

ANDERSEN'S PEA SOUP

August saves its charm for the San Joaquin Valley
outside the passenger window
miles of fruit trees and in the distance
burnished hills like sandy knuckles.

In a stand by the road
almonds and honey for sale
turkey vultures swaying overhead
dry leaves in a river of hot air.
I pass open-bed trucks
full of summer tomatoes
and when I stop for gas
the heat is a color of its own
like tasting liquor for the first time.

The highway makes lonely miles
of the hours. Here is a place
with room under the sky
to carry all your sorrow—
you can plant it in the earth
and watch it grow
a field of golden apricots.