Learning to Mourn

I.

Some losses haunt
like a sliver of glass
a point of coral
haunts a wound.
Sepsis goes underground.
Flesh refuses to heal; scabs over
only to rupture again and again
at the least provocation:
a brush with tree bark,
unrefined fabric,
a dream.

Night and morning and night and morning and night.

One morning, a hundred mornings later,
trees in light mist, and the smell of rain:
a normal day – a miracle!
Twenty, thirty normal days,
one hundred miracle days
before a rumble of anxiety,
earthquake 4.1;
nothing astonishing:
glasses don’t break, walls don’t crack,
the surface holds
until without warning,
it doesn’t.

The thin crust of the day buckles
and the wound gapes again.

II.

Blue and grey to the horizon
and farther; the sound of ebb and flow
sustained beyond the limits
of human attention.
The ocean seems eternal.
Battling grief, I whisper
Heal me, heal me
to the rhythm of the ocean:
always, always, always.
As the light changes,
the surface of the water changes:
grey blue, navy blue, azure, turquoise.
As the wind changes
waves lap or crash,
pale at the tips,
always blue, always the ebb and flow,
flux safe in a net of always.

But it isn’t.
Planets heat up, stars burn out
the oceans of Mars are silent.
The fact is, what’s gone is gone.
The ocean, the sky, will be gone.
And grief? Will grief ever be gone?

What if I I lived in seasons?
Loved yearly the fragrance of lilacs.
Suffered the death of roses.
Planted delicate pansies in early summer.
No cycles for pansies;
one season only,
loss of pansies a law of nature.
Loss, and the sadness of autumn,
darkness and cold of winter,
summer a different summer,
no going back.

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