

Afire

There's a blazing on the air, a low rumble of a 3AM sky against parched lips and a tongue roofed upon dry walls, a shimmering haze in the distance like white-hot eruptions too far for present comfort, till a rufous haze seeps through the grey curtains of our bedroom. Your breath is laboured, like creased thoughts upon linen, what-if, what-for futures flamed over panting embers, of a mind wandering what sort of hellhole I have descended into, of phantom pains and pits bottomless, patched sails unfurled upon blackened seas and storms stirring on the horizon. Always, my feet are aflame, the surface area of my skin bursting into a crimson shower of past regrets and rote sighs. Yet, you are here, your body contorted into mine, unspokenly soothing in an apocalyptic embrace.

The Terror

He had a simple job to do:
pick at the ice chunks lodged
between the blades of Terror,
but first, he turned, his eyes
sweeping the polar black,
wondering, hoping, dreading
nothing lurked within the void
scarcely pierced by light, or reason,
the remnants of air pockets floated up
from the black depths and no doubt
the gaping maws of things no Man
had ever laid their eyes on before.

Then, came a face — a frigid grin with fingers
outstretched, like a spectre in cheap black robes
from those old carney spook-houses off Route 11.
He loosed a scream, snatching at the pitched water
(as if that would save him), but his cries only echoed
within the confines of his copper helmet; and only
dear Billy Orren heard his screams, thrown over
starboard prior, now making one last bid to pull
himself from this frozen wasteland, or at least,
downwards with some company. “He wants us
to run!” Young later shrieked from his sickbed
when a Netsilik shaman stared with a Tunghak
for a face, his eyes in hoops and his lips aswirl
with stars and beastly orifices, a blood-stained
grin turning with strings and bellies.

One day, I too wish to pass out on the ice,
my body laid bare beneath a sky set aflame
in emeralds and swirls of lilac, my face set
agaze upon distant light, a skeletonised
panoply of past wrongs and futurescapes,
a severed tongue festooned around my neck,
and my fingers clutched around the tailbone
of a Tuunbaq for good luck and good hunting
ghosts on the icy wind.

Pruned

Imagine having a little shit on the loo
when men (and women) in black steel
and polished frowns, batons tipped
with the light of infinite universes,
shock you on the nuts, prune your soul
simply because your stool shat out
in three spurts instead of two.

Now, I find myself in a nuked landscape
of violet wisps grasping at my throat,
green-yellow jesters with twin horns
for self-styled glorious purpose; multi-
verses masked in what could have been: *maybe*

I should have kissed you twice on your forehead
instead of once per day. *Could I have*
attended that spin class with you on Monday
instead of paring paperwork? *Would that have*
preserved the sacred timeline, saved me from
a low-key existence as the god of outcasts
conjuring two shits instead of one?

Order 9066

They came for us on the brink of War,
astride speeders and lasered bayonets,
pitched eyes under polished domes,
said our family had to be 'relocated'
to Camp Harmony for the security
and sake of the Empire's citizens.

Rebel scum, they called us behind
turned backs, slit-for-eyes and chink-
skinned resolve for sallowing already
sundered stars and a swollen chest
adorned with coloured stripes. *OjiiChan*
was the first to be taken, pitched blasters
escorting him back to a starship the shape
of a three-winged heron, but when they
came for the rest of us, the rebels barricaded
the bridge, crude machetes and BB guns
plunked over the wrecks of Tama-Toyota
pickups. Let them pass in peace, they said,
we weren't going nowhere but back
to our hunk o' junkshop off Fifth Avenue.

Once, they came for us, till there was
no one left to speak for me but myself,
my granddaddy's stolen years interned
in alien sedition and imaginary military
zones, but his heart of kyber interred
somewhere south of the eternal Falls.

A Psychohistorian Who Used to Predict the End of the Universe Now Writes Poetry

All roads lead to Trantor...

but oh, how Hari Seldon's headspace would roll
if he ever found his prodigy (who calculated π
to the eight-millionth degree and repackaged
the Great Calamity from thirty millennia to three),
now locked up in low-fi gravity of Jamaican roasts
and cinnamon twirls, words pierced on paper
instead of spreadsheets — *a strange occupation
for grown men* indeed — more so in predicting
his currently estimated potential, *past glories
as poor feeding* and future paths scant unthread.
Encyclopedias don't win wars, they say; but neither
do luxury rhymes or flavoured *poetic temperaments*.
Yet these words I still hold true: *a fire-eater must eat
his own fire to kindle himself*, and I've juggled these
sufficiently enough to swallow myself whole, reach
a Terminus

...where all stars end.