You rise at dawn from your bed of boughs
tensed and blinking from a dream that ended
with a snap of—what?—a branch? . . . your senses
whip-ready, primed by the slightest noise—
You watch for a figure, but nothing shows . . .
In that decisive moment, let’s say you’ve heard
the chip of a grackle in the click of a cocking-piece,
and you relax your guard. If you’re a moose,
you’re dead. If you’re a man, you’ve been had again,
and still you can’t see him. You’ll call out, “Colter?”
He’ll smile, and then, like a Cheshire in reverse,
(though here I’ve got my history wrong), he’ll appear
without a word, for he’ll have said it all
in shades, in limbs of beech & buckskin, teeth first.