
HOMEOTHERMS / *Keith Allen Artrip*

(Working late afternoon)

A cleaning lady enters,
sighing in the building's
mechanical coolness, asks
how I'd like to be outside,
90 degrees and climbing—
I would. Sweat's
preferable to flat-faced
strangers cawing the heat
and the hardness of macadamia
nuts; let it run down
my face, stinging eyes red
as an addict's, stumbling
in withdrawn dreams
of madness, mumbling
to passers-by domestic
drought and disease
unrelieved by Crow Dog's
dance or medicine's
needle. Let them stare,
fanning themselves
with yesterday's news,
black ink staining
palms unreadable;
until, with wag
of heads, they return
to cool containers
of imitation lemonade,
the nightly news.