

A Gouging of Memory

*“Black-winged night laid a germless egg in the bosom of the
infinite deeps of darkness.”*

Aristophanes, The Birds

My freckled fingers press upon your days
my thumb gouging a hole in memory
as the earth swats me away with a fierce wind

like swatting a mosquito drilling into skin.
Thunder spools in the distance, acorns drop
on the metal roof in disjointed syncopation,

inner ear collecting round balloons of sound,
sending them like boulders
bludgeoning into neurons,

crashing contents of mind cabinets
into rudely glistening fragments
scattered in unrecognizable unpatterns.

A soft blanket, fogged, white,
smothering weight bears down
on the electricity of thought,

muffling spaces, suffocating laser vision,
clouding flow of words, deepening mind
crevasses, stuffing cottony wads into fissures.

A slow panic builds, arms wave,
frantic to capture popping bubbles;
iridescence flattens into oily puddles.

A breath: I wrap you in a patterned quilt,
a shimmer of stars spins, remembering our eons,
cleaving to recollection in twisted galaxies.

Put Yer Pipe Down, Lady, You Need a Reset

Not that kind of pipe,
not a corncob clenched
in Granny Wisdom's jaw
as she dispenses pithy advice.

The iron drain pipe
you use to bludgeon
questioners of your nasty vitriol.

The off-key strident
shrieking pipe tootled
with abandon
as though
you had any music
to add to life's symphony.

Dredging up say-sos
until we gasp at the waste of it:
your frivolous profligacy,
flinging spiked phrases,
ugly utterances,
razor slogans
scooped up from your bucket
of nunchaku words,
flung with foul intent
to scissor, slash, scour:
a foaming succubus
with nothing to say.

Poetry and History Pressing Upon Me

In a rock hollow,
proportioned for contemplation,
I ponder my journey
of half a billion years.

Observing plays of oceans sloshing
against untethered shores,
observing landmasses rattling and shifting,
building up and eroding down,
connecting in Pangeaic companionship,
departing in amicable separation;
from my rock I see vast vistas,
I see lichen flutter miniscule feathery fronds,
clinging for a season on my boulder.

Dodging meteor impacts, I float
atop my tectonic plate
traversing a tropical southern pole,
watching as earth warms and cools,
watching rhythms of life and death,
watching the alive ones thrive and perish.

My continent, in unending tectonic argument,
drifts north at a pace too slow
for dinosaurs to notice,
too fast for meditative completion.
I bask in sun's heat and shiver
under miles of glacial ice,
I tremble in shuddering thunder
of quaking ground, become washed
in vast interior seas growing and waning,
and wonder at my journey,
as all moves about me, carries me.

For a moment, a brief instant
in my onward path, I rest,
peaceful under shading branches,
listening to nearby swish of water
as it burbles forth from a spring at my feet,
to become a stream, a river
on its way to rejoin ocean depths.
My woodsy friends, birds, rabbits,
possums, deer, stop by for a drink

and I consider their coming and going.

I endure for the next forever,
the sequel of something
of which I have lost the beginning,*
long braid of sacred thread
circling earth and sky and stone,
gold-pink light leaking
under massed western clouds
in long rays to illuminate
a shy woodland blossom,
the old color of creation.

My rock vibrates with deep bass thrum,
not joyous abandon of birds and butterflies,
but steady harmony, stately drumbeat
enshrining my place where time sits
in a moment and an eternity.

*Henry James, (*Beast in
the Jungle*, 1909)

The Zephyr-Hound, Wise Denizen of the Winds

Gusting wind may propel things, and knock you about—
with such power to surprise by the strength of its clout.

Astonished, you fly there, and blow back again
when you're driven by tempest with thunder and rain.

The wise Zephyr-Hound sniffs to feel the charged air;
he does not relent, will not yield to fanfare.

He stays anchored and tranquil, while gripping four furies,
lets no rant or eruptive tornado cause worries.

His left paw on wandering winds of the west:
“Stay in place, you tough travelers, you might take a rest.”

His right paw on icy hiss-natterings of north:
“Stay in place, you foul blatherers; I'll not call you forth.”

His right foot on elusive erewhons of east:
“Stay in place, now, you troublesome unruly beasts.”

His left foot on sneaky snark-stirrings of south:
“Stay in place, adjourn cyclones that squall from your
mouth.”

With his tail, he slaps sense in and subjugates fiends
that stomp, blustering and blowing, sham causers of scenes.

All this to say, you must learn from the master
when naughty nefarious outbursts dash faster:

just pin them with patience and let their storms cool,
fuming flareup may flounce till revealed as the fool.

Untamed Infinities

A Dizain

“...untamed infinities breaking loose across your calculations.”
--Adam Becker, “The Origins of Space and Time”
Scientific American, February, 2022, page 28

If you pull the threads of a tapestry
removing them in a tangle of loss
where a single shimmering mystery
scruffs colors together in random toss:
patterns slip, depixelize, form mute dross,
and, stirred by a nonchalant forefinger,
become nothing/everything to linger
like fallen trees wrestled up by their roots,
vertical accord disturbed, sky singer
left to wonder what the world constitutes.