WATCHING LIGHT IN THE FIELD

It may be part water, part animal—
the light—the long flowing whole
of it, river-like, almost feline,
shedding night, moving silent
and inscrutable into the early morning,
drifting into the low fields,
gathering fullness, attaching itself
to thistle and sweetgrass,
the towering border trees,
inheriting their green wealth—
blooming as if this
were the only rightful occupation,
rising beyond itself, stretching out
to inhabit the whole landscape.
I think of illuminations, erasures,
how light informs us, is enough
to guide us. How too much
can cause blindness. I think of memory—
what is lost to us, what we desire.
By noon, nothing is exact,
everything diffused in the glare.
What cannot be seen intensifies:
rivulet of sweat across the cheekbone,
earthworm odor of soil and growing.
The field sways with confusion
of bird call, mewlings,
soft indecipherable mumblings.
But in the late afternoon, each stalk
and blade stands out so sharp and clear
I begin to know my place among them.
By sunset as it leaves—
gold-dusting the meadow-rue and hoary alyssum,
hauling its bronze cloak across the fences,
vaulting the triple-circumference
of hills—I am no longer lonely.