

# Appalachia

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Volume 68  
Number 1 *Winter/Spring 2017: Glaciers Melt,  
Mountain Goats Cope*

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Article 19

2017

## Watching

Francis Blessington

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### Recommended Citation

Blessington, Francis (2017) "Watching," *Appalachia*: Vol. 68: No. 1, Article 19.

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## Watching

Huddled in the still open water,  
small dark populations  
have migrated from the purging ice.  
The wind has remapped the pond  
to clear glass and snow fields.  
Gulls strafe the newest generation  
of ice fishers in tan suits like  
station attendants at their  
ice works of wooden crosses  
and sunken lines that rouse  
the hungry trout to snap  
at any moving bling.

Above in an empty maple  
a red shouldered hawk  
hunkers its young darkness,  
a target himself  
at the branch's end,  
following sparrows in the brush  
even the diving ducks.  
Cold rubs his back  
to its white roots.  
A stranger, motionless,  
trained, dutiful.

*Francis Blessington*

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FRANCIS BLESSINGTON's essays, stories, and poems have appeared in *Arion*, *The Dalhousie Review*, *Literary Imagination*, *The Sewanee Review*, *The Southern Review*, and in many other publications. His latest book is his translation of Euripides, *Trojan Women, Helen, Hecuba: Three Plays about Women and the Trojan War* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2015).

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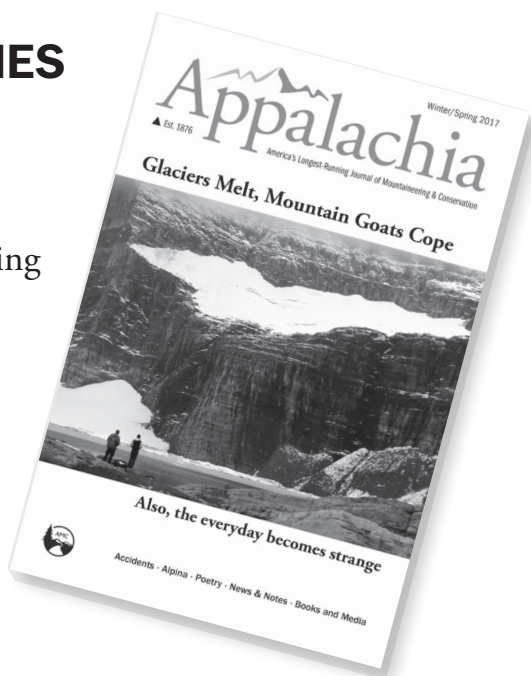
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