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Locked Down

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Locked Down

You sit in a room, subtracted, stranded –
a knot of words dreamt in fractured sleep.

You avoid risk, avoid touch, avoid even
the flawless afternoon, sensing the darkness
masked by its brilliant façade.

So much has been shattered – so much destroyed –
even the good have been made grotesque.

At first, stunned by grief, you struggled to believe,
comprehending, finally, that belief will have no use
of reason. Then you learned to endure – faceless
avatar – a shadow – memory turned to stone.

Now you allow those things that would destroy you
to become your poem – plague wrapped in words
set ablaze – malignant flame swirling –
false myth burning to ash. You would cry grief to light –
reach for salvation itself – but can only name

what once was and now is not – an absence, a numb silence.
Of this you are certain: at the end of grieving
there will be punishment. Grief will demand an answer.

And yet the day remains.

You begin again, listening to your words, hoping
that by hearing your poem in your own voice
you may learn how to go on. You begin again,
pitying a future in which there can be no innocence,
a future that may never forgive the past.

You begin, following your poem to the place of its making,
to that vanishing point where time and memory reside –
where darkness may be cast back into the night.