

In Commemoration of the Pandemic: All Things Pass

Desiccation

Dawn.

Yangon traffic already
snipping through the air
Then a soft gong echoes
reverberating over the noise
The bare feet and saffron
Call us momentarily
to another world
more real than this
and yet the same

They pass.

Traffic resumes its chaos
and we return
to our struggles
forgetting how
those bare feet and metallic ring
preserve our
lives from
utter desiccation

Social Undistancing

I was caught up
in my own head
checking this and that
off my list
nearly passed you by
sitting quietly on the curb
your prosthetic leg
against your heavy head
Plucking at my loose change
I knelt next to you
and saw the tears
in your worn eyes
my loose change paling
to the widow's mite
Then you horrified me
scooting onto the pavement
and pressing your hands together
you bowed to me

Why should you bow to me
who has too much
and can do so little
to right the injustice
that keeps us apart

I should bow to you
Forgive me

Mochi Moonfall

Sharpshootin' at that bloody moon tonight
Keeping it in the crosshairs of my sight
What good is it with so many phases
Its namesake the lunatics it crazes

I'm aiming for a mochi storm tonight
I'm aiming purely out of hungry spite
I'd like to avalanche these starless skies
Sweet rice cake snowfall at the moon's demise

Room of Acquirement

Here in the waking dream of the soundless room again
that dead space between the delusion and real where thoughts suspend
like specimen fettered in glass observation jars and formaldehyde
unnaturally bloated with preservatives, looking both so dead and alive
In this room insane my hands hold only one gesture repeating
they trace endless tenement walls whose dark silence remains defeating

Ask me what they are groping for—
perhaps a barred window or a hingeless door
honest to God, these weary hands don't know anymore
Vague memories of this place that once crescendoed a musical score
now I cannot even decipher ceiling from floor

Echoes of a grand illusion: the dewpoint of clouded souls
evaporated into space—don't you know for whom this bell tolls?
As familiar as foreign, this room required lives on in memories
minute as a child-sized coffin yet untenable as the seas
Find me here when I seem listless and withdrawn
I'm groping—hoping—this night will be broken by dawn

From one survivor to another

Just wait
all things change
This too shall pass
and a new season will come
One day
we'll sit at the foot
of Everest
far, far from the summit
—even below base camp—
and a shadow
of a smile
will glimmer
on our tired faces
realizing how far
we've come