

THE NIMROD LITERARY AWARDS
The Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry

FINALIST
ARNE WEINGART

World Without Signs

for Karen

The arrows are the first to go
detaching themselves from their places

on the right or the left of their signs
with a disturbing crack and heading

straight off whichever way
they were pointing into an alternate

universe a universe of emphatic gesture
and dire consequence but little of

what we think of here as substance
the names of places are next

fading away like the superfluities
we always suspected them of being

leaving only signs that point to nothing
that name nothing the signs themselves

suddenly existential and oddly decorative
all objects now stand naked neither

labeled nor mislabeled only what they are
or believe themselves to be it is impossible

to give or receive directions
you simply have to know where it is

you think you want to go
and we have only ourselves

to rely on your hand in mine
our words curling over our heads like smoke

in the bar of the restaurant whose door
we can no longer find