

STEPHEN DUNN

Getting Places

That red gash in the hills, I told her,
is bauxite, not clay. I saw that it was *gash*
that made her smile. What about
those cows the color of Irish Setters
grazing in the lowland? she asked.
Oh, just big, slow dogs.
Thank you, she replied, like Elvis,
thank you very much.
That over there, I said, feeling it now,
is bougainvillea, and see, up the trail,
that house, the one gutted by fire?
It once belonged to a famous bandit
and his high maintenance woman,
dear friends of mine.
I like the word *cornucopia*, she said,
the sound and size of it,
that's the kind of girl I am.
I understand, I didn't say.
Instead I told her that beyond
the red gash in the hills
are the caves, and beyond the caves
are the monasteries beyond sleep
where you get to lie down.
Good, she said, we're getting places now.