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Flying Above the Missouri

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FLYING ABOVE MISSOURI

[Isaiah 5:13]

By bends the river
weighs the ground's merit.
Angling
for a destined south
that now slopes
the other cardinals
to wherever
the dryness tows
calligraphy.

Internal shore,
the mind's pole
for the pumice flat,
it confounds
its predicate role.
The River is the verb
of the verb nation.

Lost it never seems
through arcs that will not
guide the geese chevron
or this plane
mapped and scheduled
between earth and heaven
gulping clouds in rows,
climate's abacus.

A chatty native in the next seat
pulls me to his boyhood "There."
These molten lights
breathed his dense, intended flow.

He's counted all his man days
since this water was his home.
Cradle, speaker, mast
upon which a people
swayed storm into course.

Briefly, as he rambles, I ponder
the landscape as would be mine.
I am fluent yet foreign
to its syllables.
Sibilant formed,
the spinal undulant
shapes the compass
by which a race I know
but will not know me
knows and is known.