

Itch

I had an itch I spent all the time scratching
but when I talked to you I felt like water

I needed to apologise for something I'd done
but when I explained to you it seemed trivial

I was separate from everything,
I looked around me and revered or sneered
except when you looked into me
there was no 'I' to be separate at all

I didn't speak unless spoken to as a child
until one day I began to speak over others

It was only by accident
like sun through a cloud
I would look and see without gazing
or hear and feel without listening

When this happened I wasn't meek or quiet
I neither whispered nor shouted
there was no such thing as volume

It was then I lost a corner of the itch
I had been scratching and,
since that was all it was,
there was nothing left to scratch

You made me feel stupidly, giddily free

Wonder

I awoke from a dream-you, a will o the wisp.
You winked like a Greek chorus which knows
its characters in ways they can't see

then tucked a few blazing hairs behind your ear
and burst leaving my limbs light
like a summer cloud tacking overhead

I peer between the curtains
looking for snow or sun to animate
this mild amnesty of my squally seas

Outside it's half light: crows
are diving into threadbare trees
poaching eggs with a frenzy of entitlement

Am I overblown to cast my lifted brow
- common copper gobbet of relief -
as a pearl of pure wonder?

Perhaps although I thought it rare
to have neither bought, hoarded, or faked it



Toby Hall is a writer of short fiction and poetry, currently studying for an M/A in creative writing at the University of Manchester. Having foregone the idea of making lots of money, he is currently seeking out authentic experiences in the hope of learning from them and having burrs stick to his sleeves which can later be picked off and turned over in the light.



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