

Secular Requiem

1.

From a single point, in suspended time,
to a chaos of expanding energy,
to matter condensing into stars and galaxies
 with planets,
to life on one (at least),
to me.

Like all the stars and galaxies that went before
I am no more,
for my dust
has always been their dust.

2.

I stopped to sit, alone, in the forest,
 and therefore I was.
You are here to remember,
 and therefore I am still.
The future stands transformed by our presence,
 and therefore I will be.

3.

Measure my life
by the number I have touched.

Measure my life
by the depth with which I have touched a few.

Measure my life
by the wildflowers on a mountain,
by the explosion of a volcano,
by the scent of a thunderstorm.

Measure my life
by the colors of the sky.

4.

To those injured
indifferently
I offer an apology.

To those injured
with intent
I admit
it does not seem
so important now.

To those I cared for
and who cared in return
(or did not)
I offer thanks and ask
for your forgiveness too.

5.

I am like the soldier who died bravely.
I am like the soldier who was shot running away.
I am like the queen, neck sliced by the guillotine,
or the peasant who collapsed behind his ox and plow.
I am like the rich man who left only false friends in his wake.
I am like the lover who passed away surrounded by her beloved.
I am like the old woman who died in her sleep,
or the child, stillborn.
I am like the young girl strangled by a serial killer.
I am like the miner who succumbed to blackened lung.
I am like the serial killer who died in his sleep.
or the hermit in his cave
whose remains lie undiscovered still.
I am like the deer, slain for meat
the buffalo, for sport
the leopard warming someone's marble floor
the mayfly after its day to mate.
I am like all who are, thus, alike,
and will be, forever.

6.

Celebrate a life
which brings us joy.

Celebrate a life
which brings us pain
so we may measure our joy.

Celebrate a life
offering moments
to embrace the heavens.

Commemorate a death,
which returns us to the earth,
nurturing space
for the new life that will replace us.

Steve Bloom

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