



Carol Hamilton

Mustard Seed

The certainty without being sure.

—Charles Bernstein, “High Tide at Race Point”

What did the desert fathers discover?

Landscapes with jimson weed
nopales, cholla?

I think, instead, stark saharan sands

bare mounds like those captured
in a bottleneck corner

where the Sangre de Cristo range
slips out of Colorado

into New Mexico

those sands that burned
our feet when the sun came out.

We splashed happily through the sparse river

to cool our car-weary selves

scurried past

those who crowded around the billboards

with instructions for safe passage

scampered

toes slipping down into bits

of glassy particularity

Then the clouds parted
 pain scorched us
and we knew we had made some mistake.

Now I count each grain of sand as an error
 on a rosary I finger constantly
 trust the touch
 whether cool or searing
as the only true thing
 I have ever doubted.

Carol Hamilton is a widely published poet living in Oklahoma.

Photo from the Food U Love