

Two Poems

Amish Trivedi

THE DEPRESSION ERA

Or the way the wind sweeps across a desert. I tried to grow a heart for you (it didn't take). Or how the landscape fades when the city grows its way beyond lines drawn, enough to contain all want. An imagined I spoken to with every breath drawn from a well that keeps me guessing if the way light escapes is a sign that gravity has to decay after holding together a universe. Now I imagine an I that could say the things it should have stopped being in denial of before. Or how the organs that fail indicate rupture, fragmentation. How they appear and reappear in the same frame without anyone misdiagnosing them. A thing unseen is a negation of what is sensed, so draw a heart instead and hope no one notices just staying in bed all day. My eyes find some birds that black out the sky just to keep from wondering how far it goes. The atmosphere creates parallax, or a way to put things out of order to keep people guessing forever. Yet the skin obscures too, the organs which fail are always the ones cut out last when they rot through the center and risk systemic failure. Systems are failing but no one waits for the doctor to cover the body so it just gets burned in the nearest yard or eyelid. Material world or world as material, a point of calcification, a point from which to forgive the sins which aren't recorded anywhere else. Or the river down which the body was never seen again, where the stones that weighed the body down were never swept again until the sea collapsed around them. Or the spasm that throws blindly the clot into the chambers that make them startle and stop, fire out and misfire and misfade, a façade of plausible when the aching becomes a way of biting through the bone to sever an arm that got trapped. Or how memory bends back around, so reach through the legs far enough to catch it before it falls over onto a face, as if to prove the shape of memory is really just denial to everyone who isn't me. What goes hiding what goes hiding and hidden into the scene of the film, in between the cuts of the frames per second that can't be seen because the brain is not the screen onto which the film was ever projected in the first place. The way across, the way through to the final moments in which the object of the world is seen as what it is: the world as whole. Not as container of objects but as object (as the bridge burns or car crashes or sun collapses into the oilfire of sea). In the longer version of the treatment, out of view so that another tension can grow, can escape of the waves in which the rocks are surely smoothed by now. Or as the wave upon rock or as negation of wave that is wave. Or as acclimatization. Or as acclaim or the way memory

seems to rewrite whenever written into too deeply or
just on the surface of a prayer or sermon or madrigal
sung in dreary tone to evoke the terror of being known
to every sinner who goes unacknowledged for their sin.
The world as recalcitrant, that which denies in the face
of denial, in the space understanding of the grace
which was left over in the moments the universe
sprang forth, swam forth of detail, of bridgematter.

WATCH THE CORNERS

Maybe it's a blessing that we get to die.

The world I cannot recommend to you.

My miracle year was any before this one.

Rubbing the ashes of two good days into a wounded knee.

The trajectory seems off: the mortar doesn't hit just the things in its path.

The creek is always rising but you don't always get to see the houses that flood.

Dead spot in a mirror, or the way the bottom of the ocean runs with rivers of sand.

The warmth of a void welcoming beyond ecology.

The tick of time is counter rhythm, or the value of getting away from who you are.

Poetry asks you to betray yourself by letting out the parts of yourself you would have preferred to keep in.

I learned to shut up about myself.

The things that are just for me, I keep in, keep silent.

Sometimes a whole career is playing against type.

The smaller crisis is reimagined within the larger one.

I grieve a death that no one else seems able to determine.

