

The Debt Limit

We withdraw so much. See how our hands
 grab scraps from the miracle of nothing.
There is no measure to it. And what we take
 chokes us. We hide greed in a pilgrim's
burnt clothes. We think this also burns the record of our plunder!

 In the end, we sleep on it.
A world we won't know grows the mote of dust
 that floats away in borrowed thunder.
 Everything is borrowed and nothing
wakes us. We weigh the dust.
Must we wake at sunrise to figure out
how much is left? The ageless geographies
of natural selection may count as an indulgence.
 The escarpment
 between the savannah
and the murky crypto-currency balance sheets
isn't that high. We do not live in equanimity; we
addict to the scam of more.
 Predatory lenders swallow us for supper.
 The waterhole's walled off by speculators.
Our rib of mud burns in Olduvai, Lascaux and the Caymans.
In such burning a light forms, it shows a story's told
as crimes unfold.
 A pack of wolves case the watershed.
They call in chits, they bleed old parchment on the earth.
It's the false scarcity of ideas, the eons of waste and wishing
that feeds our creditors, and the wolf downloads a moon from
 your data. We lend and borrow both. True devotion.
Get a clue, to track a wolf is to walk after yourself.

We hide our short-term life from the *canis lupus* in us.
We expend the false fact of time. We think paradise is purchased.
We don't check the balance. We pocket nihilism
as debt protection surges from mortal accounts.

We pretend scarcity is a burden best let go.
It will, anyway, go. It floats away
in the light that's left, right out the window.

The Empty Theater

The house emptied, though there's a crumpled cough drop wrapper,
a folded ticket, a white wad of tissue,
a blue covid mask dropped and stepped on,
a glasses case left, left
in the rows and aisles.
Clues here and there of where
an audience once sat for the drama,
in the creaky barrels of seats
covered in a red velvet whose threads bared long ago
anyway.

In this silence my images play
on the proscenium where touch reigned.

I am walking away from the stage
where I missed the mark. I can't get over it.
How I suffered from causes; from creaky dramatic poses.
The curtain's finally closed on that lugubrious shit.

OK, I did play too loose with the storyline, I suppose.
And where applause once rained down
I'm alone now with my inutile regrets
as useless as these playbills on the floor.

Stopping, I look at the green exit light
and choose alchemy over renunciation.
Renunciation, which always adheres to what it denies.

So I'll not be here for the new season.
Why would I? What possible reason?
I can't make it new anymore.
I'll pocket the gold and move on.
With pockets heavy enough to walk into the river
outside, where they are sweeping the sidewalks with starlight.

The God of Gaps

Between the base
of these tall redwoods
I stop thinking about thinking.
Among these words I wait for space.

It's almost Fall.
The late afternoon light
streams on its side
even now as I try to write
about writing.

I can't get close enough
to the right word.

The sunlight falls in diagonal shafts;
through tall pillars of spongy bark,
from canopy to duff.

There is a Japanese word
for light like this
in the forest.

I can't remember it.
Proper nouns, then nouns... in that order
the retrieval stops.

I could Google it. But that
is why the names won't come
on their own.

Yet a song is in my hand
on YouTube... not a song
but an Arvo Pärt border to silence.
There, a sound fills something greater
than the sum of its longing.

The trees invite the light.
Or give us opportunity to parse it.
Are all the gaps where
something holy makes itself up
too full?
We learn from what is sparse.
The light in the forest drops its name
to spite line fifteen in this poem: *komorebi*.
Poetry and nature both abhor vacuums
and both point out how very full emptiness is.