

(Poem from the new poetry collection *How Men Pray*, just out from Anhinga)

Your Mars Looming

Your Mars was looming before dawn this morning
at your west horizon of your overbig sky; from here on
it will fade. The planet was amber. Your silence prevailed.

All things seemed to observe the moment. Even the dog
paused to look, in dewy grass, elbow deep, at the edge
of the lake's flat black water. Your day was just beginning.

Yesterday at our same time Mars was higher
in a slightly brighter sky. The days are getting shorter.
When I first began watching, last month, longest days,

heat of summer, the moon passed over ahead of Mars;
but during the month Mars left it far behind, the moon
in its nightly phases, in a big cool orbit of its own,

and Venus and Saturn splayed and went their different ways
and while the big dipper kept its shape, it pivoted and twirled
like a kite hooked to Polaris which remained at your North

like it was pinned there. What a living thing your night sky is.
In its hours between the light, we might think it passes
in formation. No. Your synchrony is far bigger than that.