



Watchers: A Journey to Alberta

by Jenny Crakes

I
Like elderly neighbors, they hear that I am going east.
They send me on my way,
their icefields clinging to peaks
against fierce July heat,
cavern walls so high I can see only blue,
streams etched in chalk.
From the Rockies to the prairie, I cross a line
a sudden exit, a blink
from still granite folds
to yellow fields, the road tapering
straight and swift for miles.

II
Over my shoulder, the watchers hunch and draw together,
knuckles propping up the chin of sky.
They remain, formidable and brooding,
slowly growing pale, slippery. Ghostlike
they breathe themselves back into the horizon
and disappear.

III
Descending into boomtown
I arrive at the
Great Canadian Dinosaur Rush
oil patches and fossilized bones
help wanted in every window
and men in steel-toed boots eating ice cream
on their way to rescue houses full of flood.

IV
On the way back, thick wind pushes hair
into my eyes.
The road curls like smoke.
The watchers fade in like a crown, an echo
on the edges an hour before I reach them.
I am drawn forward like a magnet
in the white glare of afternoon.