

on our last evening in the house, after we'd sipped scotch aged  
as old as the walls, a storm approached from the northeast.  
it dealt only a glancing blow, lighting globes in the southern sky  
behind obscuring clouds, like synapses in my mind  
illuminating memories.

that week, they released the first pictures from Webb;  
exhausted light—blue-shifted, expedited—  
received at stellar speed. and yet we couldn't see then that  
we were touched by deep time,  
that even the youngest ray was still eight minutes away.

so how does one stay present  
when aglow by the past?

I wish I could see the emerald swell in timelapse  
over a decade and a half,  
and the thuja trees, nine of them—we call them the Supremes—  
linking, filling in the seams.

like the roots of the Japanese maple next to  
the lemon-shaped green,  
unearthing the stone path;  
or the rose bushes and birch in the back, forming  
a gable-roofed cupola, where we watched  
every summer supernova until it was black,  
an airplane skirted the downdraft, and a  
fulsome rainbow framed a lightning flash.  
and briefly, we could see timelight, endlessly  
reflected, refracted, dispersed.

it felt like it could last,  
like we could catch the dusk like a mote of dust on a sunlit glass.  
or drink the sky, grapefruit and tangerine.  
when it thundered, we counted as the seconds passed by,  
and we knew the source was receding,  
so we went inside.

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# measure

we're losing heat;  
her eyes tear up at the frost.  
we're momentarily lost until  
we find the right street in Harbor East.  
she shivers and I shake,  
colliding with the years I'd been here,  
before I'd seen her shape.

that cold spell in 2012—  
six degrees, propelled, layered,  
stepping out on a dare,  
with no intention but to measure  
the separation between  
me and a bar,  
my head, her heart;

the sidewalk and the sky,  
my hand, her thigh;  
a rooftop, the asphalt;  
the spacetime I borrowed from me,  
that can't be heard or seen,  
shining, echoing, on too high or

too low a frequency.

the shrinking distance between now and  
history (*once more, once more*);  
the numen of an eternally cascading city;  
the number unknown to me;  
the moments it took to answer my phone.

I never learned who called,  
while I refracted home in the dark,  
who whispered my name and  
said *look at the snow*.

maybe it's me, a few minutes hence,  
leaving a message in the ever tense.  
offering what helps, what doesn't harm—  
measure again. keep her warm.



*before bereft of ballast,  
above the undertow,  
the songs we sang were ballads,  
of the dreams of heroes.*

*now I grieve the dying light,  
as I've run out of time;  
I feel my body collide  
with splintered, christened pine.*

*remember I've loved you and  
never told you not to cry.  
when you feel your feet lose the land,  
stay warm and stay high.*

*w a r m   &   h i g h*

*though we'll reign over grey sea,  
we'll never feel the crowns.  
still now we sing of our dreams,  
for the wind cannot drown.*

*thus received I am baptized—  
worthless water from cruel clouds.  
shivering into capsizes.  
sinking beneath the shroud.*

*I hope whoever loves you,  
never tells you not to cry.  
when you sense a salt breeze lift you,  
stay warm and stay high.*



I awoke with a song, through the blinds  
in the window frame, I thought I spied  
faint blue above grey—and was surprised  
by the way this shifting sky  
obliged a nascent, insistent hope—  
rooted in rest, I know—  
and by how the heart stirred  
in the chest.

## late bloomer

(after Stanley Kunitz)

the cool and the dark beset no one,  
so I guessed, and yet,  
"A curious gladness shook me," and  
I chose to be  
light-splashed,  
meeting a rising expectation *at last*.  
believing—just then—in  
photosynthesis, a lotus' kiss;  
in distance over time equals  
persistence.

a ribbon, a flag, then May was June,  
and I couldn't bait or recreate the muse.

I became too late to bloom  
in the garden of your room, but  
as long as I can hear a song from a dream,  
I'm liminal—ever varied.

I can't tell you not to  
bury your pain.  
but I've learned when the  
time is right to turn the round  
and grow again.



I.  
*let there be light.*  
a forbidden spell cast;  
and when he disobeyed himself at last,  
he was blinded and deafened.  
and as he wailed and wept, he groped in the  
impenetrable dark, his

## *heat death*

fumbling fingers spraying  
feckless sparks,  
failing to form from that  
which he could remember  
of himself,  
of himself,  
of himself.

II.  
two headlights shone into a dark bramble.  
clinging to wood,  
begging to be beckoned no further,  
unsure of the matter cleaved,  
but certain it need not be seen.

motes suspend—  
*a sunbeam trapping dust off the wall...*  
*catching the dusk like a ball...*  
a bellow, a peering maw,  
and dilation becomes quantum—

unobservable, immeasurable,  
without alteration.  
points converge and collapse, incorruptible.  
*and we shall be changed.*

light made shadow free, shallow deep—  
*in the twinkling of an eye.*  
breaking horn high to lips.  
it should have been left to sleep.

*God save us*

*from ourselves.*  
*from ourselves.*  
*from ourselves.*