

PHILLIP WEST
HONORABLE MENTION

A Rough Understanding of the Cosmos

Earth orbits the sun at seventy thousand miles per hour.
At a thousand miles per hour, earth spins on its axis.

In a window, at 7:32 a.m., the earth appears perfectly still.
How fast do memories move?

A hummingbird flits through the green wild of a pear tree.
Morning glories continue the slow siege of a backyard fence.

Last night I dreamed my father was slicing his toes off with a razor blade.
We do not yet have the technology to remain in one place.

In a matter of hours New York will be here, and here will be
in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

We will take our birds and streets and sorrow with us.
We will take our guilt and fate and houseplants with us.

At two million miles per hour, our galaxy hurtles
toward a deep space structure known as the Great Attractor.

Through a sequoia's evergreen mist slants.
Very light rain begins to fall.

By now I am unfathomably far from where I began.
Turning the hours over as though they were stones.