

Going Coastal

by Callie Palmer

The west ends here sodden dripping,
sliming into Puget Sound drowning with a faint gurgle
eaten by geoducks and oyster along with red tide

a vision of sasquatch meant the end was near
and how true, slow corrosion of mental clarity
punctuated by brilliant blue flashes once a month

Seattleites defend this atmosphere
claiming more subtleties of gray and green
than half or three quarters of the world

training ground for future Alaskans
new arrivals every day, laying claim as
the homeless look on, warmed by sour wine

and dry sandwiches, a crime in a wet city
the P-I could do a great kindness
using water-proof fiber to print

blankets for vagrant benchesleepers
crowded out of town for large events
and politicos, who propose

programs and policies, soon vetoed
in favor of gentrification
a good façade like the I-90 corridor

looking heavily forested
really a 40 foot buffer zone
no one makes connections

between façades and catastrophe
flooding and fire with no old growth
to hold root and earth together

when the city slips into the Sound
noiselessly dropping below sea level
condos with ocean views now aquariums

will cruelty capitulate?
or is this build up significant biological retribution
gather the masses for one stroke

a cold murky multiple murder
brought about by greed and lust
indifference the final insult

will it happen when the homeless are south
for the winter, drying out at the Betty
or on the beach at Venice?

When they return to find vacant housing
and a new shoreline, will they drop
praising the power that restored their village?

Happily drinking instant coffee
eating salmon and oysters
as the sun returns to Puget Sound