
Carson Colenbaugh

LATE ARIA

Surely this show was over
when we invented plastic bouquets,
ceramic seashell soap dishes, decorative wheat.

Those or profitable dentistry, that
or just its paper cups:
conical & disposable & crafted
to sip mouthwash & leachates
alike. Or it was over

upon the creation of calculus
workbooks; not the mathematics, see,
just the mess of thin
paper, problems manufactured. Or perchance
news itself cued our curtains,
a knowledge of the blur
that veils life with its
many velocities. But believe me

when I say it wasn't
Mike & Ikes that marked
the Rubicon on civilization's map,
nor paper towels, nor imitation crab,
though I could be mistaken.
Someone must've swerved, once: glistening

in antiquity under avant-garde visions
of Quikrete & theme parks
maybe, when extinction's protocols sounded
far-sung, when we first imagined
a mortal omnipresence and put
him on tomorrow's to-do list.