

(title of four-poem set: "And You'll Breathe")

cleft i left behind

no reason why i will not start a poem

with i. except it be presumptuous

to think my readers want to know about

my views. except that they are reading this.

tis true. am humble. do not want or need

phat fame, fair share of literate eclat.

and yet i hope that someone gets to see

these same things from my angle. failing that,

triangle delta oracle behooves

me to put out there stuff which no one proves.

make music with the wording in the grooves

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the sighing of the oft

"don't stand in the doorway, don't block up the hall" Bob Dylan, The Times They Are A-Changin'

twas oft he'd start his sonnets with the oft

he'd tilt them on one stilt toward the center

strong scent did lead with speed to door marked "enter"

you'd know it was not loud because twas soft

then softly he would write "there isn't always"

"nor is there never" "hardly ever peace"

haranguing with a pencil would not cease

harrumphing at those blocking up the hallways

And oft as well the volta gives a turn.

Turns into bits of sad acerbic wit.

With voltages grown softer. Candlelit.

Grows calm and strong. Oft, thoughts no longer churn.

Dissolving, disappearing as he writes.

On mute, he hears the sighing of sound bites.

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what we wondered

we've wondered where we wandered when we went
we've gathered that we're woven then we're gone
we didn't sense the substance as we spent
our precious prequel dusking until dawn
and dawning on and on, abandoned dreams
sad sleeping seeping wuzzy fuzzy one
was there and here and now, then split its seams
and went who knows where, back to smoking gun

remember when we put that thing together
remember where we put that thing. Together...
remember how we put that thing together
remember why we put the thing together

dismembering the thing, bring in the embers
ring in forever, ringing out the wrong
or wringing out the tension and the temblors
ring in a new beginning for old song
old song we've sung together for so long
say ciao and wonder how it got so strong

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And You'll Breathe

You'll breathe air soon enough. You'll start as one
cell made from two. Inside placental place
you'll float, finding your oxygenation
From blood-on-blood exchange. Mom interface.

No need to breathe in there. You'd better not.
Lungs undeveloped. Heart with two valves shut.
Escape the wet. Hurling child juggernaut.
Take that first breath. There's no if and or but.
Breathe like there's no tomorrow. Squall. Yell. Sigh.
You'll learn your respiration or you'll die.

Of ins and outs of air you'll soon be sure.
Inhale. Exhale. Run round about the block.
You'll snort. Sneeze. Sniff. You'll hold your breath. You'll blur
distinctions between human and livestock.

Oh you'll fall down. Get wind knocked out of you.
Gasping, you'll get it back again. Refill
those alveolar air sacs. You'll renew
your life-long bond with air... with time to kill.
And then you'll use the strength of breath in birth-
ing children... winning races... tilling earth.

(continued on next page)

Exhaling, you'll give CO₂ to plants.
They'll gladly give you O₂ in exchange.
Your lungs will sort it out. You'll do the dance
of life and hit your stride. You'll find your range.

Much as a whale clears water from blow-hole:
breathe out completely. Take fresh air. Lungs full.
Gravity's pull has no effect. You'll stroll
cloud nine. Air-energized. Implacable.
The breadth of the breath. Length of life. Far. Wide.
Oh you'll breathe wide and far enough. There's time.

Sometimes you will grow angry yes you'll seethe.
Exhale. Exile the madness. Send it out.
Then find the positive. Go on and breathe
it in. Go breeze on through your days. Don't doubt
your well-intentioned efforts... they'll do well.

Keep breathing till your dying breath. Last gasp.
Seek stoppage... respiration's ending bell...
you'll find it with a rattle and a rasp.
And thus you will have known this planet's squeeze.
You'll live just long enough. Go on and breathe.

(end of poem... title of four-poem set: "And You'll Breathe")