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Hymn to Death

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Hymn to Death

Nicole R. Schmidt

The sky parchment
soaked in dying blue
with streaks of orange—
the heralding
of coming day.

*And he sings, “Oh the glory that the Lord
has made.”*

The spectral hybridity of dawn
awakens thought
fires sparks of
fading dreams
and unconscious fears.

*And he sings, “Oh the glory that the Lord
has made.”*

My friend Sufjan embraces me
via radio waves
and fires my neurons
sends hunger and tears rushing to my bones.
he grabs me
makes me hold the hand of his first love
who stands by the window
in dull white winter light
and tells us that she has bone cancer.

*And he sings, “Oh the glory that the Lord
has made.”*

My forehead pressed against hers
there is dead skin on her nose
grooves in her chapped lips
and the smell of dried sweat on her shirt.
Oh the glory that the Lord has made,
the bone shattering glory
the pink and purple glory of coming day—
this fleeting moment
of life
soaked in white winter light.

*And he sings, “Oh the glory that the Lord
has made.”*

The great precipice
tiled hospital ground
the terra sanctum,
‘the great divide’
and my forehead is pressed against hers
her lips cracked
cheek skin contoured along her bones

she stops breathing

oh the glory that the Lord has made
the bone shattering glory
the once in eternity glory
red pulsing blood
soft, white downy arm hair
the supple curve of breast and thigh
teeth and food and laughter
and pure winter light
shining on the page
that she was reading

the little girl in Communion white
holding a shiny nickel in her hand

Oh the glory...

*And he sings, “Oh the glory that the Lord
has made.”*