

Kota Tinggi, The Unmaking, Panic

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Kota Tinggi

Water falls
upon tired feet, an open hand.
Light carves

my shadow into a rock,
beckons and merges it
with the shadow of a tree.

A child's laugh
disappears over the bridge
left reluctantly behind us.

That slow
walk back to the car,
air kissing our foreheads,
minds filled
with music
from another world.

Panic

Look at us now, changed
before we know it,
before the eyes of friends
who too have changed
or are dead, whichever
is worse, depending
on the arc of our mood
and that time of the day,
rising in a panic when rain
arrives without an invitation,

its unseasonal rage rocking
our homes, then not before
pausing as the wind deals
its unceremonious blow,
cold rain slapping our faces –
how much braver we used
to be, once, when there was
nothing to be brave about –
before sliding the window
shut, pulling the door firmly
to ourselves, remembering
what we have become,
serenity restored indoors
and that look between us
that means we are still here
in the dark, breath slowing
in and out of us, the sound
like an animal coming
to rest, at last, on the ground
after a spirited chase, the end
of another sweet escape.

The Unmaking

Everything woven through
with its own unmaking, a storm

brewing silently in an apple,
that shattered net of clouds.

Why obsess with first causes
when eternity tells us

that space has always existed?
Cracks in walls rocket

to a big finish in the ceiling,
one arm going suddenly

numb, the final poem of a life
left unfinished on the page.

Space and time. Particles,
elemental dust, magnetised

to form new planets and suns
with or without a creator.
Seeds of illnesses make camps
along bloodstreams, preparing
for that climactic war on health.
Nothing left to be considered
within diminished vistas
of hope and reason. Nothing
reconsidered, how it flows
into an embrace, electrifying
every word and gesture.
And who says we cannot
compartmentalise heartbreak,
break it open and employ its parts?
Grief to inspire tragic songs.
Anger stored for potential storms.
What to do, then, with resignation –
how to use it and what is it
good for? Stars faint to black,
freefalling into deep graves
of themselves, from which
no light may ever break away.
The future revealed to us
like another afterlife, which we
fight to occupy and exit
with equal courage and elation.