

## There You Are

Even once aboard, I feel the stinging cold  
and as the train begins to heave

away from the old country station,  
away from the spiny, alabaster mountains,

I see you,  
crossing your arms in midair,

again and again,  
your face alit.

At my seat, I prepare to collapse;  
in my head I am already in the city.

Ten hours into the future, I sink into my bed,  
next to the woman waiting in it,  
and tell her of your joyous farewell.

Now, I drop my bags and watch you through the window.

You recede in slowest motion,  
your eyes singing,

your whole-bodied smile gently mocking  
my exhaustion.

The morning is illumined by your gesture,  
not by the stingy sun.

The scarf wrapped round your head  
sounds a note of vivid colour,  
defying the gravelly sky.

For the last time, you wave your arms,  
and I make a noise like a laugh,  
astonished by the contrast between us:

you are so young,  
I am so old.

Not ten years afterward I dip a shovel  
into a mound of earth,  
and hear the dirt smack dryly on polished wood,

and begin to describe you  
to different women, in different cities.

There's the train, there's the distance;  
no more station, no more mountains.

There you are,  
slowly windmilling your arms,

and smiling.

MITCHELL ALBERT