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Time As—

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Time As—

Everybody kept telling me the time
would come and the future mattered
and practical work plus practical minds speak louder
than the words I keep finding on sidewalks
between the alleys. In-between
the city and my childhood:
there is a place where people
compete with the life expectancy of trees,
catching up every day with each other's
other madness as another way of communicating with
the already dead. Slight mistakes in a story
are the stories. This can become a going-nowhere-fast
conversation
in which you become the exclusive member
of the century-long human
body: the trunk of a skeleton
shaping the way discs slice up
subconscious cravings and feed,
the spine reaching like a backward root.
Praise to the time-honored
establishments we end up in,
whether in metaphor for the mind
or in the naked reality
of it.

Nobody said anything enlightening or anything at all
about distance. I thought about time
the entirety of my life
without progress. I'm too young
to be saying that, but it rings true like
my apathetic internal alarm:
first a reminding and then
a screaming.

The incognito quickness
of technology crept over me like the absence of color.
I would have thought my time was right around the corner.
It was miles around hundreds of corners, and the walk
around dumpsters with another man's treasure in them
was where I learned.

Finding an alley you've never been down
in the city you know
was the same place we grew up in.

I kept walking until the distance between me and us
was seconds less than the assumption
would ever be. And the world got worse
when I left the place where my
name started disintegrating.

And of the news being thrown in the trash
and the recycling center I started in high school
out of pity for all that paper.
A stalled peace talk, the placement
of public information in the wrong place.
The tears of that time had no
time to well up. And
I could see how my best friend would turn his head
after his first tour in the box. It was his first time
back home, as if looking directly behind himself
without moving his feet or his arms.
It was highly uncharacteristic, but so were the shadows
on his arms and the ink making them darker
and I thought I knew why.
When he routinely told me
without flinching and over too many beers,
that he could keep a secret
and tell me at the same time.

Kenny Jakubas