

I braise a path through desert at dawn
my visible breath leaving me
to reunion with light clouds tracking
still dark ceiling of the world

I braise a path with my dream wealth
a treasure of desires and fears
I have hosted on the long trail
of my generations

my expelled air grows invisible
as candle climbs the sky
spreading its warm quilt over
chilled sandstone
queuing night predators
to their diurnal sleep

I set my feet step by step
on earth like dry leaves falling

gentle as my distant grandmother
taught me

I walk with the softness of quails
my heart pulsing with the stealth
of wolves as I stalk my peace

my solitude a loud fragment
of this canyon's silence
echoing of intimacy with
more verdant domains

my intent heavy and stubborn
a whole heard of bison given
to the graze

my full lips crack in the aridity
as does the ground I touch
its brocade of breaks
bearing crevasse shelter
for what lives in that
penetrating shade

my soul's compass set for a cave
I have never managed to make residence
though I have tasted fleetingly
its calm inside my heart

the story of my ancestors is carved
on the cave's obsidian-toned walls

their shapes and shadows
are trying to tell me
who I am

I know enough to know
I am not the elk
and at least must be the river

the rest of me is answered inside
this vacuous mouth of earth

all my life of days brings me
to this desert
vast extremity conspiring me
along my way

my breath is no longer visible
it is a free flock of birds released

above me
the sun
still climbing

and a sky
boundless shelter for my walking
dry as falling leaves.