

PALM DESERT: City of Warmth and Light

Silver shimmers outline the fronds of our tallest palms
as the desert sun makes its initial tilt towards winter
and Mt. San Jacinto stands bedecked in titanium white

until the wildflowers fully hyperbolize our springtime
experience: crispy paper petals of the whispering bells,
the chuparosas nestled in unassertive shades of sand,

a tender-lavendering of the smoke trees, a hummingbird
perched on the red torch of an ocotillo. Pale yellow sky
holds a cotton ball cloud above the Santa Rosas, closer

to paradise than anything otherwise. What stays the same
is the variation in every day. We are invited to live parts
of our lives without portion. If only nature wrote fiction.

Shade forms in the furrows of the Little San Bernardinos.
Art accumulates on corners and medians about the city.
We are aware of extremes and all the dusty in-betweens.

As long-timers, full-timers, part-timers, weekenders,
we have our acclimations. Life here makes it easier
to fathom and admire majesty, our own, and in others.

Another day and the brazen sun spontaneously adjusts,
instructs the mountains when to blush and pewter.
Millions of years have led to this air and color.

If we temporarily leave for the lure of an oceanside,
a ski slope, or skyscrapers, the draw to return is real;
a heart knows when it has arrived home, once again.

The sun's gone down, but the heat doesn't care. The sky
turns a faded-shade of lapis, then aquas, before it navys
into a color too elusive for accurate human description.

The desert night quiets and composes itself, Cassiopeia
owns her fixed wide-sky place, and the marbled-moon
releases its wash of radiance across the creosote, and us.