

DRIVING WEST

the sun lights down on the hood for us
at the end of every westward-driving day:
the fourth such sun will find us there

I have looked at my first tumbleweed,
seen desert soil, and the hide-and-seek of mesas,
and rediscovered
truths not known since childhood:

that the sky is a blue mixing-bowl inverted
that the clouds hang there by magic and do not fall
that the stars of night are not three, nor twelve, but myriad
that the sky enclosing these is black

I have gained this much: that I saw New Mexico blue
and the land still bright with flamecolor—vistas
that spun and bounced off mountainsides to the valleys below them—
as, counting myself twenty-three years old and soon twenty-four,
I crossed through Texas real
and Oklahoma physical
to the certainty of California
my first West, and the world's last