

CONDITIONAL

if they ask for the sky **then**

promise only the preset shades of blue,
do not suggest clouds, however wispy or well-proportioned,
nor the effect of wind from the east,
do not imply there will be green-winged birds of any sort,
nor the dusty evidence of farms, burning fields, plumes of gray smoke
echoed in the heavens, signatures of the dead or laid off,
definitely no angels – no visions hovering secretly in corners,
coded scripts, triggers for events not planned

if there are to be stars **then**

cast them as multiple instances of the same fiery eye,

else

stitch black thread over black thread till night gleams in absentia

else if they wish for the earth **then**

while the world is not null

draw ink-black stones from the mountain side
sketch the long gravel road home, curve after curve,
or whatever you recall, trees and their forgettable leaves,
the small burdens of sight