

it could be so different (but it isn't)

We open our eyes in time with the sun -
a flicker of lights that illuminate the grid -
and consider the ways in which we cannot do our best.

Our bed-born blanket of chainmail,
pressed cold against the skin,
implores us to resist light's winter-weak pull.
And so, we rise with the birds; a multitude of standing,
and fail to choose our troubled route.
Encircled by the fated dozens -
a soul shrunk to the size of a seed,
a will encased in soap.

I watch your mummified body from my seat of cotton wool,
and the rising and the falling of your beautiful breath
is always made to splash
against the perspex that you loathe to loathe.
But this is nothing new to a mind filled up with coal,
to a baby that was born alone inside its
mother's fearful, cladded caul.

While you might always wake in fluid, I might sit in hay.
And we, all of us - every one -
can't thaw fear's arresting freeze.
(I've pissed myself while thinking
but at least my legs are warm).

Where I am now can't be another village,
and you can't shake your matted locks apart.
We roll along in separate glittered balls,
dropping glimpses through an oily hole,
to land false smiles that yearn
to appear as bravely real.

Even more, I feel the burn of the seatbelt
against my tongue,
and the taste of a weighty padlock
accompanies my words.
Resorting instead to hopeful gestures,
I shrug in a pitch-black mirror.

Here we are, then, wading in a staid pool of vibrant fluid
that feels no breeze or current -
still, within it floats and sinks
all that's ever felt and happened, or will.
Evolution can't get going here and
the blossoming of hopeful variance
waits impatiently to be ushered in.

From on the wall, framed in wood,
an eyeball on a book tries to speak to me -
it's from a moment, just like us -
and across that expanse, in a frequency unknown,
I register the faintest love.

From there,
asking us, here,
to be different than we are.