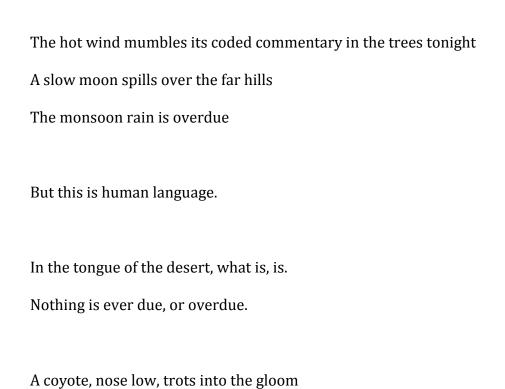
Waiting for Rain



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