

Guthrie and the Columbia

When he was drifting between Oregon and Brooklyn
Woody Guthrie's wife sent him a letter that began:
You're the person that makes me love everything more.

There is something in us that moves West. That severs
The pretense of our nature and seeks the water stretched
Like blanket at the edge of land, to feel a mermaids' breath

On our neck, to wash the Okfuskee dust from our boots
Like the traces of the empty, aimless labors that kept us
From today. Take up that great migration, heart as your guide

And soon a voice will rise above the clatter of your wander
And the static of your younger hours, and then the scrapes
And clanging of becoming, the rude notes of barge and reaper

Will gather into chords of resurrection borne on the Columbia's
Misty glitter, its wild and windward spray that sings behind
This moment with the means to make a home where you stand:

A house built from a new cut stone
A lamp lit with a new found light
A feast fixed from a new dug ground
A new life in a new found land

Washed in the gathered light of the Columbia, as the river
Rolls you to the arms of the sea, into the arms of the one
You love, the voice that delivered you, the one who changes
The lens by which you navigate your hours, who bends the asphalt
Into star, the bustle into music, the thistle into daisies, the rough sea
Into embrace, washed home into the waiting arms of the one
who makes you love everything more.

