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Without Glasses

Michael North

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from their dreams of the tomb they come to life again
with all their senses, sailing past
the cats waiting paws lifted in the bushes straight
for the nearest cloud stuttering by. arm in arm
on the top step we watch them clinging
with their thin transparent fingers behind
the billboard moving on to other kingdoms.

Without Glasses / Michael North

Without glasses I look
at a primitive world
where the animals are more
beautiful than Lascaux.
Cows billow as they amble
through the trees. Dogs
go soft at the edges
and mold themselves
to the fence. On every
branch is a small bird,
pulsing like a flame.

This is the original world,
where the deer grew so
tall they toppled, dragging
their complicated racks.
Here the new teeth of
the cats distorted their
jowls, and mammoths
bowed to the majesty
of their own mouths.

This is the world in
flux, where color is so
insistent it can't be
contained by any line.
With nothing to stop it
the tail of the flycatcher

stretches forever. The heron
erects a long body,
standing to see, and
the blue whale tests
the ocean and finds no
limit to its buoyancy.

In this true world the jay
blurs itself in flight;
the wind blots the sharpness
of the pine. The artist,
pausing at the wall, finds
his shapes already leaning,
the long wolves stretched
by the tension of the chase,
the great square ox expanding,
fleeing on its spindly
legs, acquiring by its
speed the body of fright.

Landscape with a Woman / Richard Shelton

when shadows climb
out of the desert
up the sides of mountains
and violent birds pass like projectiles
on their way home for the night
I say I have given you
everything it was all I had

when darkness rises
to the tops of saguaros
and a river of cool air begins to flow
down the arroyo
I say I have given you
little it was all I had