

Waiting for Rain

The hot wind mumbles its coded commentary in the trees tonight

A slow moon spills over the far hills

The monsoon rain is overdue

But this is human language.

In the tongue of the desert, what is, is.

Nothing is ever due, or overdue.

A coyote, nose low, trots into the gloom

Sonoran Desert Toad

Appears at my back door on a hot night in July,
motionless as a monk, far from the raucous chorus
flung like sequins last night against
the vast black bowl of sky:

Toads, singing.

That wild party
in the moonless dark
seems unrelated to the placid mug before me now.
I focus my beam:

Is this the one that can kill a dog?

Camouflaged as gravel,
grave and entitled as a dean,
he inhabits the yard.
The negotiation is silent, two-way,
of the moment.

We each have our claim,
but he grants bland consent
to a low shovel flight, over the wall, and out of sight.
What is it to him? Lizards, scorpions –
His meals abound

But I interrupt him
in his country.
Here in this desert, he is ancient, organic.
I, with my gates and screens,
am a novice on rocky ground