

DOMINION

**CHRISTOPHER
KEMPF**

"& God said unto them, 'Be fruitful & multiply, & replenish the earth, & subdue it. & have dominion over the fish of the sea, & over the fowl of the air, & over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.'"

—Genesis 1:28

But to the trees we are,
like metaphor, mostly

extraneous, our language,
to them, the breath—

play of peasants. Picture
this world without us,

you say, the sick
planet picked

clean—as by a kind
of divine wind—of ruin

& war. Of word. We turn
west on the Redwood Trail late

on a Sunday. The endangered
sequoias vanish above us

& there is nothing, you say,
or no place the planet

is unaffected. Its feverish
heaving. The breathing

trees turning
over & over their old

air. We are
all of us lung. What

Cabrillo breathed. What bands
of Ohlone women walked

beside in silence. I
would be for you

like the railroad the ravager
of all of this. Would give

vast acreages to make you
immortal. I am not

in the slightest sorry. Tonight
I will tie you to the bed—bolted

pinewood—& we
will make the frame whine. & when

the idea of people
is over, as I hope

it is quickly, I hope
the trees remain. The language—

less. The in-
describable night

like a blindfold.