V

Celestial

Full dark, and in the cooling night air
the scent of dog tooth violet and mayapple,
and the burgeoning suck and slide of the river
boiling with unseen cargo, the freighted tangle
of toppled, up-ended things borne away:
trees, animals, the dreams of exhausted men.
Colter snores. Drouillard and sergeant Ordway
share a nightmare, a boat tossed on its beam-end,
the deck vertical . . . Meanwhile, beyond the trees,
Meriwether shoots the stars, or rather, sights
the moon’s slow wade and toggle against Anatares,
calling out the numbers to Captain Clark—
and regular as clockwork, Clark complies,
records, by lantern light, the unencumbered skies.