

Astonishment

In spring we are running at dusk,
all five of us, away from a wisp
of victim when a cloud
barrels down out of the heavens,
immense roll and wash, leviathan,
barrels end over end, knocking us down
in a field's loneliness three furlongs
from the house of my father—
the full grain brushed
with dew, the dew almost touching
the soil, quick in its descent,
sweeping towards a night between film and glaze—
barrels in before Ammon sees the outline,
like metal burnishing in the summer sun,
and I sense that I've heard of something like this,
argued with my father about *thrones*,
dismissed him as he spoke of *seraphim*
more beautiful than beryl,
when Alma looks up too, and catches
the horse speed of shadow
and white—this chrysolite sheet
as powerful as ten suns,
dropped before us in a blind
and boom of eclipse and thunder
while we hold out for each other
in this thrashing of sonic death,
as though outside of this empty
field nothing else existed, nothing
that was clear enough to hallow
after we fell again to earth,
to dew that tried to make us clean,
face first with the blast of angel and sky.

—Mark Bennion

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