

STEPHEN GOULD

To the Desert's Eye

When
night set and in spite
of the wind
we made camp on a low knoll
sheltering only leeward of a crop of stone.
Dry heat lingered
at the corners of the eyes
the fibers of vision out of weeks gone
twined like the gnarl of greasewood.
The fire lodged
behind the retina. Like desert's echo
in the Masoretic text the broad wind came full circle
the circuit closed all arks
at once, electric
trees tapseeking root in stone
guttating cloud.

Great birds of light flew out of my mouth

We'd come forever
had forever left to go
sat bolt still with stones
indrawn breath paused

collapsed balloonsilk tents

about to speak.