



11-15-2003

Third Planets

Barry Ballard

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Recommended Citation

Ballard, Barry (2003) "Third Planets," *Westview*: Vol. 23 : Iss. 1 , Article 13.
Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/westview/vol23/iss1/13>

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Third Planets

by Barry Ballard

If you imagined a planet, would you
imagine it blue and then green, heat it
and then freeze it—and then heat it again?
Would you imagine it a cool liquid
emptiness and then fill it with life, your spewed
out breath surfacing like volcanic fists
under the sea? Could you foresee the problems
of its gauging reach and self-conscious skid

through the outer atmosphere, its questions
trapped in orbiting spheres of geometric
shape (some of them igniting in the friction
of their own descent, while the others sleep
in an unguided drift of memory holding
to itself in the very womb of knowing)?

