

# Astonishment

In spring we are running at dusk,  
all five of us, away from a wisp  
of victim when a cloud  
barrels down out of the heavens,  
immense roll and wash, leviathan,  
barrels end over end, knocking us down  
in a field's loneliness three furlongs  
from the house of my father—  
the full grain brushed  
with dew, the dew almost touching  
the soil, quick in its descent,  
sweeping towards a night between film and glaze—  
barrels in before Ammon sees the outline,  
like metal burnishing in the summer sun,  
and I sense that I've heard of something like this,  
argued with my father about *thrones*,  
dismissed him as he spoke of *seraphim*  
more beautiful than beryl,  
when Alma looks up too, and catches  
the horse speed of shadow  
and white—this chrysolite sheet  
as powerful as ten suns,  
dropped before us in a blind  
and boom of eclipse and thunder  
while we hold out for each other  
in this thrashing of sonic death,  
as though outside of this empty  
field nothing else existed, nothing  
that was clear enough to hallow  
after we fell again to earth,  
to dew that tried to make us clean,  
face first with the blast of angel and sky.

—Mark Bennion

*This poem received a third place award in the BYU Studies  
2004 poetry contest.*