

My bones rest with an accumulation of dust of about a millimeter in thickness, in the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. I am fixed on a wooden backdrop, with a sheet of beveled glass in front. I imagine that on the outside of this enclosure, my species name is nicely labeled and reads: *Columbian Mammoth*, although I can't be sure. The layer of dust represents a time span of about 91 sunrises and sets, the last time I felt a velvet cloth against my dry, hard, calcium-rich skeleton. Before the present, I walked with the high peaks of the Rocky Mountains. Before now, but after I walked those peaks; I layed deep in sediment at the site of a buried ancient lake. The dirt around me represented a time span of 51 million to 21 million dawn and dusk cycles, since I last moved through the rocky peaks and grassy high elevation basins. I carry a much smaller burden of time on my bones now, here with this dust.

Heavy muscle and wrinkled flesh hung from my skeleton as I grazed in fields high up in the mountains. I stood 10 ft tall, and weighed something north of 10,000 pounds. The climate was warm and wet, during a period when glaciers had retreated. The impressive Colorado peaks rose high into the atmosphere, encircled by damp clouds. Their tops sparkled with quartz, as if God had dropped his finest crystal chandelier and shattered it on the peaks. Huge trees grew in thickly woven forests in the valleys. My close relative, the Mastodon, bulldozed through the dense forests. Unfazed by the thick greenery, he grazed on trees and underbrush. I spent my days roaming alpine grasslands, dotted with brightly colored wildflowers.

Everytime the moon rose, the mountains became colder, and the alpine air sharpened. Although I did not know it yet, the lucid blue mass of ice forming high in the mountains advanced, tightening its frosty grip on the peaks and valleys. One day, before the sun rose but deep after it had set; I was resting in a grassy field. Without warning, a piercing cold stone pushed through my heart. Six more sharpened stones punctured my old wrinkling skin, as a pack

of homo sapiens emerged from the dark forest. My blood drained, and my flesh peeled back. My body rests here, on the damp frozen grass beneath these peaks. Rain and snow come, seasons pass. My bones expose themselves under black-brown scraps. Eventually, I am pushed to the bottom of a large lake, icy blue water envelopes me, and I am safe in its frostbitten hands. The world falls out of view, as layers of sediment and rotting organic matter accumulate on me. Light from the sky stretches its long arms to the bottom of the lake, fading as more leaves come to rest on my bones. I can feel the deep unsettled growling of an advancing glacier pushing through the mountains, as if it's yelling in hunger, moving closer to my icy blue home at the bottom of this lake. I lay here, suspended in time, so much on either side of me. Glacial till from a cold icy period before lay beneath my bones, leaves and bugs from the time I walked the grass rest just above and next to me. I feel connected to the infinity of it all. The glacier pushes to the edge of the lake, a wall of sediment has piled up at its terminus, and the frozen mass is forced to flow around. Saving my bones and the bugs next to me from its pulverizing force.

It becomes hard to understand how long I have been buried in the muck of this lake. I notice small changes in the weight I carry, one more leaf, one more grain of sand. As if everything has ceased, but I know time still relentlessly progresses. All in a moment, warm light struck my bones as I was lifted from the muck. I could see that the glowing hot orb had continued its service of rising and setting, even in my blackness. Now, as I lay here in my case, with a millimeter thick accumulation of dust; I am reminded of infinity.