

It was reported he'd recently
been observed storming around
the mezzanine, stalking some absent
space—and with the house lights down he slipped
into the empty box and pitched himself head-long over
into the dark. He did not stand out in tuxedo and black tie
they said—there was no sound, no note. Only the lovely and loveless
Turandot, waiting high and star-white on the stage, with her riddle for the hero
who was confident as any tenor despite the heads of other suitors who'd been unable to answer
staggered about her on poles like disjunct planets, like moons bruised beyond all aspects of the light . . .
Is it coincidence then, that this year they discover the hole in our ozone to be much larger than first supposed,
that melanoma is on the rise, that the clear-cut Amazon is leaving us with thin air, a simmering rain?
Where on the scale finally are we—Galactic to Sub-Atomic? Our cells cluster and spiral
like galaxies, to or from what effect? Yet we're most open to what lies beyond us—
astronomers have now abandoned our own solar system in favor of great radio
telescopes fixed on the obfuscated heart of space—steady petals of the dishes
unfolding, like camera lenses, like slow and awkward flowers
craning toward sound instead of light. And anchored
firmly in those white sands and eroding shoals
of time, they focus toward some innuendo
sung down in dim, binomial bleeps—
too far away ever to be of use
to the future hanging fire.

SUN SPOTS

Every eleven years they appear
like dark pores beneath the floating
photosphere, the atomic skin that makes
up the surface. The *auroras* erupt then too,
the irrepressible fiery hair of the sun torn loose and
thrown into space at us, a welter of flaming astral birds
lifting off the *limb*, that visible edge and hard limit of the star.

The magnetic whorls, paired anywhere from two to fifty, are then
several times larger than earth, and strain and pull at fission's invisible frame,
setting out against the rotation of burning equatorial seas, hovering above the blue-
hot center like a sickness in gravity. Yet, when the ocellated torrents and latitudinal drifts
are graphed, the *penumbras* echo the winged patterns of butterflies rather than some matrix of sinking
anti-matter. And after all our spinning about this source, this seething theme and variation, we have nothing new
to say about the spots outside of the old tales that still flare up and forebode havoc in the distant atmosphere of our lives.
So last winter when auroras blazed and the black fields swelled, it was no wonder that broadcasts were interrupted
with blank bursts. "Live from the Met," waffled out and in with a certain nothing on the air —
a soundless hiss and drop-out from the blue. And just weeks before, the opera at the Met
balanced soul threw himself mid-aria from a balcony to a break-
neck death. And so, the dread forecasts must have held
sway over at least one man as his will sparked
out and reason fumed in on itself.