Empire Burlesque

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“Reduced in circumstance,” Clark reports, “we suped on skant soup, a little bear oil & twenty pounds of candles” melted for tallow. As they pass, ridge upon ridge, the Bitterroots cast and recast the terms of next resort, (for there cannot, there will not be, a last). And hunger makes the best of bootlace al dente, for instance: picante, but as tough to swallow, perhaps, as this coarse meandering from fact. Sorry. I’d mend my ways, but the fact is the river undercuts, frustrates and beguiles the plan, theirs and mine, the crow’s route we hunger after. And the river offers no other method, which is why they call them river miles.