

annunciation

cold-nosed on the drenched mountain
smelling of wet hybrid sage and charcoal
watching orange sodium light up the valley
why do they flicker—atmosphere or for real
squares and lines, human bees coral
in 100 years how ubiquitous electricity
so much, we don't ask where
it comes from, forget
what makes the magic
we put our fingertips on when we come indoors
it seemed like little enough to want
it has turned out to be too much
too many of us expect it now
bat scatters past, pauses, tangles in the brush, then
on its way again, jitters and skirled up, erratic flap
that a brain can think as far back as origin, take
in books, talk of ice ages, primordial soup,
the savannah, oxygen, it thinks should by rights
go forward the same distance—we think we've rights
in this matter, are aggrieved
when we go no further
darken behind me
straggle low silly gulf clouds, linty fawn, taupe of dust-balls
above them more serious
indigo cumulus massing
hides the snow on peaks far to the east
beyond which lies the desert
valley which was not always desert
(what the old ladies told me: peaches, apples, alfalfa, green
clear glacier-fed creeks, water rights sold off cheerful,
no one thinking what could happen, knew nothing of
the unstoppable thrust of cities)
los angeles and las vegas appeared
singing bewitching kicky songs
rhinestones velcroed in hair black a shimmer
of lipstick glitter on her shoulder
I flake the purple nailpolish off, know I shouldn't
try to imagine 100 more years, then 100 more—
fail—will there be air, will be here or other or altogether elsewhere—
our memes, extended phenotypes supply us
cars for exoskeletons, silicon for brains, but what can
replace the world's skin? incredulous, I
decide the thing that scares
or grieves me most—loses me, unhinged to where my mind's
got no chance of following—about my dying is
I'll never get to know how it turns out—astounded
no one will ever so much as send me a letter—will
some one not write or call—no one come
to get me, send to let me know
how you all solved
the problem, or even
if