

In which Einstein was proved correct

by two black holes that shimmied,
swirling closer and closer
until they collided and merged,
causing an infinitesimal burp,
a barely audible chirp likened to a middle C.
Having ridden a wave of a billion light-years
to reach this earth, the echo of that note
has caused me to consider the accretion
of chirrups and bleeps that punctuated this marriage,
with its children and corresponding careers
and various cancers both shallow and deep –
as well as home haircuts too numerous to prove,
except by noting that the razor had gone dull.
Was this gravitational pull or was it love?

Skin tests

I imagine his, scabrous, flayed,
the cope, the veil, the mantle
of him censored by medications
and a soul-pain no one can reach.

The skinny I

*The largest organ in the human body, the skin,
has a surface area of between 16 – 21 ½ square feet*

I imagine his, glabrous, splayed,
shaved of every follicled hair
that would render the tender map
of him legible still.

The skinny II

*The average square inch of skin holds 650 sweat glands
and 20 blood vessels and more than 1,000 nerve endings*

I imagine him, subdued
by those four aides delivering
those last subcutaneous skin pops
before the final coma descends.

The skinny III

The skin on a male forearm averages 1.3 millimeters thick

I imagine him, chuffed
to cubic inches of crust,
then chaff; tissue shriveled to dust.

The skinny IV, V

*The weight of air on a human body is circa 1 ton and the weight
of 200 cubic inches of ash of a human male is circa 6 pounds*

I imagine him, what is now him,
tagged in a simple solemn bag and box,
which I will probe for some errant bone
on which to hook the simple
solemn round of my wedding ring.

The skinny VI

The weight of a risen spirit is said to be between 21 and 23 grams

Mirror

I glance, sidelong, into that darkly glass
that once held his reflected gaze.
Now, refracted by hearsay as a mask
of unconcern, it's hazed as alias
or a mirage, which seem to fade
along a shimmering horizon's sill.
I stare, hard, confessing that I delude
myself by praying that his ghost will
exact from me some form of hope
for silent atonement (or of grace –
or a blessing perhaps?) as I probe
that glaze once sensible to his face.
Seeing, in that illusion of who he was,
that the truth of him will always remain his.

All I know

Loss weeps
all its water

into the desert
of an empty bed.

Tears
(when they come)

salt the underskin
of each eyelid

as if bled from
a sour, depleted sea.

The truth of tears
is precious

when heart and bed
are scoured

and all that remains
is a memory of air.

I shall live on air.

Anniversary

a cento, from tinkers by Paul Harding

From the distant cusp of marriage
not so much a stain as a silhouette –
her fastidious ghost of a husband,
and between them that empty space
more than the smoky arrangement
of a set of rumors, but a puzzle itself
that doesn't stop; it simply ends.

Never mind you.

That so.

Well I never.

Nor I.

Improvisations built from daydreams
and a sorrow so deep it must be love.