

spacecraftprojects

we are all astronauts

transmissions
david hinton

Late winter light
traces tangled

orchard prunings, remnant
leaves hoarding
color. It's
harvest time. I

weave these
gnarled light-

lines into a clumsy
little basket, then
wander upland
fields gathering wide-

open light. Who
knows what

hunger leads me on?

Darkness returned
night after
night as we

humans slowly became
what we
became, and the eye
opened it

through us. Eventually
we wondered
what we are, searched

down through
story and history
into the deep
shadow of empty

mind. But who
could understand
darkness that

vast? Whole

mountains appear
there every
morning, villages, fossil-

strewn valleys, people and
all these other
planetary distances.

How is it
we can
never touch

sky? It
touches us

easily in the least
breeze, breathes
through us, infusing
blood it-

self with life, speaks
through us

heart and mind

we somehow
never quite touch.

There they
were, my
sandals on sun-

warmed stone
outside the door, as if
someone had
come to visit. Is

there any choice
when you
meet your own

absence? I

welcome it
home, listen
closely. It's telling
its life

story in sky's
restless gusts and
swells. Soon it
moves on to wolf

spider, raven
wing-breath, a long-ago
peak's broken-

granite silence. Old

talkative
friend: it has no
end of
things to tell.

These mountains
never know where
they are, where
they are

going. How
could they? And I
seem nothing

like them, so it
surprises me: I've
grown suddenly
old, and some-

how lost as
these granite peaks
ever could be.

We cultivate
depth and complexity. It's
how we realize

ourselves, and I've
done what I
could. It's
taken a lifetime, but
now I'm learning

how to accept
failure, how to
wander today's blue-

sky snow flurries
windblown across yellow-

gray fields, for
instance, wander
cultivating everything
identity leaves out.

Wind tells its
story differently
each time. I

come often, wanting to
know all its
joys and griefs, its
dark thoughts. But that much
clarity isn't

easy, and sometimes
wind grows
still, silent. Then I

sit alone, whorl tempests
through the dark

deep canyons of my
lungs, whisper gusts strung
out in
words. And if I
listen closely

enough, listen
until I hear my own
voice there

again, I understand
everything wind
says rinsing
itself through this

pine and granite
ridgerock canyon.

Mountains are
what they
are, and they're
nothing like

me. I should
know that
by now. But here I am
again, gazing at

yet another
mountain, and all I

see is that sun-
scree face
memory hides, that earth-
plume sky-

ochre face
I wear
whenever I dance.

I can't find
my thoughts anywhere
this morning. They've
left me

alone, no one
to be. I

act like nothing's
happened, so they don't
suspect anything

when I
stretch my usual walk
out through

winter-burnished
grasses. And they're so
preoccupied, they
don't notice
when I wander

past wafers of seabed
rock angled
up and broken
away into sky, then

sit sun-
warmed facing a familiar
mountain, mirroring

it perfectly. Good
deal. They'll never
find me here.

I've only wandered
its canyons
these few hours, only
breathed a few
scraps of its wind-

sculpted sky—so how
is it this
mountain knows me
better than I

ever could? All
day long, things seen

vanish all the way
inside me, finding distances
I'll never know.

Ochre cliffs water-
stained steel
blue, knife-edge
swifts and sky, wild

roses, ancient sun-
bleached oaks: things somehow
make light

visible. And aren't these
eyes how
light sees it-

self? I've
never understood
masks—what they
hide, what

they reveal.

These days I
don't want this
life any-
more. I wait

quietly all day, then
walk away

toward a last ridgeline
lit in late
sunlight. How

easy it is
to be

what I
am not. This
life, or

some other, or no
life at
all: that lit

ridgeline
can't see the least
difference
between them.

Somewhere past midnight
I wake
hungry for sky. I
gather my
distances, then

set out. On the first-light
summit, I find

sky everywhere, sky

hungry as ever for
distances. It
suspects nothing, and soon
enough it's
feeding on me, feeding

deeper and deeper
until there's nothing

left but wind. I
sleep awhile, dreaming
horizon-wide

wind, then rise
and follow that wind
home, gluttoned with

sky, mapping the way, knowing
I'll come
again, come hunting
sky again soon.