

## ONCE IT HAPPENS

nothing can be cured;  
every glacier—not wanting to let in  
the warm air—will have to give in to desperation.

The sheets of ice that make up  
the king-sized bed of Greenland,  
are already bearing the holes of a hotter climate.

The oceans will continue to lap at the spirit  
like hungry mouths—not in fulfillment,  
but only for what else their bodies can do.

What will happen when the earth is not a world—  
when the water reaches the mountains  
that are now only salted with snow?

Once it happens there will be no interruptions,  
no damage contained beyond the smoke  
that thunders, no crack in the rim of illusion—

just a no man's land where the light  
that had once gathered us into the foreground,  
transitions, darkening the very heart

of what we might have done.

## **THE WEATHER, LATELY**

has been guilty of breaking records.

The temperature has been steadily rising  
and the forecast is calling for more of the same.

None of the predictions, however,  
have ever been accurate,

but if a radical change occurs,  
if suddenly a small wildfire explodes

into a bellowing tyrant and the fire is not put out,  
a new regime of normalcy will strike

at the very root of the terrain.  
It's happened many times before,

a story that's been told by someone else  
of how a kingdom of paper birch caught fire,

how the tortuous flames whipped out of control,  
claiming every shrub and tree.

What was left in its place was nothing  
but a solid sheet of white-hot ash

suppressing the land beneath in its desire  
to break free. There were no more forecasts.

An absolute power always seems to have its way;  
the forces combine without interruption,

and in time, the smoke thickens into a fog,  
poisoning the air with impunity

so that all anyone could do eventually  
is to forage into a future promising more of the same.

## MELTDOWN

Just another iceberg  
once again leaving its home in the Arctic,

a child forced out by the break-up  
and running after its siblings into the currents

of a warmer climate, each one raising the limit,  
each one at the border trying to fit into the landscape.

The earth will have its primal moment;  
the sun, a blazing crown, will punish by degrees;

a sudden meltdown; the water, an unwanted guest  
the coastline will have to book into its rooms.

Where is that unknown gap, the one  
that will find itself in the height of the season,

the stroke of luck behind the sandbags  
that were put up by default? Our oceans will soon

storm in on the land, the land in between  
no longer guarded. How much more

must the earth give up before it can be reclaimed?  
How much more than enough

until the land slides into obscurity—  
until the lights turn out by another source of power?

## ONE WAY TO FIND THE ALTERNATIVE

is to take what is known to be absolute,  
break it down—reduce it  
to its simplest form,  
until the only thing that matters  
is what's at stake.

This is a mighty force of power—  
an eye that can see through to the truth  
like the sun using its light  
to appeal to the masses,  
that it can work with more integrity  
than oil and coal: no meandering pipelines,  
no emissions, no looming pits  
in the ground—

just its rays stretching out  
over the terrain, changing its décor,  
a greener field where the grass  
can reach its height,  
where the wind can softly caress the blades,  
a power more valuable than any currency.

Every blade of grass can be the spoke in a turbine,  
rotating slowly toward salvation,  
a renewal of itself in which the future  
can survive. An even better way  
to find the alternative  
is to raise the stakes.

It's the world or nothing.