

## melancholia

yes, I agree, the things we have learned from songs  
and from movies have warped the way we see, and yet

in my own dream, a figure walks toward me  
wearing a white tunic  
and radiating a broken wholeness  
that is its own form of holiness

to get closer to the feeling I'm trying  
to describe, recall particular faces you have seen  
faces that have caused you to cast your gaze to the floor

maybe they were ravished by addiction and loss  
maybe there were two sunken spots on a young woman's face  
where the fullness of her life should be

maybe they reminded you of the dimple  
on your own late niece's face when she smiled as a child  
a smile repeated in the face of the actress in the movie

whose character said "the earth is evil" and "no one will miss it"  
the niece who died from complications of the needle  
when she was the same age that you yourself got clean

whatever is rushing to collide with the earth  
its effects are palpable in our actions and inactions  
in sunken cheeks and aversion seemingly beyond our choice

how then do we tell the truth to ourselves and to others?  
how do we stay true to the need for truth when it conflicts  
with the need for love? harder still to bear witness to our own near miss

in the dream, the figure passed me on the right  
I think that I was on my knees  
unnoticed and inconsequent –  
its heat passed over to my body  
and I awoke with burning in my chest  
choking on the atmosphere of a narrow escape