Winter 1995

As Western Culture Declines Without Its Knowing

S. P. Healey

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.
Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank
Part of the Creative Writing Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/cutbank/vol1/iss45/3

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in CutBank by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
His body is an accumulation of hindsights,
Dreams of fallout shelters, names engraved
In bullets, centuries of weathered newspapers,
Weeping flags, widows walking through flowers,
Retired heroes living on mild archipelagos,
Credits rising because the movie is over.

It’s a small door open to the counterfeit light
Of dead stars, lost sources of celestial rivers,
Marathons time forgot, while another vernal equinox,
The sequel to last year’s version, comes true,
Making day once again equal night. It’s a hand
Searching for unfamiliar faces and the syllables
They once spoke, because now he’s the only thing
He knows, and there’s word this galaxy is drifting
In a different direction than previously believed.

This means an unknown is attracting it, though it
Remains intact, iceberg-like, promoting togetherness,
Each person frozen and individually-wrapped
Inside an enormous shape, moving simultaneously
Toward the same unknown. There’s also word that
The Palos Verdes butterfly, believed to be extinct,
Has been “rediscovered” in southern California.
About a hundred of them were found “flitting around
A pocket of deerweed” next to an oil refinery.

This is visibility after a period of hiding,
To a lightswitch under finger
As your eyes adjust to fact.

You’re both wave and particle,
Doorway and vanishing point,

Possessor of reasons without shapes,
Governments without nations,

And it’ll be water that takes you away,
Having read the memoirs of dead generals,
Having known their sad victories.