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For My Vita

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For My Vita

My life has the country in it; hills
follow me; miles of grass climb
toward this traveler's eyes in the morning.
Even at night the country unfolds
whenever a splinter of quiet at a party
happens along: I fall straight
as rain into whatever is around me.

Once in prison I felt I was
too free—my cell tumbled with the earth,
all of us flung unknowing and blind.
Since then thousands of miles have sluiced
headlong as comets past my life-shield
and vanished where the rest of the world goes.
Some day I'll save it all by closing my eyes.

William Stafford