

A Fan

My neighbor's circular fan sits
between parted pink curtains
as July's sun sets on it

it glows, a face embraced by pale hands
cupping, it steadies a revolving mind
equanimity frames fears, ideas, and images
that have spun all of these years

feel the whir within
imagine the hands that steady
wait out time
feel the pulsing wind
giving life
singing certainties:
stop your mind's spinning
at least for one night
it is all all right

Railroads

Downtown railroad juncture delays my going home -
swift waters cut below weary branches
yellow leaves race under the bridge, under me,
astride the mills and creaking railroad cars

River ran the thread mill, railroad made it profit -
mill's quiet now, train's tattoo entrances

Grandpa drove locomotives
hauling coal out of blue ridges
he'd bring home his paycheck and his love
and then disappear in a cloud of smoke

Grandma called theirs a fatherless family -
he was too busy following rails
through the Shenandoahs -
kept the kids coming
while he kept going

Last car rumbles by, a red light
fades into leaning birches
as the gate goes up

Traffic jostles across and I see the sun set
on oiled rusty tracks shimmering gold
like promises to keep, paychecks to deliver

A Breath for the ISS

The mission of the International Space Station (ISS) is to enable long-term exploration of space and provide benefits to people on Earth. - PBS.org

Dead winter out, its darkness cloaks the woods -
dim inkblots cutting forms from blackest blue
night sky. A weight within, but then a frieze
appears: Dog Star, North Star, the Bears construed.

Infinity inspired, I climb the hill
and take a vantage spot. Check time, look for
the angle. Catch my breath, my heart: the drill
to remind me blood and air must mix much more.

Once crowded mind grows sparse, beholds not, then
my shoulders fall, pointing my heart skyward,
night's silence waits nearby; a search, and when
I hold my breath I witness what comes by:

A star is gliding over hills, towns, states
(they're weightless in there from speed, not
a lack of gravity), this ship of fates
passed right there over me, 5:10 on the dot.

Exhale serene, it's passed, peace has possessed:
my burdens lighten when I watch the ISS.

Still

The strength of your absence:
worse than winter's fog erasing forests, fields,
lifetimes with mere mist

an oak stands unseen
across briars, brambles,
but it lives still;
this cold pale veil is temporary
as grief is meant to be
its strength is in its
refusal to fall down
in the face of oblivion

furnace shuts off
silence penetrates
still all is all still

your voice should fill this abyss
frame dark lines around this blur
I almost don't hear it anymore
can't quite conjure you up out of that haze
I am that blind tree waiting for you
deep in December's night of frozen fog

and what if the dawn's rays
can't chase ground clouds up,
freed, transcendent?
we'll all travel blind-folded
with cotton in our ears
as I do now without you here

2022 Poems

your absence while I'm present
leaves me insensate
makes me forget I'm waiting
for this time to end
again and again

reveals the lives lost
and this life's losses
are all cold winter fog
waiting to rise and dissipate
with the sun's hopeful breath
erasing this still night

Invitation to a Reverie

come watch the cat fall asleep with me
his tiger stripes undulate, mesmerize
soft snores from a pink nose
rhythmic sighs of content
drain the day's pains
in a purr

stop that chase
running you ragged
come here, feel the cat sleep
plush white belly side up
paws twitch and hold your worries down

come curl up and
watch the cat sleep
let your spool unravel
feed their feline dreams
with the weight of that thread

it's a daydream in a sunbeam
let's curl up let's cat nap
come watch the cat sleep with me