‘this is horrible,’ says everyone that works in politics

As a child, I thought the word *desert*.
I took a stone into my mouth
to slake my thirst. My father and I
lowered our luggage down a dry waterfall.
As a child, I thought the word *desert*
would open agony, softness,
lucite, quartz, basalt.
The more it’s used, the less it means.
Going voicelessly into the desert,
going without voice.
Absolutely unintelligible, the human person,
walking into the desert,
though they have left their abrasions:

tire tracks, spotlights, high tension-wires.
I agree that it is desolate, catastrophic,
sustaining. As a child, I could not believe
that poetry. That poetry can carry its own weight.
As the word *column* or *fragile*
implies a state of being
in relation. Forces of shearing or compression.
The sea, for instance, or
the drought-bleached lawn, their power
consisting in the way they rise
and fall back. An allegiance:
to motion, hurrying through. Perceptible,
as iron is: a vein, an itinerary,
that travels through the rock.
When that motion stops.
Brittleness—