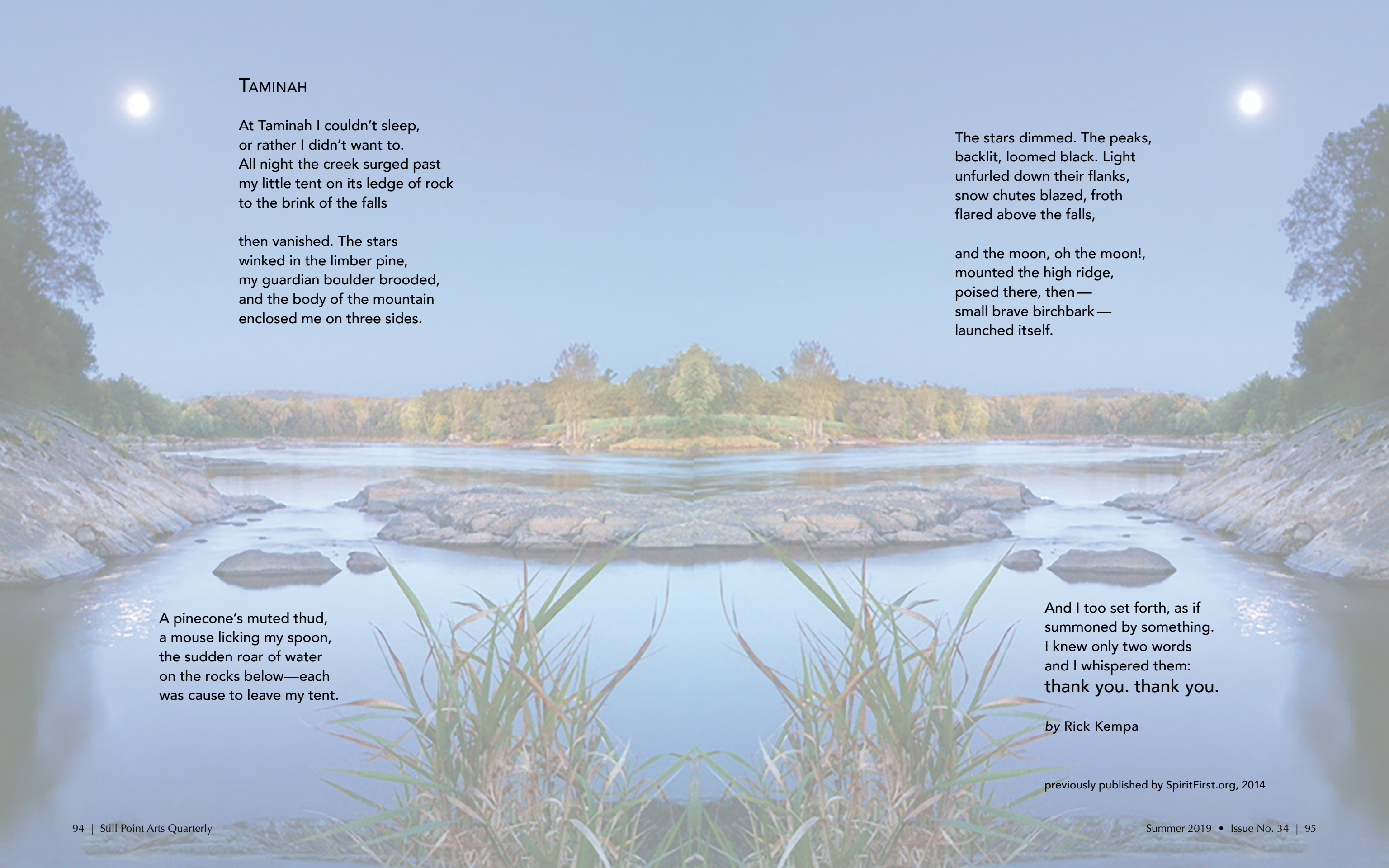




TAMINAH

At Taminah I couldn't sleep,
or rather I didn't want to.
All night the creek surged past
my little tent on its ledge of rock
to the brink of the falls

then vanished. The stars
winked in the limber pine,
my guardian boulder brooded,
and the body of the mountain
enclosed me on three sides.

A pinecone's muted thud,
a mouse licking my spoon,
the sudden roar of water
on the rocks below—each
was cause to leave my tent.

The stars dimmed. The peaks,
backlit, loomed black. Light
unfurled down their flanks,
snow chutes blazed, froth
flared above the falls,

and the moon, oh the moon!,
mounted the high ridge,
poised there, then —
small brave birchbark —
launched itself.

And I too set forth, as if
summoned by something.
I knew only two words
and I whispered them:
thank you. thank you.

by Rick Kempa

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