

Trickster Time

We are a few moments of time
loaned by the Great Trickster
from the Big Bang bag
for us to use, abuse, amuse
Him or Her as best we can.

An almost invisible thread
in the tapestry of billions of years.
We unravel through countless
errors, regrets, greying hair,
fated to the same ending.

Delay just an illusion, a gift.
We are all children triptoeing
downstairs on Christmas day
to find the Great Trickster
welcoming us back to nothing.

off the balcony, laying flat on cold stone slabs.
Discovers from legend: Castor and Pollux,
yapping in yellow winks: Sirius the Dog Star,
barking at the flooding Nile to Egyptians,
the Dog Days of summer to the Greeks,
guide across the Pacific for Polynesian,
Unknown to me, mistaken as a planet.

I thank Orion for starting something
begun as a curious boy but forgotten,
scattered through adulthood of alternatives,
resurrected with sore head and wonderment.

Orion Over the Tiroi

A rare break from the clot of cloud tonight.
I watch the waxing gibbous moon rise
and feel roundly called to study the stars,
that much muttered about aspiration.

Orion's belt guides me, and I begin
the education of every hopeful Pharaoh:
locating Orion's legendary body parts:
pulsing Betelgeuse, Bellatrix, Rigel.

In and out to the balcony many times,
consulting the internet, banging my head
on the window shutters, cursing loudly,
wondering what neighbours make of such a
slow student. Still more to learn: tonight
the Winter Circle, a huge hexagonal asterism,
known to ancients without pads or airbnb.
I map out the hexagon, afraid of falling

Together

Elderly couple waddling
down the evening street.
Holding each other close:
her white stick tapping,
her eyes half opened, flickering.
No leader, just together.

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Author's Note -

The title '23.5 Degrees' refers to the
tilt of the Earth's axis:
a tilt borne of violence but also luck
as this leaning, this imperfection,
gives us our seasons and all the gifts
and challenges that come with us.

- Matthew James Friday, 2019



Dust

If we are just dust
hovering in the light
lit up by a splutter
of energy, enough
to claw some crude
shapes, form dreams
of better shapes,
making better dreams;
making every art,
achievement, agony:
agonising over instances
of what was, is, will be
long after the dust has
settled, sloughed. Then
what precious dust
we are, how carefully
we must hold each other,
never spilling a grain.

DNA Destiny

I reach out in bed, press
fingers into your shoulder,
my thin glove of flesh
and bones becoming fused
with the felt of your existence,
feeling that skeletal future
but asking that the magic
of carbon atoms amassed
from the decay of some
other organic miracle,
a DNA destiny shaped
by flint, fire, endless
immigration through eons
of evolution to end up
as me in a bed with you
asleep, unaware; asking
the magic to stay forever,
defy the deafening darkness.

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