

Cumulative Weight

Accumulation of anything small can become a torrent
A tempest
An annihilation
If given enough time and space to build.
It is easy to be buried alive in soft flakes of snow
Unable to breathe
Beneath the weight of a drift become avalanche
When what seemed like moments before
The softness was light enough to catch gently on your tongue.

The thing about bearing witness
Repeatedly
To trauma and to suffering and to darkness,
Is that this cumulative weight becomes too heavy
On the chest
In the gut
In the heart.
But it happens slowly,
And most often feels as if it isn't happening at all.

Until one day you wake up, and the heaviness of lead in your organs
Doesn't allow you to stand
And the knot in your throat doesn't dislodge when you swallow
And the shadows in the edges of your mind
Have clouded your vision
Your faith
Your resolution.

So for all of us bearing witness
Repeatedly
We must remember to make space for filtered sunlight,
A reason for the dust to dance.
We must take notes on the strength of roots,
the presence of stones,
The equanimity of water in movement.

We must remember to also bear witness to
Beauty
To light
To faces cradled
Foreheads pressed against foreheads
Outpourings of love
And to the testament of time unwavering.
To those who have come before us
Those coming after us,
Those surrounding us.

There must be a counterbalance.
An accumulation of equal weight
Of something more
Something bigger
More compelling.
A reserve of warmth to melt the snow
To melt the lead
To loosen the knot.
To remind us when breath is hard to come by,
And gravity seems to be calling our limbs to the earth,
That mountains come from upheaval
And that shadows cannot dance without sources of light,
And that sunrise is a symphony
Every
Single
Day.