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What We Carry

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Three Poems · Patrick O’Leary

WHAT WE CARRY

this shadow stuck
 to the bottom of our shoes
 this fossil footprint
 this bruise we don’t remember how we got
 this missing tooth we tongue
 this vivid amputated arm
 this dark sum of all our blinks
 this unthing
 this fading echo
 this forgotten dream
 this memory denied
 this empty center
 this useful absence
 this cracked bell
 this windless chime
 this metal pipe of music
 this hollow hub
 this strange attractor
 this donut’s hole
 this storm’s empty eye
 this metaphor which only lives
 by what it leaves out
 this wound that forms the locus of our love
 this thing we thought we had
 this thing we do without
 this more than anything
 the thing we married
 the thing we loved
 the thing we carry.

We look at it and do not see it.

Lao Tzu