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Katie Dixon

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Impressions, Lakeside

*“Water, over or under which so many
mysterious realms exist, is an apt
symbol of the truth beneath the
surface of things...”*

I.

Standing at the edge of a watery Otherworld,
gazing over this expansive Cup of Truth, I realize
there is a reason that tea leaves gain significance
only through baptism.

And while we try to read the truth, in grains,
by peering through the fluted two-way mirror
into an increasing murkiness of honey-amber glow,
it is instead the truth itself, that
like the Wise Child of Celtic myth
being born, cauled, into darkness,
rises on the ninth wave and begins to speak.

II.

I am the endpoint of this glimmering ray
that tricks my mind into believing that I alone,
by virtue of my vantage point,
have discovered a current—extending, arrow-like—of gold.

And then a sabled shadow drags its elliptical body
through my ray, trailing gilded threads behind its backswept
feet
and proving, with its ability to mar, that this stream,
if at all golden, only runs a feather’s-breadth deep.

III.

Infant,
here, out of your purview,
I perceive your little ritual—
take from the earth,
sacrifice to the water...
You pluck up pebbles for handmade erosion,
and as you cast them
you don’t observe the ripples,
you ignore the grace of symmetry,
you delight only in your small destruction
and only for an instant
before you flit away.

IV.

We are cursed with the perpetual pursuit of perfection.
So, in moments of suffering our inevitable, inherent failing,
we seek fulfillment in some consummate external.
However, stillness is often much more easily achieved
in the company of lake-driven,
sunlight-maddened flies
than in an atmosphere perfectly tempered to breed it.

V.

If I disclaim this notion of the solidity
of the ground beneath my feet,
and if I plant my vision out in the thick of the water,
limiting myself to tracing the ripples scattered on desultory zephyrs,
and if I wait long enough for the wind to become
impatient with its own dalliance,
finally directing its energy in a determined course,
the ripples will mold themselves
into a united front of perfectly proportioned troughs
and, enveloping me in their symmetry,
will melt the earth away
and coerce my senses into an impression of suspension.

VI.

So straight, these trees, straining to escape,
hoping to pull up roots and rise up into the blue!
It is, you know, fruitless.
Their coarse bark is closely camouflaged
by burnt umber earth.
They would be all-too conspicuous
Floating through porcelain-*demitasse* clouds.

VII.

In these indecisive days between Winter and Spring,
Nature often accompanies the passage of a moment
with a striking shift in perspective.
Daylight falling feebly through barren branches
casts funeral tones onto the pallid trunk of the lakeside birch,
But in the next instant, the water,
fascinated like a precocious child,
captures the beams in its liquid jar
and, in projecting them by reflective ricochet,
transforms the previous instant's *memento mori*
into a fluid lamp, set at its bedside,
glowing through sunset.

|Katie Dixon