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.