Red Dust

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This harpie with dry red curls talked openly of her husband, his impotence, his death, the death of her lover, the birth and death of her own beauty. She stared into the mirror next to our table littered with the wreck of her appetite and groaned:
Look what you’ve done to me!
as though only that moment she’d discovered her own face.
Look, and she shoved the burden of her ruin on the waiter.

I do not believe in sorrow; it’s not American.
At 8,000 feet the towns of this blond valley smoke like the thin pipes of the Chinese, and I go higher where the air is clean, thin, and the underside of light is clearer than the light. Above the tree line the pines crowd below like moments of the past and on above the snow line the cold underside of my arm, the half in shadow, sweats with fear as though it lay along the edge of revelation.

And so my mind closes around a square oil can crushed on the road one morning, startled it was not
the usual cat. If a crow
had come out of the air to choose
its entrails could I have laughed?
If eagles formed now in the
shocked vegetation of my sight
would they be friendly? I can hear
their wings lifting them down, the feathers
tipped with red dust, that dust which
even here I taste, having eaten it
all these years.