

## Not the Truman Show

*R. A. Christmas*

*for Duane Jeffery*

Imagine a world with labels on the leaves,  
fossilized scripture in compacted dust,  
“God Made” on hooves—where everyone believes  
not out of hope or faith, but because they must.  
We’d have Everest and oceans, but here and there  
Heaven’s “product placements,” coyly displayed.  
Nature would be a warning, not a dare.  
We’d be awed and cowed by turns—but mostly afraid.  
Instead, we get dinos, billions of years,  
Australia, plate tectonics, Sanskrit, yurts,  
chimp DNA, vestigial gills at our ears—  
Mom Earth, with sweets and secrets up her skirts,  
herself existent, leaving room for doubt,  
our stage unstaged, where life and death play out.