

Prayer for the Finite

Let us pray for days and diameters,
For positive integers and ticks of a clock,
For every obstacle with which we briefly
Barricade forever's advancing army.

Have you ever imagined the world
In divisions by zero? Existence,
Only louder; time, only heavier;
Life, only longer then longer then—
Looking up to blank sky, barely
Remembering when entropy
Snuffed out the last star.

Does your stomach churn like mine?
Do you realize to be eternal is to speak
Without punctuation or paragraphs
Which is to say everything
And nothing all at once?
Infinite which is another way of saying
Void, heaven which is another kind of
Death, a point in ever-inflating darkness.

So let us pray for epilogues
(Make us instruments of tendon and marrow)
For periods, paragraphs, lifted pens
(Where there are hands, let us sow lighthouses)
For fermatas, eyes swinging slowly shut
(Where there are skies, let us sow reverent aurora).

Pray for us dust, now and at every hour
Before forever: world with finite end—

Seeing Your Breath

I.

When you wake, soft wisps of silver snow tinge
Trees' knobbed fingers the color of vast above:
The barbed barrier between earth and sky dissolves.

No more must you slouch on sidewalk's rusty pew.
No more must you listen to a metallic choir's honking.
No more must you cough on exhaust pipe incense
Staring as salvation is reduced to a procession
Of glaring headlights: the street is empty.

Reclaim the frozen morning.
Let the snowflakes paint your hair like baptism.
Seize the clouds for rosary beads and pray
That you might dance in this snow globe cathedral.
Peace be with the invisible—the inaudible—
This imprecise perfection. Eucharist is nothing
If not crystallized symmetry landing
On your outstretched tongue. In the name of the
Winter, the silence, this windblown creed: amen.

II.

Blades of grass skewering the snow,
Earthy colors bleeding through sledding tracks—
Was it all a facade, this temple inside out,
This blizzard hush turned melting sabbath?

III.

Tomorrow you'll forget what's beyond
Buzzing sludge. When your boots again shuffle
Along sidewalk, and Wednesday sun shoves
Sky out of the way (the barbed border between
Brittle branch ends and infinite blue crystallized
Once again), and the last alabaster ashes
Float onto your forehead, you'll brush them off.

Ode to Binary

1.

The monsters under our beds
Shift uneasily on creaking floorboards,
Listening to the metallic thunderstorm.

We just lie there, you and I,
Our lowered blinds blocking out the sky,
Sticking fingers in our ears
As if it will drown out the monsters' murmur,
Tapping our glowing glass menagerie
As if it won't hollow us.

0.

This time, the angry clouds spew not raindrops,
But harsh blue pixels in a forty-day flood.
They hit the ground—one click, then another,
Then a billion (louder than buzzing static)—
Becoming a river as massive as the Amazon:
Terabytes high, gigahertz fast,
Scrolling through cities, engulfing them.

This time, we sinners choke
One by zero by one, diodes
Swooning slowly under
A lazily infinite current.

1.

We've become afraid of the silence
Instead of the dark, dreading the hour
When empty chatter ceases,
When our thoughts no longer hide
Behind thunder, when the only monsters
Under our beds are ourselves.