

Western landscapes with retreating horizons

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A flurry of dust from librarian fingers
keypads spell silence, poets write
too late what time is . . . In a flash

it allows a photograph

but darkroom water reveals blank paper
and professors dribble
down murderous bibs: *There's not time
to wonder where time's gone.*
But the crowd shouts
Wait a minute!
turns sixty perfect circles

and makes the sign of the clock.

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The shop bell rings, a knock on the door –
*Please shut down your power supply
we now own the sun.* We bend over backwards
to comply, then bend over some more.
Cash registers ring: *Hey, listen to this!*
police on radios, many countries mentioned
in one breath; one long breath drawn in,
but never let out. We want to scream
what we know and release all the mice
from their treadmills. Ordinary indexes
swing through the trees and we hear the creaking
forest floor. Speeches die down to a low hum
that steals flight from everything feathered
while we iron wax stains from our wings.

The distant waves
do what they do
and we set alight
photographed catastrophes.

When we rebuild, we won't govern
nor allow others the honour.
We'll live regretfully, we'll hoo ha

and dance a pirouette. No one
will notice. We'll explode in capital
letters all over the footpath
croon old tunes to young audiences,
then forget to bow. Once the jeering

dies down, we'll smile and show
each other scars. The crowd will cry
for more, then search us for knives.

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Trumpet calls finally die down
and with it the recurring dream
of snow-capped mountains towering
over a wilderness of ideas.

*You're from the past, a voice
down there cries, but we can't tell
if it's for us or the mountains.*

This is the kind of confusion
sky must endure all the time.
The weight of the impossible
draped around a bird's neck
it's clouded face dissolving.

*Once all the leaves are gathered
the mist will clear. We'll know
our real names and the sun
will be the busiest it's been*

is the myth of circumstantial evidence
given the gift of happenstance:

there are no further hiding places
now the earth beneath our feet
is ploughed and the planet's
axis is the balance beam on which
we take our final bow.