

Migration through Borrego Springs

after Marianne Moore

less
than an inch
 this year of water in the washes.
 longhorn beetles crawl to catclaw shoots,
 the marsh and rushes thinned.

deep
in dry gorge,
 a rusting water-car, Earth's largest
 trestle bridge – 600 feet of
 beams wrought out of redwoods,

snake-
line miles break-
 ing in single plumose drops. amber stakes
 of fire-followers in clay,
 bells gleam and whisper through

low
desert. it
 enters into driest decade, sparsest
 bloom. yet elephant tree blossoms,
 mollusklike, unfurl – yet

spoon-
petals of
 desert apricot continue. and
 dips of cloud reflect blue lines on
 stones in the pale caves – and

moss
and sweet vine
 hang the ridge of an oasis. green-
 gold burn of cottonwood in col-
 lapsed siltstone canyon straits,

then
pulse of heat
 on moonlit rock. white-lined sphinx moths float
 to chlorine pools, to dark-sky Springs
 of just two thousand, where

acres,

insectile,

shake off unnamed morteros, graves, rams'

curved horns in pearly sockets, sage.

a lone painted lady

sips

verbena

as the water table waits for flood –

seeks her mate in the red petroglyphs –

one leaf. then sun. then sun.