

**Unvoiced**

The words from the dream are  
Wisps in the air like broken  
Spider webs wrapping invisibly  
About my face and forearms

The fake sunrise tarp draped before me  
Ripples like a summer mirage  
Half-soaked into the rural street

And then as if I were not supposed to

I step through and place my foot  
Solidly into an evening of dark specters  
Waiting outside of their existence  
To become what I am

There  
I am the cool turpentine  
Wash of grays seeping over  
A dusting of brown sand in the road

There  
I am the night falling upon  
Neglected pastures of weeds  
Sputtering up about the silhouettes  
Of tree stumps and old swing sets

There  
I am the street lamps' sallow illumine  
Peering out sensibly from between  
Foolish tree skeleton embraces

There  
I am still the child  
Twisting acorns into the asphalt  
With the soles of her shoes

Squealing into the night

## I, Your Progeny

I cannot get my mind  
 Around the meaning of your ninety years.  
 If I multiplied my age, my experiences,  
 My life's richness –  
 Math not being my strong suit –  
 I would be making your age, events, and richness  
 Quantifiable,  
 As if you were simply  
 A larger, scatter-plot version of me,  
 Your number and density  
 Increasing  
 With every cycle of rebirth and dormancy;  
 Repeating  
 Over acre upon acre  
 Of variegated shades and shade;  
 Each of your small, too-subtle suffocations  
 Receding  
 Into anonymity  
 By your sheer enormity.

Even if my calculations were viable,  
 I would be entirely lost  
 In the matrix of your possibility.

But here,  
 Where my roots have taken hold,  
 Where this slice of sun streaks in,  
 In this cross-section of you --  
 I cannot count the leaves  
 That glimmer golden,  
 Or burn blood-red,  
 Nor plot each point of light  
 That breaches the canopy and reaches  
 The dank floor.

I am not one-third, not one-thirtieth  
 Of your richness,  
 Not even a quantum speck  
 Of your boundless soul,  
 Yet, dazzled here,  
 Neither am I invisible.

I quiver, here,  
 In your engendering light.

### Wise at Thirty-five, Revised at Forty

Preserved like wax museum sculptures,  
 Erected in their own, obscure enclave,  
 These two, distinct ages pulled off quite the  
 Elaborate spectacle – circling  
 One another in yin-and-yang-fashion,  
 Gurgling and sputtering dramatically  
 Toward a crescendo of neurotic  
 Self-consumption – until the violent  
 Vortex of their fervent dance dissolved in  
 A brief instant into oblivion.  
 Still, I relish the living left to do,  
 While constantly reliving the living  
 That can't be redone, intently watching  
 Today's waterfall spill over into  
 The uncertain basin of tomorrow:

“Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow creeps in this petty pace...”<sup>1</sup>  
 Shakespeare was wise to the relatively  
 Insignificant fact that tomorrows  
 Keep coming, regardless of how we spend  
 Or squander, mete out, or justify them,  
 Forgetting their order, or which ones were  
 Real and which were dreaming, or whether there  
 Is quantifiably a difference.

I have tried and failed to live up to that  
 “Mysterious,” skulking *expectation* --  
 Convinced it was my duty to perform  
 The scenes from a moral composition,  
 Which I now know I scripted for myself:  
 Whether I'd tried pink-nosed and dreamy-eyed  
 To face into an icy, winter wind  
 (To look like the cover illustration  
 Of the children's book, *Eloise in Moscow*),  
 Or to bound – stripped down to nothing but my  
 Bare disillusionment – through the fertile  
 Valley beneath a sun-streaked, summer sky,  
 I'd *always* been shocked to discover the  
 Dance was neither beguiling nor beautiful.  
 How did I manage to cultivate and  
 Reap such a harvest of indignation?

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from *Macbeth*, V, v, 20-21

For an age, I sulked in self-abasement,  
Practicing absurd, measured detachment,  
While swathed in a café's lulling morning  
Warmth, huddling with coffee and crossword.  
I once watched through the glass as a curled, brown  
Leaf flapped fitfully in the street, as if  
It were some willful creature with purpose  
And life blood coursing through its wrinkled veins.  
Though I feigned amazement, as it darted  
In and out of traffic and leapt anew  
With life after each self-orchestrated  
Brush with tragedy, I all the while knew  
(Though I may have started at its final,  
Quick, clever tailspin, as the wind blew it  
Out of sight forever), and *loved knowing*  
That on most days, a leaf *is* just a leaf.

If once I rather resembled a rock's  
Unmovable crest, emerging stubborn  
And solitary, from a rushing stream,  
My constant shadow blotting out the sun  
From the leaves cascading by beneath me,  
I now glisten and shiver in the splash  
Of that sun's blazing, cold humility.