

Sixfold submission April 2013

Or, The Whale

Always the whale, it seems, and its whiteness
Cast in gray, like clouds heavy with themselves.
So easily seduced by larger things, we smelt
Awe to arrogance: what we pierce we own.
Lances and arrows and bullets and bombs aimed
At the seen, the things unseen too distant a target,
When we should be shuddering at the film on our teeth:
Bacteria that filch our heart, prions our memory.
But to stab at spores and fragments would be to turn
Our backs on the white whale with unbaptized harpoons,
Abandoning the gray day of our overrated reason.
Fungi hunt their nematodes with lasso traps,
While their mycelia hold our world intact,
Waiting in their widow's walk for our return.

Dark Matter

Imagine:

You are a slow bullet
So small and sharp you pierce everything you meet,
Riding the space between atoms,
Around electrons and their central suns,
Unimpeded by brick walls or metal gates
Or the thick rock, solid and liquid, of planets.
For your trouble you are tagged a WIMP,
An acronym that picks at the heart of your dilemma:
No matter how massive a particle you may be,
Your interactions in the end are simply weak.
Unseen, unseeable because you can't be touched by light,
You fail to summon the right force to alter anything.

Consolation prize:

Together with the multitude of your dim kind,
You mold a universe, hold it, shape it in your likeness;
Which doesn't change the sum of your particular histories:
A life spent just passing through.

Vacuuming the Living Room

What a mess they made, and me stuck here.
Picking up, straightening spines and inclinations,
Putting things in place. Thank goodness for the vacuum,
The forceful sucking. *Swippth!* A thin film
Of Pisendel, violins oboes and bassoons
In tow. *Thoop!* Cummings' crumbs rattle
Up the hose concatenating *circustent*
Monster, manunkind wrongsideout, sameness
Where our heads lived and were. Under the desk,
I find clumps of Montaigne; they almost choke
The hose. *Th-th-thunk! Pfoof!* -- there go
Private wishes nourished at the expense of a virtue
So savage and costly that man is never happy,
Since he is only after he is no more. Parts of Arvo
Float in a shaft of light. Beethoven – no neatnick –
Left ABAs all over the floor (well-developed as they are).
And beneath the sofa! A remnant of Rand, a shred of Poe –
I lie at full length, "Living" conquered at last --
Bradbury's rubble – *a smell of Time in the air tonight* –
Shards of Stravinsky, Copland's simple gifts.
And so I go on, drawing their drams, the hose clogging
Unclogging rattling shaking and generally whining
My peculiar stab at song. Upend the waterfall,
A sea builds inside, and the poor filtering sponge
Bloats until the wheeze of dusk. Finished,
But not Donne, who *sucks two soules vapors both away*
Being double dead, going, and bidding goe,
Love's first minute night. Outside the cold and dark
Decline, while inside, the old bag fills,
Waiting for a change. I tap a nail on the window,
And see, with a smile, that Frost has covered them all.

Ninety-nine Poems Appear on the Wall

Blame it on the Balvenie, twice-wooded
And just shy of teen – better yet, blame
It on e. e., and his hundred minus one.
Or the fireplace's mesmerizing flame.

It doesn't really matter. # 99 is here,
Floating on whichever wall I touch

It's fingershandstrees now and then
While I of you of us of when clutch

At the until of tomorrow. A plane
In the dark will bring you: two
To us at last. I read ninety-eight
For the one, counting up to find you

Oblivious – so fearless – of my too-large foe,
Fixation with *then's silent forevering snow*.