

BILL HOWELL

Carry On

Luggage, language, whatever he finally needs
when he arrives. But first a last glance: placing her face
seeing him off, graphed there
in airport glass, her eyes following
him wherever he goes.

*And was it two in the morning or the two of them
last night?*

*The green wind of her waist becoming
the Milky Way unravelling
a shroud of shouldered moments
into an unknown season.*

*And where were they
then, in that room beyond themselves
when all the walls dissolved?*

Her open smile now, watching him catch her placing him
again at the end of the line, no matter where
they've been.

*Their early August morning sky, first thing:
distance itself an undressed forecast,
depending on what you need to know, forget, get
on with.*

*Again the sun lining up its best shot, banking off
those low rolling clouds, banking on you both
being here.*

*Waiting for each generous excuse
while everything keeps changing
into later, better than ever before and then
never again, right on cue.*

Her hand half-open but not letting
anything go, a stray fidget, while he holds
his one-piece limit below
a shy but essential nod, glad to have
something solid left unsaid.