

ROY JACOBSTEIN

Heaven

Poetry //

Exceeding music must take the place

Of empty heaven and its hymns

—Wallace Stevens, “The Man with the Blue Guitar”

Oui, mon ami, a mean estate, devoid
of Chuckles (the lemon, the lime).

No zoot-suited organist sluicing fear
through Saturday Silents matinees,

no escaping that scrim of mute
smiling Seraphim, no lush lutes

resounding across verdant buttes.
Nothing save prayer prayer prayer.

Yet when we attend with our inner-
most ear, we hear this plangent note:

the cry of the Earth’s latest neonate—
that does suffice, that and the ineffable

joy we find in rhyming, say, *guitar*
with *catarrh*, or *ouija* with *squeegee*.