

STUART COOKE

*This Rough Charade\**

Trapped in summer light, cliff orange falls  
from pine-green and bruise.  
A mountainous profile looms

like a sun rising over Earth's lip,

a moon-sun, bruised, pale pink, but  
simmering with dashes of red dish

fiery as the crags, those fierce,  
abrupt molars, barrier  
beyond which nothing flows.

Falling world, uprushed through pines,  
through the great fissure at your feet,  
contrast smeared into blur, suggestion of stroke

scraped into uniform, three  
bold planes cascading,  
moist, fertile, rough  
charade of structure and choreography,

tiny spaces of lines in all spaces,

pinetrees throw height across a quarry, catch  
peak and distance dissipates

into the smile of an arid moat, primitive,  
stroked perspective, its absolute,  
titanic lyric.

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\* Paul Cézanne, 'Mont Sainte-Victoire seen from Bibémus' (1897)

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