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Without Oceans

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Without Oceans

for M.S.

I am astonished, at first, how anyone can
have lived long yet not traveled to its lengths,
measured those rough antic swells, the rock cliffs and running
tides, moon's messages: ebb, flood, neap. Madness,
really, to imagine growing old without oceans, overcome
by dryness, hand held to eyes, eyeing the horizon,
like Odysseus walking dryly inland to plant his oar. I imagine
that the echoes of limitless waters haunt every ear
and then realize they must. I find ocean in canyon's frozen
waves of red rock, see piscine shadows in alkali flats, sense
seas in some people's passing looks, matching my own peaceless
need for walking out, out, across the rills of old tidelands
to a chilly edge, where, alone, the crash of crosscutting waters
drowns the *skee* of seagull, slow bark of sealions.
I don't mean brunch on the sand *or* the tossed beer bottle of the heart,
but lifeforce, ocean you carry within, that rolls like leviathan,
sending upswelling waters to restore each wide dawn.