

# THAT LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN YOUR BATHROOM

COLIN POPE

*—for Jennifer Wrisley, 1980-2010*

was one of the many sadnesses I inherited  
like sticky, foamy residue pushed onto the beach  
from the ocean of your life. Also, there was

a sack of scarves, a decorative lamp shaped like a star,  
and a miniature poodle who displays  
literally no compassion towards people, who won't lick  
or fawn or curl up in your lap  
when you're sitting on the toilet at 5am  
sobbing uncontrollably at a painting  
of which there must be 500,000 reproductions  
keeping watch over the lavatories of the universe  
like hidden cameras from the world of art.  
But it's a lovely idea of countryside,  
so lovely it's almost enough to make a person forget

that nature doesn't give a shit about anything,  
not slavery or Nazis or stockbrokers  
tossing themselves from the signposts of industry  
to land on the sheath of pavement below

and certainly it didn't care about your fragile,  
overburdened body, full of pain and terrible intention  
as you scaled the porch railing that night,  
tied the noose, and made no plans  
to ever touch the ground again. One wants to believe

in the sympathy of nature, how it dreams  
of lush grass that never needs rain, zebra  
sharing blueberries with lions, a lake  
of peppermint tea. But nature is a god  
who doesn't share. It hardens and stares,  
an ancient, mustachioed face behind glass  
swaying a bit on its bracket of rope  
in the unbelievable breeze it makes, like a joke.