

# *Catharine Lucas*

## **AFTER NEW RAIN**

*for Anna*

On the slope, last summer's dead—uncut fennel, dry thistles, ghosts of  
rye grass—a silver scrim like tattered fog  
subdues the boisterous green called forth by new rain.

Our tardy wet season has begun:  
dirt paths soften that last week wore like iron under the feet. The earth  
is not yet muck, so the going is easy if you stay out of the gullies.

*Look, I tell you, meaning the feathered gray combed over the green crown of the hill,  
Like old men's hair—*

Or maybe not

*What was I calling it, just now? Tattered fog?*

I seem to be revising. For you. Who are here but not here.

I remember once, on the coast road out of Big Sur, you turned from the sea to the sweep of  
brackened hills. Nestled into crevasses, lifted on the crests: furled wands of pampas, purple as  
newborns—

“Give me some of your pretty words,” you said.

(I had thought that, like most, you minded my constant commentary)

Nice to be invited, though it silenced me awhile—a babbling child surprised by someone  
listening

I never recovered innocence.

Often since you left, I catch myself practicing—  
as if you'll come back. We'll be driving along the coast  
and you'll suddenly point, far out, to where sea meets sky.

“Give me some of your pretty words,” you'll say.

I must be ready to describe  
infinity.