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## **Black Feathers, White Bones<sup>2</sup>**

*William Keener*

Barren tundra lay beyond  
the groves of stunted spruce.  
In the scant Alaskan light,  
we drove no farther north  
than a snowdrift where ravens  
stripped the carcass of a moose.  
They argued, picking the last bits  
of frozen flesh from its ribs.  
The Athabaskan know this bird  
as Grandfather, whose voice  
is harsh, whose speech is wise.  
Only ravens stay the winter,  
splitting the air like black axes,  
their shadows sharp against  
the drift of snow and grip of ice  
where the ragged hoofprints end.  
Yet ravens are a toothless tribe,  
and never enter skeletons as we  
and wolves and wolverines  
have always done, cracking bones  
to melt marrow on our tongues.  
How vast their domain would be,  
the ravens think, if they could  
sink the white hatchets of teeth.

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2. "Black Feathers, White Bones" was first published in *Alehouse*.

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