

The Grizzly in the Photo, Glacier National Park

When she comes to eat you,  
she runs so fast you must fly,  
but only a man's inept wings jut and feather  
frightened and slow  
before her brazen body shoulders you down,  
her yellowed teeth, spikes,  
like her mesmerizing fur,  
now flash white  
as you fall snapping  
one last picture,  
her only portrait.

## Going into the Grand Canyon

An empty moon, stars hollow across the sky, the things you knew no longer stick or fill up anywhere— everywhere light empties, falls away, dark rising across the canyon wall, reds, yellows, oranges gone so quickly, so soon. Too soon. It seems everyone will die, where once there was hope or astrology, now it's only numbers. The road that goes to an ocean, just dry, cracked two-lane here, a rut where things go missing.

As you go down in the canyon, it just gets hotter, with less water, if your children knew you, it would not be so dark, if anyone you knew could stay, the sun might not go dim each day, clouds blurring without rain. No one knows what death is— cliffs rise up with no explanations, no inventions. Each outcrop and cave mouths nothing. Not even red paint hands or antelopes tell any certain thing— stories evaporate as soon as rain, the flesh sooner.

The pack is heavy, our shoes all dirt, sweat rimes salty layers— this geography the skin knows: the body only trying to keep cool, every operation, attribute, even the upright spine, the arched feet, the hips, the blood's curved platelets, the heart protected deep in the chest beating the walk's rhythm: every thing to help us stay alive, the same bits and pieces that fall away, like the pack flung wide to save calories for the brain, save sweat for the heart, but always there is finally nothing left to throw away to save yourself, the canyon floor waiting, its tiny river rushing deeper stronger than all the people dogs or children you have ever known.

## Countless

Several Keck Twin astronomers search for the long lost stars  
like parents hoping the child will be found, even while its photo-  
copy faces tear away, ink streaking down telephone poles.  
So they try with the radio telescope too. It is so hard to find  
that long ago light that they stay up late, eat bad takeout food,  
nod off by the computer screen that remembers every photograph  
ever taken. How the child becomes part of the family—  
so smart, so stupid, so pretty, so clumsy— its small, five pointed  
hands in futile signals to reveal an earlier compass, a shifted map.  
I could not say how you were lost, how I imagined I held you  
even when your hair might fall away or your tiny cries told me  
it was too far to come. Now I peer through the telescope even  
in the bright day. I think I see how the bird becomes part of the tree,  
its wings leaves, the heart wind, light bones nodding branches—  
the very thing we look for hidden in what we already see.

## Where All Things are Made New

Each of us is moving to another country— even in winter's short light,  
the moon eating the sun, night hovering on the horizon, the sky's pale silk,  
we carry gold with us and firewood, the wool blankets and hardtack,  
books and beans, mirrors and axes, our grandmothers' bibles,  
and grease for the wagon wheels, to keep everything turning.

I don't know which of us will leave first, which of us will carry water  
enough to get there, enough to keep there and drink in long cool gulps—  
but there may be no need, the streams full and clear, the salmon running,  
trout skimming the shore, pines, oaks, maples, ironwood, and hawthorn

filtering noise and light to shape something that might tell us  
where we are going next. Thousands walk there anyway,  
without answers. One man climbs to the bluff, his body charring  
slowly in the brightness, a shadow in the burn of sun.  
At the crest, he may fall into himself, we may fall with him.  
Mostly what we want is worthless— the beads and lace, the extra skillet,  
the trunk full of pictures— these things we must throw over  
so we and the oxen can go these miles we have to go.