

"The West"

The west was breathing—
I put my hand to it, felt its lungs rise

I lay my atoms down in the sand
and let them fuse to glass

I stood on the earth outside
knowing that one day
not a single light would come on

Too many things were alive
until they weren't anymore

You were a house made of plastic
tipping over the short horizon

I was sharp for you
I could hear your rattle

There was day long enough to hold you
Your body shining in the last light

you were covered in black ash
you were the city caught on fire

You were Los Angeles
and all your plastic was melting

Soon, I hoped, we would wake up
be able to stretch enough
to contain the budding sky
the sky that someone made

It wasn't me
I didn't make the palms
I didn't make the matches

Let's go to the open mouth of the basin
the overflowing bowl of cars and single family homes

Toward it, toward the mountain and beyond
our limbs outstretched
bodies in full force

Zoë Colette Etkin