

2001

# The Myth of the West

Laura Nichols

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Nichols, Laura. "The Myth of the West." *The Iowa Review* 31.1 (2001): 97-97. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.6598>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact [lib-ir@uiowa.edu](mailto:lib-ir@uiowa.edu).

## THE MYTH OF THE WEST

Off an island coast  
the gray shark's embryo sinks.

A sudden storm  
weaves a net of stimulation.

This velvet subversion;  
a diver walks backwards into the tide  
and listens from his heels  
as the ocean hums  
in the flat blue language of the computer screen.

On the frigid side of a mountain  
a fern unfurls.  
A man on horseback picks through a clear-cut.

Traffic lights weep from hidden lacerations  
at 2AM  
the freeway jangles its spurs  
across the routes of the west.

Drought radiates from a sidewalk's whorled spine.  
Ocean salt scours an inland parking lot.

And a river, cradle of the deciduous town,  
is a split carcass bleeding sand.

One day  
a fractured skull may break free  
of the anthropologist's saline myth.  
A glacial wind will pull the names  
from the watertower's hunched shoulders.

Ninety-seven horses  
paw out from fingerlights  
of dappled ground.