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An Almanac

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AN ALMANAC

Joseph Johnson

This pass into space
creates half-chances.
One part: the body

brought with it.
We were silent, unspecific.
The other: starve-heart-

arisen, a slow-twitch
muscle of discussion,
damp in the ungroomed

drama of leaves
on our knees. Crisp seeds
tumbled off stalks

cut sharp by the known
future, not what we
were-to-be.

Your love of fear.
My darker flame.
The natural wing.

I watched a sunset
with no comment.
The sky spilled-

upon with thick ink,
a half-moon,
a day had been.

Those same seeds
descended all night
in sacred fashion. All night

I heard them hit the earth.
I heard birds chirp
in the dark.

Below the dirt,
worms & buried fur
& new millennium

time-capsules took in
vibrations. Tremors
of seed-storm. Constant.

Awakened was my far-off
awe of your every moment,
each loose clip

in your hair or kept
on your sweater.
I'm an almanac

of false frights, freight
folded from its rails
falling from a cutbank

in the floodplain, storm
warnings on static,
news of a pet

dropped soft
in the ditch, all loosening-
into, hatching bacteria.

It's almost rain-
smelling while some bright
bird wrapped

in its own wings
rolls in the road
in the wind.

Not everything responds
to sustenance
or is thus sustained.

So the strange-triangle
hangnails of dried-up
earth appear. So life

sinks out of reach.
Is such wakelessness
ours to keep?

My better explorations
of mossed thought in your eye?
In unspecified space

a whistle splits at your lips,
blown free of itself.
& a terrible calm

climbs over me.
The whistle spreads,
singing emptiness

loses hope of you
falling in. Emptiness falls
asleep like a theater.

JOSEPH JOHNSON is a teacher in New Meadows, Idaho. His work has appeared in Big Big Wednesday and Forklift, Ohio.