

What Is Real

And though we had fed long and well at the table
the talk always turned to whether to go on
regardless of what it might say about our moral sense,
regardless of what it might cost us in the end,
or whether the time had come to surrender,
let the sum of our particles back into the flow
hoping they might in the longview recombine
into something of value, or of beauty, but humbler
than the human—not that we'd ever be able
to judge, not that we'll ever be able to know
what comes of what we did, or whether it was

worth it, like the towering alien humanoid at the start
of Ridley Scott's *Prometheus*, how it paces
to the edge of a powerful waterfall somewhere on what
appears to be a still primarily mineral Earth,
takes one last look at its oblong mothership
surveilling from a mist, removes its monklike robe
and drinks as if in ceremony from a cup
of animate metallic ooze that quickly disintegrates
its all too pale flesh, unleashing new organic matter
into the ecosystem, strands of DNA unzipping
haphazardly in the rush to mix it up with Earth's

own chemistry and into offspring whose tumble
up it will never witness—not the earliest infinite-
simal blips or supertime in old Persepolis, not opaque
dawn in Beijing or any single sentient being
separated a moment from the chaos, wholly
unobserved, in whom life sank down as if to test itself,
limitless, dark, spreading, unfathomably deep
and free. As if at play in aether, a meadow of
possibility skittering as axons of foam across the surface
swell of the North Sea. I felt once I belonged to
it in a way I would collapse the instant I began

measuring it in words: waves in blue profusion
dissolving into geological undulations and then
pulses in yellow sand. Here a snake crosses
my path again in Texas, the length of it like a dew-
damp privilege wriggled by a cloud-hid hand
conveying deep troughs and amplitudes back to the sun.
We do go on. Near movie's end, the last known
humanoid of the type to seed life on Earth
is uprooted from cryogenic sleep on a made-up moon
by a crew of corporate human blunderers it then
looks down on with informed disgust, killing off

in minutes all but one. In *America*, Baudrillard
says the products of our imagination remind us
what is real, the way weariness of existence is
how we come to feel, buried in all this abundance,
we are still alive. Hold on tight, my circumstance.
Tonight we're diving in. Tonight we'll find the bassline
subatomic-style, let particles of us entangle
knowingly with those of a gold encyclopedia
in the ruins of Vienna or an ear of teosinte across
an open border, a common source of being, before I
die—let us be, let being be, continuous, continuous.