

a street

yesterday the street I live in
became new to me
I saw blushing windows in its bend
and wound-up cars following the curvature
the signs on the rooftops read names I had
not noticed before behind a rusty gate
the glimpse of an overgrown trellis
the scent of blossom rushing in
from another season
in doorways weak smiles assemble as
always, how's everything
the 24-hour bus service,
diagonal zebra crossings
the cracked asphalt
breathed empathy, elated me

I pray and the pale
sky promises me devices:
metaphors, commas, gene splicers
and molten licorice words
that you use to redeem themselves

I never was much of a proselytizer
who would go door to door in a suit,
keeping them open with his foot, but
such aggrandizing scene obliged -

Can you not see it? This changes everything!
We can dance on the eyelids of history,
waltz in the heat of her mementos, excite
their stranger relatives, who were never
buried in manly narrations. If only

if only you listen, Justice can be borne
of such a street whose name
 (is not to be mentioned in the poem for reasons of privacy)

So I told an old man about aforementioned epiphany
He said I don't have much time don't you see
I'm repurposing a machine to write poetry,
and I can tell you boy it does so well,
it can turn your house into a doggerel and your street into a hell
of a villanelle.

So I step out of his shadow and ask him again

The old man says the machine is broken.
I nod and offer him my help,
which he accepts generously by sending me
on an errand to the beginning of time.

I am not given a dress code, and
rather harshly pushed out on the street.

At 8:54 this morning I begin walking
backwards, my hands in my pockets,
I think a certain nonchalance
would befit the circumstance.

I retract into narrower streets
until a streetlight waxes from a dark alleyway
and I was taken in, like a lunatic

beriddled by my task I walk on the cobblestones
trying to remember good music and putting on an overall
I pass telegraph poles, water mills, pig sties,
fortifications, Roman roads, temples, pyramids
History is so soothing in reverse
Going back, I strangely have a sense of purpose:
I am going after something that must be done.

A warm haze consumes me. I am
retracing the steps taken by nameless ancestors
in a frivolous bid for supreme justice that is what it is.

I decide I am not dressed for the occasion and don
a multisex suit with a neutralizing tie, ungendered
I continue several *light years* towards my
destination, and

the air is clearing, I see homo sapiens devolve
and everything becomes almost nameless. I begin
to take notes as I trip over details:
carved stones, graves, bones
I lurch further back, silence takes away
my good mood and I feel daft in my formal suit.

I enter childhoods, analyze everything,
the children always want to become my best friend
and later would leave me disgruntled.
So I analyze the mother of the mother and so on and so on

back to the primates where loss of language
is promising at first,
but the monkeys show me their food and show me their teeth

and I conclude that I must go further

back to some fish with bright angled eyes on each side,
where movement becomes a derivative of the stream
1 fish looks at me
I see the promise of infinite possibilities, or
a play of vectors all equally unlikely
then the fish says "excuse me",
and crawls ashore.

I put on a sweater and hum Beethoven
because hard silence (<20 dB) makes you mad
and as a child I dreamed of turning his music
into the cosmic background noise
the good vibrations of my arrival
at the phenomenology of the cosmic soup,
where the chef is slime
and later at the speck of dust that engendered everything.

I am no longer sure if I should study philosophy
but I still want to reach the beginning of time
to help the old man and his machine
I flip-flop ever simpler molecules, measure picojoules
rearrange Higgs bosons and quarks
until everything is phase and frequency,
and then just dark,
an infinitesimal
densely simmering
from which follows everything

I write it down in my notebook:
I am trespassing a dark fluid
and again, I'm overdressed
knee-deep in its viscous inevitability
all aspects are lacking and seem to be -

I get my stutter back

Sick with wisdom I return to the old man,
and tell him what I have seen. He nods and
turns a knob. The machine begins to rattle
semicolons, hyphens, commas, ampersands,
parenthesis, periods, virgules, apostrophes:
a score of silence

The old man and I are reciting and all the new has passed
on in my street, hopelessly, revoltingly right.