

## Western Movie Poem

That's the part of the movie I like—  
where she rests her hand on the top rail  
of the weathered fence  
and says to the man, "I'm spoken for,"

the washed-thin collar of her workshirt  
slipped a little to one side  
to offer a glimpse of that soft part of her neck  
where the sun has never trespassed.

And he in his cowboy boots feeling a little  
seasick on solid ground.

Then there's a long zoom shot when  
they study a white puff of cloud  
hovering above the ridge

and wordlessly observe how the emptiness,  
already so considerable, can actually expand  
into a kind of vista, a preview

of the rest of your life  
from which one more item of hope  
has been removed.

This is the West—it's about  
doing your job  
without a lot of goddamn commentary

and getting to stand in that empty moment  
of tough beauty  
he will soon be riding off into

which is also like the Grand Canyon  
she will soon commence  
stringing a line of laundry over.

Now she places her hand  
on the top of the fence  
and he looks at it there

without speaking  
and right now they are  
electric in their misery,

which is large, like the sky.