

Four Poems

David Kaczynski

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Ode to Linda

I don't see people
I see stars
constellations
approximating ideas
or words that, transcending,
escape

A bird sings
flutters
above, behind
purified sound
I don't turn, no

I only turn for you
goddess of memory
and presence
around the place
where a comet
struck my heart.

Altar of the Dead

Death cuts off understanding.
— Yasunari Kawabata

I'm taught to let go
but it happens regardless.
So this clinging is
but remembering
missing
honoring
cherished ones we
might've held tighter
closer to our hearts
never dropped
or left broken.

May I not forget the names
of my dead.
At times I wonder:
Are they really dead?
Or did they leave me
in other ways?

Dissolving bonds, erasing
those gracefully etched times,
turning memory into stone –
buried strata that await some
future, life-changing upheaval.

Sipping tea, I scan the
smog-blurred horizon.
The fault, I suspect, lies
in our hearts so choked
with need and custom that
clarity is only imagined.

Resting here in absence
I strain to remember
if not to re-create
what almost was.

My Map

The map rolled up in my hand
made me an architect of empty spaces,
displacing intimacy with self-importance.
These days I carry it folded in my pack.

Probably I need this perfect square
of mind, its grimy page flattened
against the ground as I pore over
whorled fates like a palmist,
absurdly following myself.

But at night my map unfolds
like a live creature uncurling
in the dark and wafts me up
through uncompassed space
shot through with moonlight.

The Red Stone

I sat myself on the red stone
so often, so long till now
in one spellbound moment
I feel myself becoming the stone
embraced by it, devoured, assimilated.

I should have known the stone
was once a sentient being.
It could've been a living head
transformed by thoughts
its being preserved, not trapped.

Am I a fossil, then?
Even so, I wouldn't last forever
perhaps till the next eon's dawn.
Then why shouldn't I write poems
with a bare chance to outlive me?

David Kaczynski is the past executive director of Karma Triyana Dharmachakra, a Buddhist Monastery located in Woodstock, NY. He previously served as executive director of New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty, a statewide advocacy group, and as assistant director of Equinox Youth Shelter in Albany, NY, where he worked to assist youth and their families in crisis. During the 1980's, he lived without electricity or running water on a remote plot in the west Texas desert where he now resides with his wife, Linda Patrik, a retired philosophy professor. His published works include *Every Last Tie: the Story of the Unabomber and His Family* (memoir), *A Dream Named You* (poetry), *Beginnings* (poetry), and *Refugees in Samsara – the Myth of Boundaries* (fiction).

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