

## IN VIEW OF THE PROMISED LAND

The night before he died,  
Moses our teacher dreamt

of the waters that once split  
for him, now washing over

the burning bush on Horeb; Moses  
woke, and smiled at his fate,

to lead a kvetching folk  
from oasis to water hole; he,

drawn from water, giving  
himself to fire, chosen

for expertise in the miracles  
of aquifers and desalination!

Moses found it – again and  
again – from the bitter waters

of Marah to the wilderness  
of Zin; tired, there at Meribah,

he struck the rock twice, did not  
speak to it, as was commanded,

as if to say, God, another miracle!  
At Meribah Moses gave up

on his people; for this defiance  
he would not enter the land

of milk and honey. They  
say we do not know where

God buried Moses, having killed  
him with a kiss. I know.

In every green mountain that  
catches fire, in the yellow-red

night wounds of that fire,  
on the day after, in black

that sucks light from the slopes  
– there is Moses. The mistral

then comes, and blows the ashes  
up in a cloud that exiles

day from the valley. In  
the slopes is where Moses lies.

And drinks – rains, phase  
of birth. The mountainside

grows green, as it must. And  
Moshe rabbenu smiles (as

the priests did not let him  
in his book), now at peace

with his fire and his water.

*This poem owes much to a painting by Timolé and a reading of an essay, "The Spring and the Bush" by Michel Tournier. in his "The Mirror of Ideas," (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1998).*