

Hauntology

—after Jacques Derrida

The summer everyone spent indoors,
I peered into the dead-end telescope of history—

a helpless spectator from a newer century—
as Rudy Vrba escapes the barbed wire hell of Auschwitz
to warn the world of the smoke clouds to come,
and no one does anything.

That summer—
a fundamental dispiritedness permeating
the embroidery of existence
an inability to sleep at night
when the images creep up on me—
so I have to crawl into bed with my mother
for the first time in years.

Everything is a futile attempt to forget
that we live in a timeline where
we allowed all of this to happen
a thousand times over

There is something deeply dark inside us
bubbling below the surface—
just barely contained
and bursting out of us at the worst moments

As we roam the inner rooms of our souls,
distancing from each other and from
the more grotesque moments in our catalogue of horrors,
we are haunted by the spectral axis of Being itself—

is this any way to Be?

We reach just beyond the frame of reference
to dip into the inkwell of absurdities,
and write on the pages of a lost future.

We make the eternal return,
neglecting and banishing
the ghosts of our past, inhabit
a time
that is non-time,

commit unspeakable violence against the memories
of those we've already silenced and killed—

Exorcisms are out of the question,
and fervent repentance is the only answer.

The Library of Memory

We buy separate train tickets,
but you'll be telling everyone
only I know the way back home.

You follow me as if you have faith in me
and when the night blooms,
I stand beside you on that platform in my black plastic heels
and imagine all the places we have been and could go—

Father Time sweeps me back towards another May—
after a sleepless week,
we tread the golden-green walkways of Central Park
in a spring haze.

Brent has lost his car, so we trail behind him,
talking as if everything else has fallen away—
there's not a soul on the streets of Manhattan
who seems to matter.

The Upper East Side was made for our glamour & glory—
reflected back to us
in the mosaic windows of the church on Madison,
where I stop to take a photograph.

We catch the 6,
and an ocean of light comes
in through the fractal
of my shattered hopes.

The Grand Concourse
is bathed in colors so rich,
I can no longer pick out the line
dividing land and sky.

Something died in me that night—
the poetess went into hiding forever—
dissolved into the velvet bruise of a kiss
never given on Fordham Road.

With a single flourish,
you have impressed yourself on the pages of my heart—
no other book more precious in the library of memory.