

PACIFIC SOLITAIRE

R.J. Lambert

On long delay, the falling sky
crashes Pacifically in tidal waves

off the wharf where beach commoners
must resist it. A ship
ships surplus cars and trucks to water

burial deeper than souterrain,
beneath porpoises and water

mammals (no sirens per se,
or siren song's muted
by truck-frame whirl and eddy).

Decades hence, there's word
of car-part afterlives:

the shipman grandson's dreams
tether his father's father
who slid machinery to sea where

cars awoke as from a slumber, took female
form and sang to forlorn shipmen

of the day. In this as in his every dream
a captive seal dies and lies like metal
on the zoo pool's cement floor,

six thousand copper-plated weights
gorged to gut-burst—

might as well a plane wing
splitting the Pacific shallows with its arc,
sunlit pennies set off like underwater sparks.

PROBABLE ROBIN

R.J. Lambert

On high our robin
is the first spring bud to bloom

hung there among the trees
like broken glass

catching light and rain
drops

trucks don't slow for it
too small to cut
bicycles ride right past

his wings beat like spokes
on playing cards—the Red King—

dirt predator
softly stalking rhubarb corridors
for small treasure:

mischief in bushes is his
he plays the worm game alone

YEARLONG ABROAD

R.J. Lambert

—for Dean

Brother/fighter,
time competes for you.

A child's rhyme,
threadbare, barren beyond
our peers even:

girls with thin curls
were blond in black & white,

smoke like fingers
laying their heavy heads
to bed.

If I've earned a holiday,
give me your Spain

from all four poles, your Portugal,
a continent widening
in the belly of water.

Diving depths for rocks
is a native danger, heretofore.

So tender a toreador:
I have not
worked all my life.