They took the brunt of it, from Labrador to Cuba and Barbados, and after each clash or enigmatic incident they had no idea of what was coming at them next.

And it was the same in the south from Panama, random, generally violent.

The first to deal with Europeans were a few clans and families in their villages and fishing camps on the inlets and the bays and offshore islands, up along the tidal rivers to the fall line as far inland as the ships could go.

The invasion deeper into the continent in significant numbers would take awhile.

The probes and explorations of the vast interior, like the Voyageurs and Lewis and Clark, weren’t often disruptive, allowed much quizzical astonishment.

On the Atlantic’s other shore, poised and crowded, ready to leave forever, to go themselves, millions chewed through ship crew gossip spreading inland from the ports.

Exotic tales and names sparked and sizzled through Europe, would not go away.

And the a-better-world names were well strung out, New Haven, Newark, Newfoundland, New Sharon, New Hope, New Canaan, New Jerusalem, Hopewell, Harmony, New Harmony, Goshen, Unity, even a New Deal down in Tejas

Farther from El Paso to Orange than from Orange to the Atlantic, and farther from Orange to El Paso than from El Paso to the Pacific

A big place all around

In its sixth century now of eager arrivals stooping from the stratosphere’s great circle routes with enhanced destinations, New York, LA, Houston, Seattle, Las Vegas, Miami, Chicago, San Francisco

Trekking in via Northern Mexico

To our storied land of Bluetooth, horsebit loafers, cordless rechargeable body trimmers

Gold Mountain, *El Norte*

Churning its massive simplistic complexity

If not the greatest good for the greatest number, at least a good deal for most

Long-term

For as long as it holds together

Right now, improbably a skein of Canada geese well before dawn honking overhead in winter fog

Scary

Catchall paranoia

And each foreboding incident enhances anxiety
A spotted sandpiper too early in the year on the flood basin wetlands nearby

A flock of lesser yellowlegs, also peculiarly early, on the Hackensack River marsh off the NJ Turnpike, the water in the winter light shiny like high-tin bronze

The Rhone Glacier shrunk to far up the Furka Pass from Gletsch and the upper valley

Mockingbirds remaining in Maine for the winter

Catbirds all year in the Catskills

California heat far up the coast beyond the Bay

A crested caracara north of the Chesapeake, uncommon even in Florida, its accustomed range is from south Texas southward

The wide retreat of the pack ice in the Chukchi Sea

Everyone who looks around anywhere in nature has seen as much

It builds in a rush

Like watching an accident or incident of violence unfold in extreme slow motion

If we could speed up perception of what is happening we would be terrified

A startlingly rapid progression toward expected doom of a profound sort

The movidas as yet unspecified

“to aim a steep downhill shot is always confusing” (Aldo Leopold)
We’re on edge

Jumpy

Like John Kinsella “writing the land” in his gully in Western Australia

“Myopic, almost blind without my glasses, I hear a rustling at the bedroom window. I put my nose to the flywire and a roo doe sniffs me out. The breath from its nose is warm and moist and I leap back”

The roo doe is here too, just outside

And we’re confused, as when contemplating Olbers’s paradox, the dark sky paradox, with an expanding universe outrunning light itself, its stretched protons from the deep past become microwave protons and so invisible

When we do acknowledge it, perception of it is like Bonini’s paradox where explanation of such complex dynamics is impossible because as explanation becomes more complete it becomes less understandable, and so less accurate

The explanation as difficult to clarify as the shift itself

Paul Valéry explained it (trans. from French), “Everything simple is false. Everything complex is unusable”

Inutile information, obvious but ignored or dismissed by the many who, whether they know it now or not, will be players seeking higher ground before long