

A Last Word

An evocation from Alice Benessia's photographic series "Alla Terra"

the newborn opens his eyes
to the light;

there are no words
for the laughing
wonder of four fingers,
one hand,
a bassinet.

Later
there will come a vaulted
expectation
and a chair
where light is seated
awaiting darkness
where knowledge awaits wisdom
where an unseen man awaits
her touch.

How can I countenance
the fearful grief
of her symmetry,
of seeing being seen
and still, not seeing,
of letting go of holding?

How can I turn your head?
How can I cock my own?

I could be happy just skittling
like a spindly branch
over the cobbles.
And here, at just this angle,
at just this height the dog in me
wags his tail.
He can see
between the ballustrades a river,
between the mannikins
a wind-chime of legs.

Piss on it - the wall - just for relief,
and to see the stone grimace, helplessly.
at my happiness. Beyond
the stones, the trees hedge in;

this side, the sky opens

where trees lean together,
speaking softly
to the wind.

No words
are sufficient.

A wrinkled stone cupping
rainfall on a hot day:
an offering

by the waters from the mountain,
by the dark and empty shelves
of all the trees we have sacrificed
for all we know, she wept.
In the library of what is lost
when all is gained,
I lay down and dreamed
for thee scion.

The old one
closes her eyes
to the light;
there are no words
sufficient for this soft shawl
of departing.

I want to come with you.
There is a path by the wall
to the bleak and beautiful
peaks of the bright and bitter gods,
the eroticism of ice-clefts,
the lovely dendrites
of their unthinking being.

But not yet, not yet.
I do not wish at my death
to say I *was* here, passed by
saw this and that: a tree, a rock,
a baby, a poem, an observation here,
an explanation there.

I want to declare, yes,
yes, I do, in sickness and in health
that I overstayed my welcome,
that I fell topsy-turvy
into the toppled world's embrace,

and by my last breath spoke:
I *am* here.