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ON LOOKING INTO THE AMERICAN ANTHOLOGY

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Abstract
In California a young man is stuffing a briefcase — first a jug of light, the words 'water' and 'stone', a blurred image of a guy in a pickup truck with a gun

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1

In California a young man is stuffing a briefcase — first a jug of light, the words 'water' and 'stone', a blurred image of a guy in a pickup truck with a gun staring through the hush-squeak, hush-squeak of the wipers, a frail woman, crying. A leaf, a sob, a clod of mud. There! His class awaits the real, the Deep and Meaningful.

Driving downtown he sees a pair of jugglers inch up the face of a glass cathedral full of marriages, mirrored in the noon glare, one on top, and then his double.

The neon signs in the suburbs full of graves say 'Giants Drank and Died Here'. Autos, rusting trucks, police helicopters roam restlessly, their motto: Do it First, and do it Fast.

2

Down here in New Zealand, jet-lagged in transit at the bottom of the planet, a clutch of Flight Attendants giggle in a corner: one gay, the others married.
The sun that has looked down on Hollywood,
on lust, Las Vegas and the will to power,
rises, *rhododactylos*, on Auckland Airport:
through the tinted glass

a perfect field of fodder, five sheep,
a tractor nosing at the sedge, the shrill
cacophony of jets rehearsing like a madman
staring at a vase.

Nothing the amusing natives do or say here
matters in the Capital. The giant engines lift us
through the sky. The next stop — Australia —
is the end of the line.

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Connie Barber

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**THE OLDEST FRUIT**

Spring came late, summer reluctantly,
dry with clouded sun.
The tree sucked what it could from its old earth;
our feeble watering
barely made amends
for want of warmth and rain.

Plums a month late. For the first time
plums to give away;
blood red flesh and juice bottled for winter.
After the holiday we ate plums and plums
while the fig tree spread huge hands
grasping the day's surface.