

We asked for signs and followed what we saw
by [Christine Hemp](#) in the [January 1, 2020](#) issue

(Persian priest)

We found it strange the King
was more keen about a baby
than a star.

Before our journey to the birth, gifts once came
with their own requirements and obligations.
To give, really, was to ask.

Soon it was revealed our largesse
was dwarfed by a geography more expansive
than our charts. A gift no longer meant a ledger.

Afterwards I dreamt I saw a despot
licking dust, so we steered our lathered beasts
clear of the City. Sand blew

in our eyes, but we kept our course
for home. Everything was
different: constellations no longer

pointed out the path. We gave up gazing
at the stars for answers. We were haunted
by a fitful flame wavering inside us.