

Desire with Mountain and Dante

I am alone with the mountain and always
desire, a wound
which opens as soon as it's healed.

Like those poor severed souls,
Dante's Sowers of Discord, low

in the eighth circle. Alone
with the mountain, I contemplate
the high trembling ridge
where Lethe

washes the swollen tissue,
the memory of sin,
and I coax myself step
after step, goat

hooves digging in
to the sun—cusped
ganglia of rock, despair's
dry valley miles

within, and always *desire*
against this white-
frocked sky, now under cloud-
cover, now fully realized

in sequined star constellations,
miraculous planes and planets
and bird invocations—
But what does desire

fulfill? And what is it for?
Bright feathered weight that I wear
each day, alone

with the mountain
or not—
always there,
mountainous—
is.