

Wilderness House Literary Review 5/2

Daniel Hudon

A Brief History of Light

Unlike you and me,
a photon does not experience its own existence:
no pangs of hunger, no tears or lust, no joy.
The moment it is created
and the moment it is destroyed
are one, with nothing in between:
time is zero
all distances (along the line of sight)
vanish.

To a photon, the universe
is still infinitely
small like it was
when it was
created
and destroyed.
A second, a lifetime, an eon,
fourteen billion years
pass in a flash.

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The History of Gravity

I

One always falling for another:
specks of dust in the depths of a nebula,
planets tumbling around a sun, a pair
of galaxies whirling together never letting go.

II

The ache of separation at last overcome
for even the atoms, gathered and compressed,
can one day spark into a star.

III

An obsession, the way an orbit is a kind
of unhappy love; just look at the moon,
only a true lover could stay so faithful
while wearing such pain on her face.

IV

Perhaps it's an illusion that disappears
with a new perspective, like the flatness
of Earth or the space that separates us,
and yet

V

raindrops
snowflakes
gently

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Thingvellir, Iceland

I like these instances of deep time:
trees that migrate slow
as glaciers over continents
fish sleep so long in rock
that they turn to stone;
millennia pass
like a lightning flash
and an eon is a snap
of the fingers.

At Thingvellir, two continental plates
tear away from each other,
leaving a long trench, spotted
with mats of moss and lichen,
like the walls of a ruined castle,
widening by inches over centuries.
Tufts of grass grow in the trench,
and tiny white and yellow
buttercup flowers blossom.

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The Stars

"The city's driving me crazy," she said, "let's go for a drive and look at the stars." It was the best idea I'd heard in ages. So we got in the car and drove out under the canopy of streetlights, past the pharmacies that blazed along the boulevards, past the video shops and the brightly lit used car lots, the construction sites with their spotlights and the billboards trumpeting something, all the while shielding our eyes from the oncoming headlights. Maybe I had the radio on and she flicked between the stations or maybe we drove in silent anticipation. Before long I could see the glow of the city receding in the rearview mirror like an old postcard fading and through the windshield a few anonymous stars appeared out of the haze, their lights ignored for so long. I pulled off into a darkened churchyard and parked next to the cemetery. We got out of the car and the wind hit us, fresh and cold, and then, we looked up to see the quiet, quiet, quiet stars shining brilliantly, just like we always hoped.