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Julianne Buchbaum

THE ASTRONOMER

I eat stars, breathe stars, bathe in stars. I dream incoherent dreams of comets, asteroids, and lunar Alps. Becoming myself a satellite, I orbit the shrine of a holy sun, tracing for all time an egg-shaped pilgrimage through gelid space. I see the city as through a telescope: streetlamps glow, contracted white dwarfs, traffic lights are red giants burning up their final rounds of hydrogen. Sidewalks sway beneath my density as cabs career elliptically through streets.

The hemisphere unveils for me its sheer and empty skull of glass as leaves crinkle in the cold dark outside the planetarium. At times, Polaris seems to leak skim milk, the Pleiades are plotting their escape, and Betelgeuse burns Orion’s shoulder. Priest of distances, I’ve mastered the art of leaving hope and human shores behind.

Or has it mastered me? Even the moon wears her evanescence on her sleeve. What is it in me always trying to flee across spaces coldblooded, godless?

It is a mood of blue magnified by solitude. A solitude magnified by the sight of stars. The sight of stars through the telescope lens, the stars, nomadic planets, and the moon.