

THE END

Something quit in the predawn hour,
a great sussurance beneath the surface.

A wanting to die, to be washed
and empty of the scribblings
and the history. We didn't know
how to know. We never stood
hungry in the middle of the plains,
the invisibly dark gasses borne
out of the subterranean cannisters,
passing over it all like a slow song
we listened to before we'd heard
rock-and-roll and danced furiously.
It was an old-fashioned song sung
in a lost language, the good
interpreter lost over the border, his wife
already in black. We took more
than the food offered us, the fast
transparent whispers of the hunger strikers
just an empty joke. Out of the ashes
a body signifying the lord,
clothed with the white heat
of its own surety, angry, imprisoned
by an expanding ecstatic universe,
but burning like a cartoon hero
back from the dead, rife with wit
and a good guy's charm. Even he
failed. And so in the umbrella
of the cartoon darkness, another figure
unsettled in the mud, stripping
the last vestments from its body,
volcanic, massive, pre-verbal, slathered
in root-stuff and fool's gold, lifting
a radium coin from the forest floor-
And still we didn't get it. And
like a dog stupid with need, we drooled
and panted, did tricks in the hideous dirt
for the next master, until we were sent
into the cold night to breathe out
our last dreams under the frigid,
inordinate moon, under
the nervous, angelic stars.