When Bill McKibben declared “The End of Nature,” in 1989, he was posing a hyperbolic kind of epistemological riddle: What do you call it, whatever it is, when forces of wilderness and weather, of animal kingdoms and plant life, have been so transformed by human activity they are no longer truly “natural”? – David Wallace-Wells, The Uninhabitable Earth.

Right now, another fire in the haunted north takes everything back – a piece of sky the sky has no right to claim, the cattle-field that is my father, old undergrowth that is my mother, the coyote bone wind chimes slung low on a ranch fence – and this fire it tells me it wants my son crowned in thicket and soot. Later, this young king will stand outside the pines, a tangerine glow softening his skin into honey, exhausted from the already buckshot pocked west, the razor-wired climate wrapped around the rest of his life, this permanent and inane serpent of rust and blood and really what’s the point in any of this metaphor anyhow? It scrapes up enough to say someone wuz here once, I guess? But weren’t we radiant? We the anti-Anthropocene? We anticipants blossoming our hungering child -shaped apologies until we become both shovel and self-filled graves, our hands listing earth toward the triple-six digits in the air – it’s gonna be another scorcher, folks, in the re-origin of species; please, the last one alive, turn the lights off in this accidental furnace. My son will feel birds tremble his mouth, and a ladder flame hollowing him out rung by rung at his middle, and I’ll tell him the bellied flames are just the last birds of every fire on their way out. Don’t be afraid that I am afraid. Entire galaxies of light will born from his mouth and for a moment he will be radiant. He will be radiant.