

Image of God with Face Mask

Look, this is not morbid
Just because we know the dark angels who sing down highways at night
Just because they tremble like flames over a circle of years

They are the seasons undressing
Mountains from your arched spine
In the garden

Arriving to collect your offerings
Of unwanted medicine
To swallow whole the shallow roots
Of your sprawling plot.

Because you have known them
In nightmares gushing from stone
Buried under an ocean of dead rivers

Trace them back to the water
Of your birth
Your wet contract
Folded into creases of uncountable time

You were given a gut
And lungs to fill with the fallen
Their soil and song

Just because the sun will wither in a cloud of millennia
Does not mean this is morbid

Look how she shines upon the polished heels of empire
How she warms the walls which conceal a machinery
Of wilting bodies that make them glow

If we are to take each breath as a sign
That we are somehow outside of ourselves
If we are to kiss the earth with each step
If we are to love we love

while dying

Dying we are filled with flowers
Dying we are sapphires in the deepening soil of breath.

Dying we are a desperate terror
In a uniform of colorless bone

In papery loam
We are a project of death
In tenement heat
We are a project of death
In the blue words of law
We are a project of death
In the arms of the ocean
We are a project of death

If we are to take each breath as a blessing
How do we breathe at all?

Hunger conceals the book
Of our being

Book of mumbling ghosts
Book of mourning and cake
Book of candles bowing for what comes in
Through the window
Slamming doors down an ancestry of open halls

Rising from carpets in the form
Of grandparents and God
Offering its arms to the silence we have filled with flammable things.

Knowing the rivers we carry
You are tattered as a dream

A window falls to the street in prayer
And sings its sacred flame
In a choir of scattered constellation

Its vine of cinder curling over your final wall

Maybe it rips a hole through the steam of a thousand unnumbered afternoons
Maybe an orchestra awakens from the bitter syrup
That fills your bootprints in metropolitan war

Maybe you are old
And people will say it was too soon
Maybe you are young
And people will say nothing

Maybe your stones are already arranged like lilacs
Waiting to bloom in the always cool ravine
Of your final breath

Maybe you are sung in circles that widen like the eyes of a canyon
Or the universe expanding with grief
(like an echo of your lungs)

Maybe everything boils over
Maybe everything freezes
Maybe archaeology is only the rubble
Of a dream we have all had at once
And this is still our first try.

Maybe we become trees
And cardinals carry our voices through the deltas' perfect form
Through mountains shifting in sleep

Though their agony juts skyward for meaning
Though we are only the breath that threads us
To the brightest star
Or names we have given to the silence
We arrived here to become

We are wild as the heartless moon
We are the newborn light
Pouring in.