

Basin & Range

Clovis and his heirs were
first to brace this desert

that colors like still
water, mirages moving
as a herd

of game after herds
of game moving
onto unburnt pasture.

Pronghorns infiltrate
the hills, brine shrimp
churn the saline lakes,

and countless Teal
nest in this buzzing, stinging
horizon of reeds that, nights,

steams; and in tall grass,
heavy seed heads,
small birds, and furtive,

furred creatures
rustling, husking, storing
for the lean dry not all can flee;

and, along shallow rivers,
welcome trees that shed
the soft lining of small

birds' nests;
and in thickets, webs
for bleeding wounds.

Ice, for Clovis, is
the adolescence of water:
awkward, crossed with care.

Discovering obsidian,
Clovis thrived in sight
of basalt cliffs and lava tubes

at this intersection
of migrations, melt-
water, and savage siblings.

More than ten
thousand years ago,
his dead exposed

in canyons, Clovis
left middens,
fire pits.

We find
arrowheads,
coprolites.