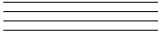


P E N T I M E N T O



W Y A T T T O W N L E Y

Behind this view
is another view.
Under this painting,

another. Before the trees
we planted, before
the leaning wheat,

before the bluebird moved
into her box
and the white moth

ticked at the window,
before this house
was another house.

Behind this country
is another country.
Bison and smoke

signals in the wince
of an eye. Before
the corn, the floor

of an inland sea.
From water to earth,
earth to air, the wind sorts

it back, blows it forward
like the pages of a book.
Behind this book

is another book.
The narrative descends
into mystery, the characters

amend their names.
Who's behind the eyes
to take it in?

Behind this body
is another body.
It is made of sky,

and it changes its stripes
from black to lilac
blue to red to black again.

It was always you
behind me, you
behind the pen.