

The sum would equal the number of stars
In western skies on an autumn night.

I lean back in my garden chair and watch
The great harvests turn slowly in vast distances—
Red, yellow, green, their blemishes and tiny wormholes
Revolving in the October sky all the way
Out to the round ends of the universe.

THE END BEFORE THE END

My friend is driving me from Denver
To Colorado Springs the long way
On the scenic route, when his car
Vapor-locks and lurches to the berm.

Two rickety, old pals—there we are,
Many decades past our undaunted youths,
One diabetic, the other asthmatic,
Fifty miles from insulin or ventolin,
In a dead car, with shadows lengthening
And strong wind rising with our stress.

As we walk we contemplate
The vast, chilled foothills of age,
Envision snow descending with the light
To bury the road and blind us,
So that we waver off into aspens
To die, our bones found in spring,
Unglued like ancient furniture,
Scattered and whittled by animals—
Pitiful, old fools, stunned by years,
Paying at last for early excesses
And now for final misjudgments.