On a Flowing Ebb

by Carla McGill

This exit, once completed,
opens out to multitudinous entrances.
The map provides methods
for placing ourselves
somewhere, but all maps
are approximations, aim
to represent something—a moment
of anguish, for instance, or a place
where a glimpse occurred—
something just out of reach,
a glint of sun on a wave.

To the North is white:
horse galloping bright winds,
luminous light on valleys,
shimmering skies.

Refreshments are in the South,
warm blossoms, continents of orangey gold,
whole philosophies form and scatter.

In the East are questions and beginnings.

Here in the West, convergence.
Air and time, rivers and stones,
earthquake dust like the debris of stars,
billions of stars in the streams
of great clusters, and on cold stones,
the mountains weigh down.

But now, thousands of lines
reaching out to eternity,
how can a soul decide on a path?
It’s a wild world, and ocean currents
turn and incline toward a thousand extensions,
like light beams through the clouds,
covering the sunset horizon.

Options multiply like equations
we have never imagined,
the gravel of childhood
now a million glimmers,
a profusion of openings.
How do we find the ultimate map,
the summital place, the concluding
unity of things?

Therefore, I bless your dispersion
into a thousand places,
your starting place at latitude
and longitude, your grand dissemination
into the world’s vast seas.

Finally, find your essence,
the theme and core,
the deepest place.
Then find magnetic north
and bolt there before clouds close in,
before seconds break like shells
against rocks of regrets,
before the world dissolves into
a place with no openings or exits.

And find heaven.
Find heaven, straightforward,
beaming and wide open.
“This certifies that on 07 November 2009 at 1515, while hove to with and no weigh on, the cremated remains of Robert Coldiron were consigned to the depths of the Pacific Ocean on a flowing ebb in accordance with the traditional rights of Burial at Sea as well as state and federal regulations at the following location:

Latitude: N 32° 41.05’
Longitude: W 117° 15.9’
Distance from nearest shore: 4.3. nm
Depth: 301 feet
Weather: Cloudy, 70°
Wind: 266 at 5 knots
Sea: 2’ swell”