

## The Burden of Humans

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The grass just has to wave, the birds just have to sing. The grapes don't wonder what light is; the light just lights them, and the grapes grape back. The golden oaks just shed their summer dresses on the lawn—but you? You have to read Spinoza in the garden while the light is good. You have to keep your focus as the motorcycles scream out of the purple hills. You have to sweat, and laugh, and weatherproof the bedroom windows, and remember names and dates, the town where your parents met—Milk River or Swan Hills?—and when they died, you have to sweep the kitchen floor and then define the good, the true, the beautiful, or try, because azaleas can't see themselves, the squirrels are busy, and the ferns have closed. The frost tattoos its sermon on the rose, but in a language only you can read; you have to know that all things pass and perish, and that what you've said is finite, but continue— as if grand exceptions might be made— raking the leaves, stacking the wood, hoping the child falls asleep against your chest, hoping the blizzard swerves, knowing the wreckage of the present will be gathered but not soon, and not by you, because you're in it, there somewhere, under the sheet of snow.