

The Naming of Things

Morning draws night's breath;
mist from cold earth, whispering
the closing summer.

Busy in the quiet dark,
shadow dwellers leave us gifts;

the captured moonlight
still clings to the web,
a quivering bow.

A single leaf falls, echoes
gold in deep water, one note

amongst the many,
as trees begin their great push,
seeking only to sleep.

Slow, low sunlight drops, dances
through hickory, maple, oak -

playing out the last
heat fling before wintering -
the transformation

of Fall, prelude to silence,
the song of this year's dying.

Earth's Measure holds me,
a shape suspended in sound,
invisible orb

condensing the Blue Jay's squall,
children's calls, the train's long horn.

Songs of the Big Prairie
played by the wind as it shakes
the summer seed heads:

*golden rod, bee balm, bluestem,
poison hemlock, iron weed.*

My fingertips drift
over basils, releasing
aniseed, clove, pine

as a Fall Monarch glides, rests
on marigold and milkweed.

In the hot, dark soil
purple-headed garlic grows,
awaiting the Spring;

an act of faith, believing
through the passing of each moon

that even though winter
will break the earth, new life
grows unseen, waiting,

the energy transferring
seamless, spiralling, constant

collaboration,
creative exchange between
the force and release

so that our touch can be soft
as the last petal falling.

Nothing's ever lost.
What is dead, returns, becomes
new life, becomes whole.

The sky's gold filigree
threads the blue, the wild geese call.

Evening's pregnant hush
holds the day's heat, expectant
of what is to come;

the silhouetted leaves sigh
whispering wishes away.

Bluegrass Savanna
yellow-bellied crickets hum
fiddles on their knees.

The naming of things matter —
Wild Fire, Silverbell, Squirrel-Corn.

It helps us belong;
the shape of the trees, the earth,
the water, the sky.

This language opens us up
like ipomoea, the moon

awakening thirst,
wanting to understand this
world we are part of.

The air changes, caught between
the summer and the darkness.

Tupelo-Cypress
grow from the sweet swamp waters,
dank roots in the past,

days of bourbon, industry,
The Great American Dream.

A ship's rusted hull
rises from grass, awkward angles,
red against the green.

Echoed by the contrast grace
of white sails across the blue;

Dime for your dreams, child.
Peddling notions from a box,
seeing something more.

The holly hangs fat and low,
under the blood moon rising.

The time of fire trees,
days folding into themselves.
Even the birds know

sing *this now is beautiful*.
The still point before the turn.

Thin fingers of branch
spindle through the canopy
as the quarter spins,

copper needles thread our path,
our faces turned towards home.

A touch of winter
curls at the edge of the day,
woodsmoke and chestnuts

and the slow, quiet stirring
under the leaf and the loam

knows what is to come,
in the dark is believing,
in the Fall, is trust

to let go to the long sleep,
as if to say, remember

through all that comes next,
remember this vivid light
and hold on, hold on.

Through creek bed and trail we walk,
young feet kicking up the leaves —

dust gathers to us,
the dry bones of the Ghost Tree
white against the stone.

Our footprint against the earth,
our being, observing.

Deep beneath our feet
ancient oceans once ebbed, flowed,
tidal patterns hold.

We turn over rocks, reveal
silent stories from the past

silt upon sand, this land
only borrowed, our years loaned
not owned, our future, our past.

We sit, watch the the Great Oak turn,
backs pressed against the rough bark —

fingers in the soil,
the scent of pepper, citrus,
notes sharp in the undertone —

we hear the single acorn
fall slow to the forest floor.

The gathering point
where sleep holds dreams of dogwoods,
the return of Spring.

This is what we take away:
These, our quiet perfect days

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