

**prologue: outcrop**

no mad bustle of creatures bursting to die,  
exuberant grasses, ponds and forests,  
the lives in each niche like smouldering torches  
wet and sputtering at intervals,

but, in answer to stars, imperceptible  
growth: faces emerging like stone  
clear of the fallow bedrock, burgeoning  
in the lank light the ground  
parted like water,  
millennial blankness in their eyes.

*caught in the sparks, something  
is green enough to burn.*

—John Baglow