Three Poems
D. A. POWELL

On the Way to Graceland
—for Chig

Paul was struck with just
such a lightning bolt
captured in a downpour just
off the interstate
somebody calling his name.
Folks here hang the wash out
even in the rain.
The goodness pie and
scripture bread are awful sweet.
But me and Pete, my friend,
have had enough to eat for now.
We went by the home place
twice, to Aunt Irene’s and
all the graves up on the ridge,
the kilns, the broken bridge
and battlefields, the dam.
The days have been so full
of ghosts. On the right
“Where the King Lives On.”
We wonder which one.
[From the Grimoire]

—Whence Visions Come

Of planets there are two: fickle Saturn
who treats us like our own father and runs out,
and dreamy Venus, who flashes her tits or
sends her naked son out to answer the mail.
The luna moths, the nightingale, the hummingbird
moths. The moon and its luco, all beings
that emit light, the stars whose names
we’ll never know. Laurel we know from poets’
crowns its link to prophecy and to the art
of healing. Red poppies down every row
their drowsy faces sewn among wild oat whose
seed we’d fling by the handful. We called them
cupid’s darts when we were kids, hair and
sweaters stuck with impetuous gestures
of emerging intimacy. Grapes and their sweet
wine. The fennel root whose queer name
brought us fire torches to lead the dead ones
home. Shadow of holy oak, bright afternoons.
Fields of broadbean, feared by mystics for
the way it smelled and tasted of human flesh.
One wonders at the knowledge base of mystics.
The apparitions to which a mind naturally succumbs.
Lightning. The late cries of owls. No unsettled
ghosts. For who could die unhappy here. New buds
on the olive trees. The rain. The muddied panels
of a cartoon we cried over. The rain again. An
unexpected extra spoon tonight at supper.
Persimmons

Mars is on fire
and we want to go there

oh, brilliant