



EROSION

Is geology a kind of poetry? Is orogeny, uplift, the syncopation
of named eons laid end-to-end? Were they really clanking toward
our future? Is geology the story we should put our hominid minds to?
Is the Anthropocene us, or are we all? Is geology poetry?

Is poetry geology? Does the numerate, have the upper hand,
or the numinous? Is that a shock of red cardinal flowers,

or is it a hummingbird bustling between? Is it a buried sediment
to be assayed for carbon in the present, tested? Are carbon levels

to Geiger counter, as stock market is to CNBC? Is the latest species
cha-cha toward oblivion to our unrattled success in multiplying?

Is the joke our sapien ancestors wouldn't get?

RATHLIN ISLAND

Not the sweet stink rising
from Bull Point's puffins, or the kittiwake
colony, or the blue eye just winked

open on the wind-lashed lough,
or the verge of prickly purple heather,
but the peregrine's sickle-hinged
stoop over fields above Cooraghy Bay—
a blade sharp as any grizzly tooth
pierced the air and dropped
below the basalt cliff face—
Strop every ribbon of surprise
to keep it sharp—

THE GEOLOGIST CONSIDERS THE POST-PASTORAL

The sewer piper clogged with sand—
Underwear abandoned at the old swimming
hole. Privet across the creek chokes

out dog-hobble and mountain laurel,
an infestation, though once preferred by settlers,
a topiary possibility topping off the lush

natives. In this unsettled critical turn
we see there is no room for the old order,
flexibility is paramount, the epoch's defense—

Only the seismic shift, coarse volcano dust,
meteor strike cants the conversation earthward—
We are now the voice, the digital gramophone

much more than the owl in the neighbor's
wood lot. His song is stilled by the mirror
of the world, though he doesn't know or care

like we do with our archives of unwasted signs,
the lyrics and poems of unintended martyrs
to modernity, troubadours of academic detachment—

I want to open a door where we could walk
into something like now. It's simple physics—
There is no past unless we make it with paper,

or better yet, keys beneath our elongated fingers—
The past is a funhouse mirror and the future is black magic.