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Last Chance

Carol A. Alexander
self-employed

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last Chance
Carol Alexander

This is it, ocean says. And land: twisted roots and arsenic,
your mandrake baby—boom town bust, gold flakes in the throat.

Prepare to be nothing after heat and dust. Nomads teach
the art of summer exodus, caterpillar tent of woven nettle rags.

A single word for rain and snow is what? Sky-stain, or hail-fellow.
It's hard to find a nautilus shell large enough to compass the brain

but you must get out of this body somehow, maybe a jellyfish.
The angel foams up on a crest, a big wave surfer demanding

how many terns you've cleansed of oil, whales you've spared
and why in your selfish heart were you always hungering after
northern lights?

A dipper of water equals "exotic pleasure." Once you shimmied down
a well and licked the stones as terrified grownups called your name.