1979

Vanishing Point

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This morning the slush-runnels lie slack and dry, grooves where the year went like the child’s globe we moved from house to house to house losing first the wobbly skullcap base, then the metal cowl showing the latitudes that it once swiveled in, until finally it was just a ball of junk rolling to simplicity: seven continents, seven seas kicked under the last bed.

Stephen, let’s not die too soon. Everything has happened, but the promises still let us go on this way. Today is the first day there is no white snow—only little patches of cinder-gray shriveling at the feet of elms, and some delta-winged birds I don’t know are gliding over with their heads hung to see the ground slipping and slipping by.

It’s this vanishing that makes me think of you, it’s the fir tree teeming with blackbirds, and northbound summer still lingering in some remote island off Panama. If I barely can connect the main dots of your short life, it’s because each station where your slow heart finally warmed a room is a distance I must move in, the way outer space follows us to our work.

In our story, two blackbirds made a pie: our poverty was rich with denials, and our father, like a frugal king, wore his negativity like sable, and took to drink. But now we have other, less homemade royalty. Why else would these fidgety, wind-bitten blackbirds dominate the window if not to set off the spring queen as she begins passing beneath on her way to the business of death.
now that the carapace of ice has split open
with the frozen children liberated beneath it.
Already they are scattering, and I wish
you were here to tell me what it means
when they dart into the shadow. I think
the crickets will play something sweet into each
of their ears, just as the scrubbed stars wink
when the storm passes, and space bends lower
like the hard-of-hearing, though no one said a thing.