

This Curious Light

After the lassitudes of blue, the sun. Now buttermilk,
now brimful and overflowing, suddenly fierce and red,

about to slip below the chipped and crenellated grime,
but shimmering for this last instant before becoming

those shades of pink that bless and surely must amaze,
dusk an uncertain premise, premonition which cannot last

for ever and ever amen. The world is swaddled now in undertones,
the scales we chant to put an end to thought,

to all that is mysterious and temptingly unknowable.
To think about a mystery we must imagine it,

maybe as a labyrinth or maze, as forest or lantana stand
but not as nothing or the thing impenetrable,

that would have another tangled name.

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Might belief be a word for something else, perhaps intuition,
the feeling, you know the one, of a presence in the room?

It passes by, you turn but nothing's there except, perhaps,
a disturbance in the air, a wobble in the orbit

of a distant world, the glint in an oceanic vent.
Free diving is not entirely free: to go down you leave behind;

and coming back breath is an unremitting currency:
constrained air swells, hammers for release, bubbles rise, burst,

or momentarily make transparent domes, cellophane,
that floats the sting beneath, nothing so defined

in all this visibility. There is everything inside the self
and everything outside, and nowhere else for anything

that is a thing to be. How to make the stone miraculous again,
wind a devil's breath, silence a wing in the shuffling air?

This commingling could be eternity, a beyond beyond all seeing
unravelling heart's battle with time that curves and disappears

in pettifogging words. When day grows dark and unintended
is it better to sense or see? The externality of things, that is enough,

this admits of hidden roots, sap that rises,
bark that strips and burns, the complicated exchange of air,

even the whole tree that falls unnoticed.

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Impossible to think 'black' or 'blank'. To think any thing
that is not thing: black maw, black hood,

blank state waiting to be filled. Light is sifted through the clouds,
highlights then deflects. Close your eyes. The invisible

saying now, now, 'you', an insect on a lake, a moth on glass,
the stealth of ocean currents, waves that feather in the wind,

the merest touch. You open your mouth to cry and a bird flies out.
Another and another. They arrange themselves in rank and order,

drop like stones. The sea responds with holes. If this is it,
if there is nothing more, then nothing must be more,

what is not cannot be. Hold my hand. We are strange uncertain beasts,
rooted to this place, singing without conviction

until a landscape intervenes. We shrink against the hills,
are lost in the verticals of trees, the clutch and merge of waves,

our voices drowning in this curious light.

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