for this earth too long hauled / later valorization

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for this earth too long hauled
-Bob Mulligan

nice to see
the sky again
way back then
when the world left
thinking it would never return
attributing the cause to not-so-original sin
stigma stigma stigma stigma
and its corresponding spread
initially blaming Eve then Adam
in the sequence so carefully tilled and taught
then later with enlightenment
a therapy ridden Father took the brunt
in those years before knowing
we are all of us really Buddhas
Buddhas with a most unfortunate amnesia

the better moments were created ones
cultivated within like Russian dolls
silently nesting the life of life inside a poem
long before hearing the sounds of the poet
pre-empting the solicitous distractions
which accompany the titles of men

gliding on extended wings
substance becomes evasive
episode upon episode collide
corporeal dreams divide
with both patience and panic
announcing the arrival of an age
when at long last we accommodate
the proliferation of insights
soon to blend anew
with the thinking
and the dreaming
and the thinking

archeology began soon after
excavating soil from childhood places
filling every pocket with the land
yards sidewalks basements
schools churches gardens
desiccated river mud
fragrant summer dust of playful fields

weighing then wedging
this stuff of gathered past
both hands buried in a prelude to finality
adding liquids to ease the extrusion
fashioning a bowl
to provide brief containment
for this earth too long hauled
measuring its immensity
against the size of night
later valorization
-Bob Mulligan

soon after i was born two important things occurred
New York beat Brooklyn to win the World Series
and i fell in love with my grandparents
driving home last night i was reminded of them

the Yankees were in a tie on the car radio
when a fox sauntered through the headlights
returning openly from her dark ramble
on the banks of the Manasquan River

musty sensations enveloped me
nearly half a century had unraveled since
i thought of my grandmother’s fox stole
suspended in an oak armoire
in an apartment above the tavern
she owned and ran with my grandfather

i recalled that fox’s soft stillness
biting chemical scent, lifeless eyes,
needle-like teeth that by design
carnivorously clasped its storied red tail
forming a circle of warmth and attachment

it was then i understood something vague
and uncomfortable felt fifty years earlier
but never voiced – that grandma and gramps
who likewise circled me in arms secure
in whose home i rolled wax fruit across a table
while spooning pungent love from cabbage soup
would someday share the fate of that timeless fox
and be the first to leave me lonely in this world

quietly buried in potent loam
that heavy seed lay forgotten
until last night’s valorization

when something sprouted in the center field grass
driving home that certain understanding
from which i had been running all these years
as the sacred fox walked calmly toward the light