

1980

The Mountain Speaks Anew

David Ray

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Recommended Citation

Ray, David. "The Mountain Speaks Anew." *The Iowa Review* 11.2 (1980): 192-192. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2609>

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David Ray

In slow motion now we join
the citizens of Pompeii.
The pumice settles down
upon our garden leaves.
There's peppered ash
upon your sleeve. The sky
becomes a sulphur yellow,
a swirl of lead, as if
J.M.W. Turner painted it.
Even the bee stirs up
a cloud, settling on a bloom.
Car's occasion for
a vicious flurry, a trail
of chaff like a shadow of
those two truckloads of toxic
waste it takes to make one,
or historic emblem left
by caravans that passed.
The vistas of our lane
become escape routes, lure.
We watch their aura glow,
and admire the sun above,
a painted orange that cuts
an orifice in smog.
In Pompeii the sunny friend
betrayed, and lovers joined
left eternal impress of
devotion under fire.
A strolling poet scratched
Nothing can last forever
on a wall. Again the trees
lie down like hair upon a head.
Behave, Behave, we tell the gods.
Behave, Behave, they answer back,
old dragons, or Wotan, breath
drifting long across the land.