

The White Wall · John Witte

Sick of words, sick of his work,
my old friend the printer
taped a picture of a meadow
to the blank wall. The eye longs
for a place to rest. We are all in danger,
though in ways we may not be
aware of. The meadow is green,
a cool profusion of frond and trillium.

Speaking of dangers, he tells me the story
of his grandfather arriving alone
from the Ukraine, a young man
going to work in a mine. Watching
the miners enter the tiny shack, he began
to wonder. How is it possible
to fit us all inside
this little house?

He tried to see
if another building was hidden behind
this one. He began yelling in a language
no one understood. His new friends
gathered around him, and tried
to comfort him, saying
this is the only work there is.