

CATHERINE OWEN

White Sale

when I tried to buy an iceberg, that day
in the desert, the salesman was dubious.
it had been a long time since he'd seen one
of those, he said, and the people had since
evolved, into sand dollars, into strange
kinds of fish. the ablation of glaciers
was complete. people bobbed like small
shoals of bullets in the flood, or squeezed
into cracks on the lengthening plains.
other species had vanished, sinking fast
on their pinions of ice, waving tiny attachés
of the future. we strolled on the moraine, he
& I, the now irrelevant spit that had once
held back the sea, and the land was split
with fissures, blood surrounding its mouths,
uncanny and rich as berries. those are the
icebergs' blow-holes, the salesman nodded,
sometimes when it's quiet, I press my ear
to them like shells and hear the cold again,
the four-fifths of what we've forgotten, held hard
beneath.