

‘He lay in the long grass’

He lay in the long grass and saw nothing
but blue in the zenith, polished immortal blue,
the original, the unstained, the ancient blue,
the friendly firmament
under which he had always lived,
under which he now lay, breathing
and gazing up at the celestial sphere, while
timothy, sweet vernal grass, and meadow foxtail waved
their seed heads at the limits of his vision.
Their grace, their elusive scent, made him smile,
keen to resume his life’s work after rest.
And seeing in the zenith: nothing.

In the second slice of time there was nothing
riding the zenith, unless (imagination?)
a mote, an impurity, a glitch, a grain
set in the blue like a dark flaw in a sapphire,
an otherwise perfect sapphire.
No seeds of foxtail or sweet vernal grass
had floated onto his pupils. The wind had stilled,
resting like him before resuming, and yes
when he blinked and rubbed his eyes and looked again
the dark thing was real, still in place
at the limit of his vision like a stain
on the blue zenith where there had been nothing.

In the third slice of time there was nothing
but simple joy. High in the zenith hovered
something alive with wings that trembled
(the speck had grown), and the watcher trembled—
not through fear, but as one who sees a lover
after long absence waving blindly, getting
close, and remembers how that person filled
his heart, and remembers after long forgetting
the subtle taste of her kiss, as delicate as the taste
of a fresh pulled stalk of summer grass—
trembled to see the skylark he thought the thing resembled
in the blue zenith where there had been nothing.

continued

In the fourth slice of time there was nothing
when he closed his eyes but the sound of wings
and the stirring of the grasses beside his face.
When he opened them it was still there above him,
the dark, winged being, not of the human race.
Its presence didn't surprise him altogether—
perhaps he had already imagined that silhouette
whose features were lost in shadow against the blue.
Its height above him was hard to estimate;
he couldn't tell the size of its deeply indented wings,
and as for divining whether
it was a cold automaton, or warm and living,
nothing betrayed its nature, nothing.

In the fifth slice of time there was nothing
more to be done. Each time he turned his head
to look past the flattened grass at the horizon
he saw, below a dark mass, a line of crimson
such as he had seen before when the sun, sinking
peeped below a compacted mass of cloud.
The unmoving air was thick with an unknown scent
that was not the scent of a lover, or of the curled
smoke from a leaf bonfire, or of a creature dead.
When he looked up there was nothing
to see in the velvet blackness: no more blue,
and even the crimson band was shrinking
under the wings that covered the world
until at last there was nothing.

This Will Pass

I can't go on and on like this
it can't continue as it is
the status quos ephemeral
my state is not perpetual

each moment offers something new
I could be looking forward to
the present isn't carved in wood
oh nothing is the same for good

life goes in phases like the moon
a waning is expected soon
conditions now—they just can't last
the variables are varying fast
it won't be long till this has passed

another day, another day
the wind will blow another way

I can't go on and on like this
the situation isn't fixed
chance will amend the way it is
a new condition must be next

the random always plays a role
the juncture judders to a turn
the reader's hand unwinds the scroll
the Heraclitian fire will burn

the freezing fog will start to lift
occurrences will cause a shift
the finger writes and moves along
no circumstance is here for long
a change of key relieves the song

another day, another day
your presence will have less to say

life isn't baked inside a crust
no circumstance is cast in bronze
I'm not dug in like standing stones
the screws that screw me down will rust

things-as-they-are will never stay
the context has to come ungummed
events are not completely jammed
you will belong to yesterday

there's not a road that doesn't bend
the scribbling finger scribbles more
no situation can endure
somehow your ending has to end

a different set-ump's on the way
and what arose will pass away
the Zeit must have another Geist
with steam or spray instead of ice
it all can alter in a trice

Another day, another day
the wind will blow your flowers away.