

EARTHLINGS

ALLAN BURNS

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Art by Ron C. Moss

Earthlings

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Artwork

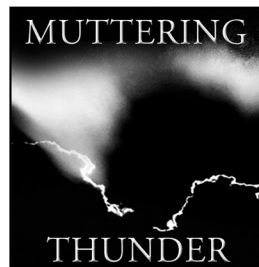
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a *muttering thunder* publication

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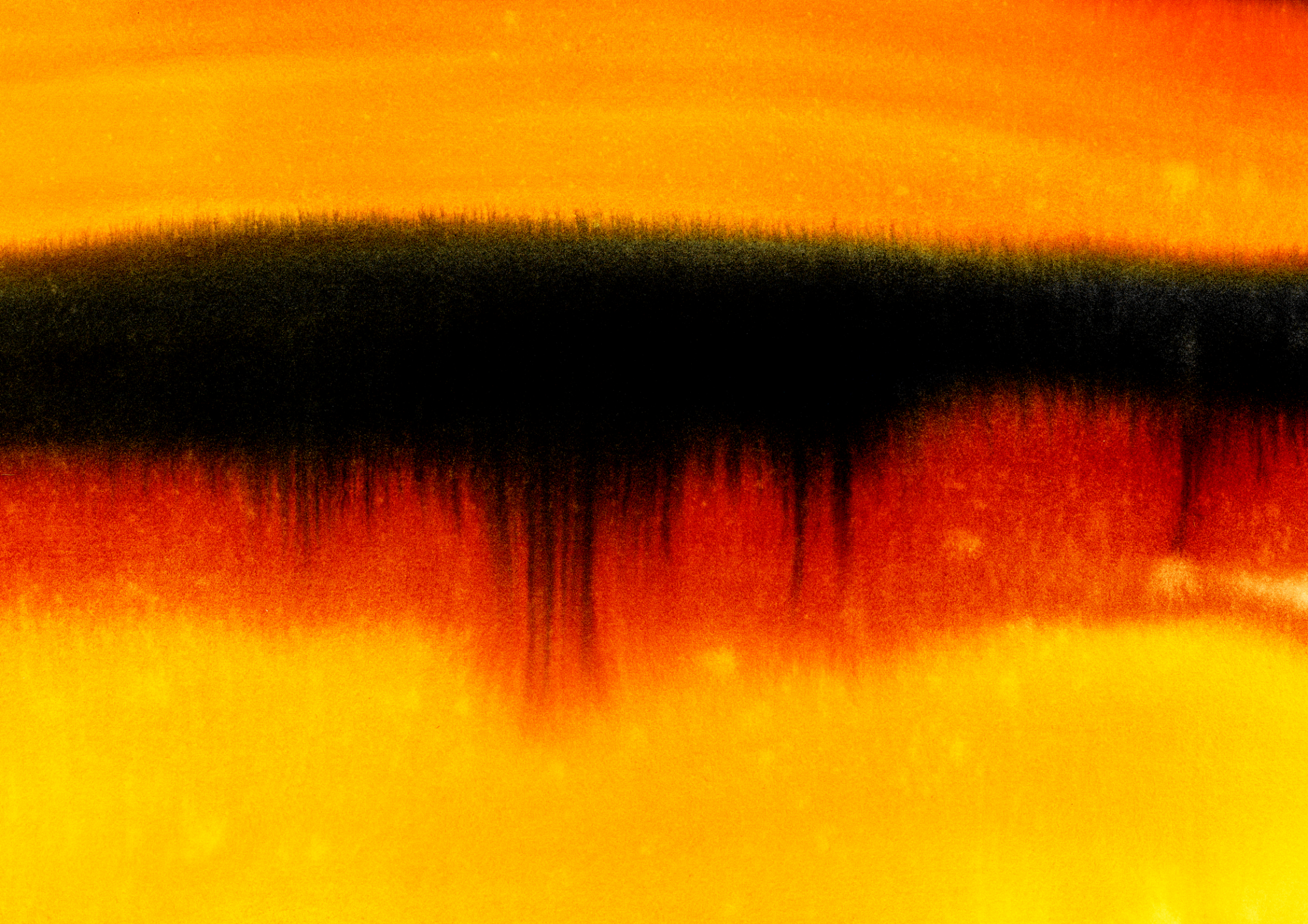


For Theresa

“We patronize [other animals] for their incompleteness, for their tragic fate of having taken form so far below ourselves. And therein we err, and greatly err. For the animal shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours they move finished and complete, gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear. They are not brethren, they are not underlings; they are other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendour and travail of the earth.”—Henry Beston, *The Outermost House*

“May it be that when haiku contain that which is terrible or horrible, it is because these things are desperately crying out for help from us?”—Robert Spiess, *A Year's Speculations on Haiku*, November twenty-seventh

sun-rimmed mist . . .
the asters trading
butterflies



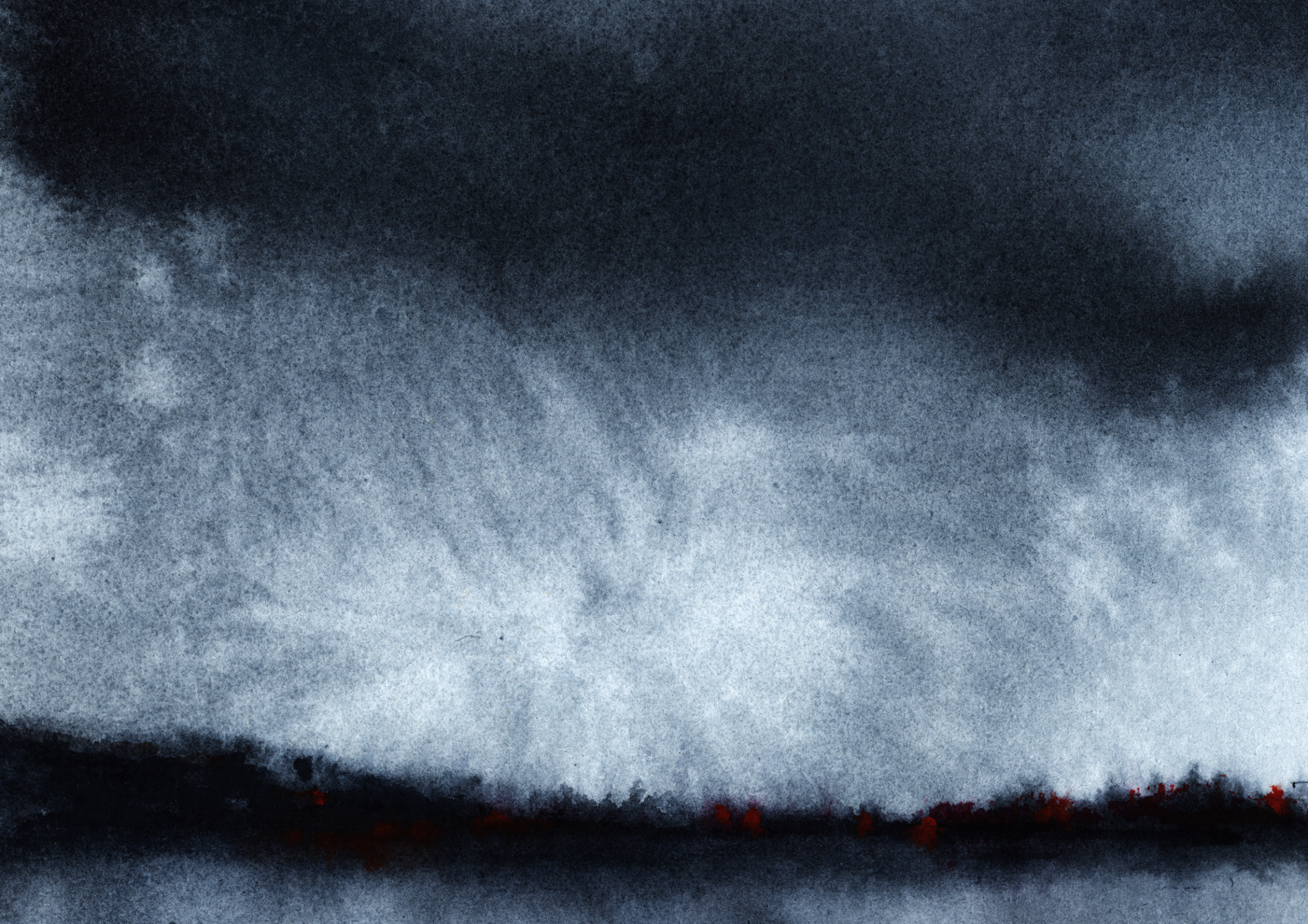
colors of dawn . . .
beyond the brush pile
the fox's black ears

squirrels corkscrew
down an elm—
flash flood warnings

scent of juniper—
the kingfisher's
last-second swerve

prairie dog skull—
the attendant's jumpsuit
darkened by sweat

the sun pink
through wildfire smoke
a gull's wing



Nothing but
silence and the dance
of fireflies

carrying the old dog—
railroad ties
rotting away

railway junction:
the pigeon missing a foot
pecks for crumbs

jagged masonry
of the castle ruin—
rooks into rain

peal of churchbells . . .
martins pattern
the sky

ill this fall day . . .
a crow softens peanut shells
in the birdbath

coyote gulch—
the raven's bill probes
for marrow



what's to come of us . . .
long into the night
a fox screams

high-desert wind—
a migrant owl rests
on an earthship

after the owl
an owl-shaped hole
in the clouds

the captive elephant
paces concrete
paces concrete

the hen's space the size of the hen

slaughterhouse—
pigs frolic in green pastures
on a mural

the lab monkey
biting his bars
biting himself



the caged chimpanzee
injected with hepatitis
signs hello

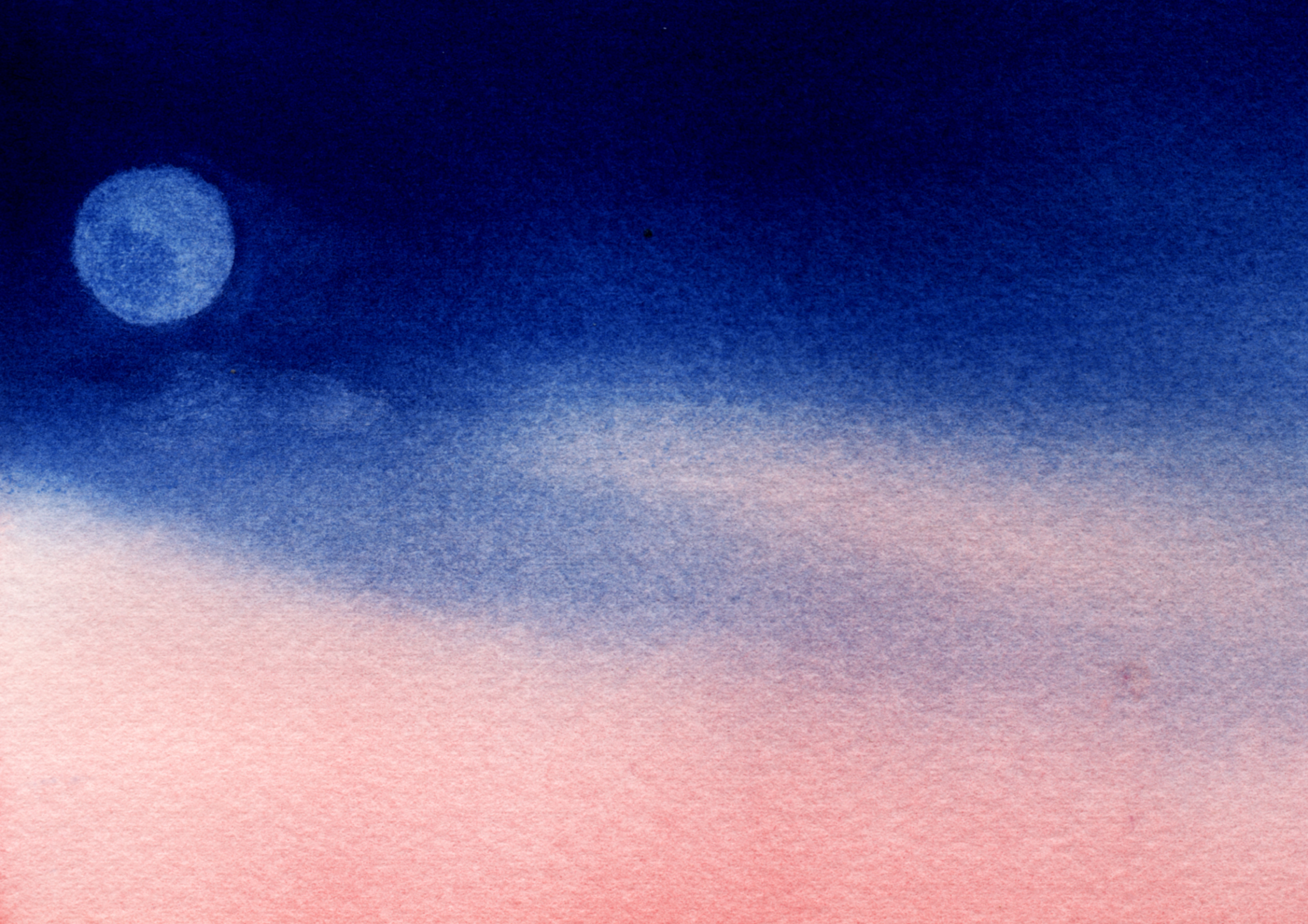
nowhere to run
from the skeleton within—
windmill ravens

polar vortex—
a ripple through
the squirrel's tail

ice floes . . .
the wren's many poses
on the reed

the empty street
the evening after
the dog was hit

owl-killed skunk—
the red star
flashes blue



the butterscotch scent
of ponderosa pine . . .
a bluebird's soft calls

spring torrent—
the river otter's
rolling place

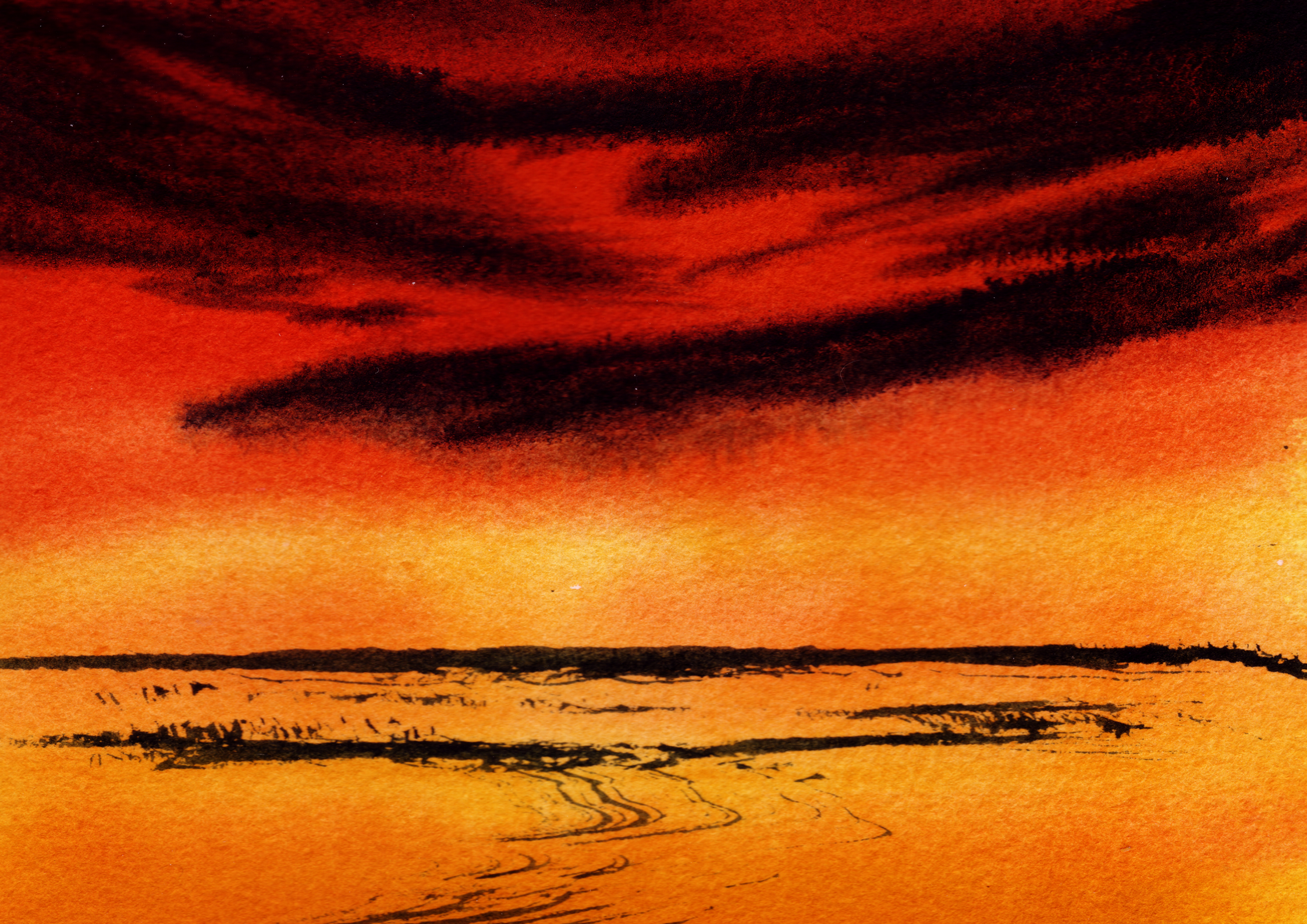
cumulus bulking . . .
one of the shrub's leaves
is a katydid

not one
who began the journey:
the swarm of butterflies

desert solitude—
one vulture
flaws the blue

saltcedar . . .
the quail's calls
unanswered

far along the desert road a man under his hat



firesky ridge—
the tanager drinks
his own red

elf owl . . .
the moon 1%
of full

having landed
the shorebird flock
becomes shorebirds

last star . . .
the squirrel's tail
from the fox's mouth

during the minute
of silence
the cries of gulls

our lives . . .
the shape
of clouds

we sit down . . .
the birds
come back

Allan Burns is an editor, an activist, and a haiku poet who lives on Colorado's Front Range. His other books include *Montage* (The Haiku Foundation, 2010), *distant virga* (Red Moon Press, 2011), *Haiku in English* (W.W. Norton, 2013, with Jim Kacian and Philip Rowland), and *Where the River Goes* (Snapshot Press, 2013). Currently, he edits the online haiku annual *muttering thunder*.

Ron C. Moss is an artist and poet from Tasmania, a place of wilderness that inspires his work. He is recognized as an outstanding illustrator and designer of many poetry books, and his haiku and achievements in related genres have been widely published and honored with many awards. His first full-length haiku collection, *The Bone Carver*, is available now from Snapshot Press. www.ronmoss.com

The author is grateful to the editors of the following publications, in which all these haiku first appeared: *Acorn*, *bottle rockets*, *The Heron's Nest*, *A Hundred Gourds*, *Modern Haiku*, *Notes from the Gean*, *Presence*, *Simply Haiku*, and *South by Southeast*.

An earlier draft of this collection received an Honorable Mention in the Turtle Light Press Haiku Chapbook Contest.

