

death valley

last night
the wind came up
sweeping chalky hills
and rattling bushes
whipping my tent
bed sheets on a clothesline
tonight the valley's still
not a wisp of wind
to unfocus the stars
borax miners
long dead
sleep peacefully
my eyes
heavy with elmore leonard
I begin to drift
when I hear them coming
to the steel sinks and faucets
clattering their pots
in drunken english accents
no thought
for the majestic silence
that contains us
all day they've been cooking
whatever the fucking british eat
ham hocks
jellowed salads
with constant teas
and always the drinking
as if the hallucinogenic divinity
of this place
weren't enough
why don't they go back
to leeds or bath?
give back the sanctity
to this place
just a few bird calls

the occasional coyote

late next morning
they stroll by
he sees my motorbike
and comes over
talking about a bsa
in birmingham
when he was a lad
she notices I have no pots
do you cook
i show what I have
a six-pack of orange juice
not from concentrate
a big bag of raisins and cashews
kipper snacks
rye-crisp and provolone
a jar of mustard
raisin muffins
almond butter and jam
how can you exist on that?
I smile at them
did you hear those loud drunk motherfuckers
clattering their pots in the night