was never large enough even for a B movie
though I think I’ve felt as deeply as Brad Pitt.
No one I grew up with ever became famous
or notorious on that spit of land that ended in the sea.
But we became as adept at reading storm warnings
in the muscle and color of water as we did in a face.

In the cold-war doldrums of the 50s, all my teachers
hated teaching. We were such little shits back then
I thought who could blame them, and became a teacher
so I could show these younger versions of myself
how to open their hearts and enter into a different,
richer kind of darkness that exists in them.

We were an obstinate desert people given a single animal
which we rode and milked and roasted and skinned.
The stories strangers told us about fabulous places
we’d never get to taught us how to open a door in rock
and go inward, how to widen our hearts with longing
and a song and bang along on a drum skin and a string.

I think Mother and Father seemed larger than life because
we were smaller than them. That’s how our life felt then, heroic.
We felt Fate sitting and watching in the empty bleachers
as surely as our shadows on the ground were having fun
parodying us. We didn’t think making everything from
one thing was very special. We thought we were special,
and the day would come when some of us would finally
break through our smaller selves to prove it, and then
we’d have the luxury of looking over our shoulder at a
beginning we wouldn’t want to return to any more
than Marilyn Monroe wanted to be Norma Jeane Mortenson
born in the charity ward of the L.A. County Hospital again.

When I think how far we’ve come and how epic our struggles
were and how huge it feels to be alive, I wonder what it is in us
that needs to feel larger. Was it ever possible to be bigger
than ourselves? Something eternally young in me jumps up
and says *Of course it is!* But the teacher in me, the one who has
seen it all and looks like he hates teaching, says please sit down.