

THE AIRSHIPS TAKE US,
EVEN AS WE BLOW OUT THE LAST CANDLE

Pitch-blackness comes on like a tarantula.

Goodnight, Mrs. Calabash, wherever you are.

The air is arctic against my skin
with the scent and earshot of a bird in it.
I can taste its reluctance to come near.
It tastes like my mother's old apron
the day we put it in the kindled fireplace,
the day Samuel E. Danvers of Hatfield,
Massachusetts, was committed
to the Worcester Sanitarium, 12 Mar 1873,
age 42, of a brain disorder.

The darkness did not come on like a tarantula.
It was always here.
It is penetrated by man-made machines
muscling into the night,
by two young women on a downtown bus
with blue streaks in their hair, whispering,
Calvary, and, *Hosanna*.

Giantism in dinosaurs caused the world to tilt
on its axis,
not to mention the recent watercooler gossip
about the chemistry of love and fidelity.

The small hands of Time are holding
the dark mirror of Vanity, saying with a glance:
Look at yourself. Look at how others look at you.
Remember when this didn't matter?

We were as happy as willows, then,
when we built an airship from spare parts
and a kit. It took all night. We lifted off
before the morning sneezed all over us.

Durwood remains in the bygone, a regret confined
by memory, by a real or imagined happening.
Tomorrow he will try to learn from his past mistakes.

It is known in some circles as the “Great Dying”:
251 million years ago an extinction level event
killed 96% of all marine species and an estimated
70% of land species.
The ones that survived forgot the world
was larger than the horizon.

Le gustaría acompañarnos al teatro?

When the darkling leaves our planet,
it will be kind enough to turn off the lights,
even as the last men and women, dressed in
Victorian attire, board the remaining airships,
the moon disappearing behind their sails,
even as their hulls kiss the tops of trees.