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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 fFather 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