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Into the West

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Into the West

Alberta is a blank sketchpad
to the eyes trained for neon lights and mishaps
labeled modern art, unable to see past
their tawny smog and blue lights—this is a private gallery.

A winter's sunrise stroked pastel lavender
by the blackbird's feather drifting above a cerulean lake
dusted with glitter. Strands of shredded cotton balls
curl upwards from the silent surface.

The ridge of mountains sprayed
deep forest green. The graffitist's thumb slipped on
the nozzle as he turned to call back to his friend. Changing cans,
spritizes of sunshine fall gently on scarlet leaves.

The roads etched in charcoal,
long and straight. Halfway through, the child's hand
grew weary of gripping the two yellow crayons
and he wandered home for a snack.

A herd of cows blotted cream and chocolate in oil pastels,
trembling in gnarled fingers on a nursing home porch.

Just a smear as they graze high in the hills.
The crimson orb dips into black soil, tugged by the flick

of a rainbow tail under the ice, stars poking through
the thickening cloth of night until the moon
is our only spotlight.