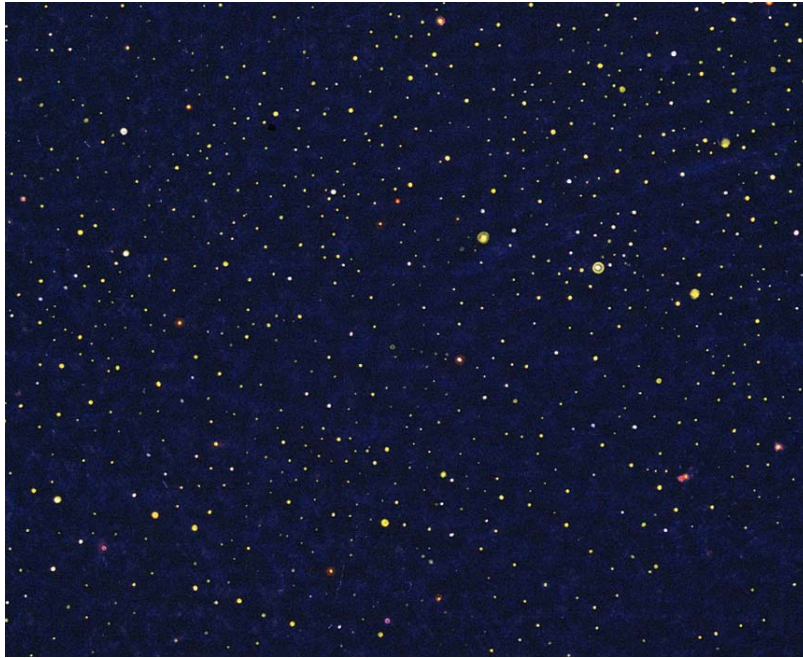


Here are some of the submissions from our sixth Invite to Write inspired by the following work of Karen Arm, *Untitled (Stars, no.1)*



NORTH STAR

The North Star brims with promise
The inky sea, the ship's bow, pen nib-like writes
The arc of this narrative follows the 30-degree rule
Guided by a star to shores unknown

The poem is hidden beneath the waves
In the depths, the night current steers
Swirling clouds, conceal meaning in secret places
During this sacred night-sea journey.

Meanwhile, we slumbered, curled,
Unmindful of the changing outer skies
Dreaming in a paradox of journeying east to seek west
The golden mistake - nevertheless our sails unfurl

A thing deep within our nature
Sets us on a trail of fearless desiring.
This visible world, sea foam, the ship labors
Floating on a sea of light, vulnerability and loss.

This pen inks in the service of all the disparate parts

Writes into a wholeness all that is imperfect yet true.
Anticipates the undiscovered new world and that bright star
Shines on - whether it is fact, fiction, fantasy or metaphor.

-Frances Roberts-Reilly

NIGHT VISION

Galaxies spin, throwing the infinite
 slow curve of time and space
 across these winding heavenly fields
 and up steep slopes of light.

Stars turn, whirling in turbulence and tide,
 stability in flow, the perfect fluid
 of the sky suspended in
 an uncreated rain of light.

Each constellation teaches me
 of time not older but of time before,
 a stellar-lit, bejewelled interior
 dreamed time out of mind,

an axi-symmetry
 dark polar to my life's design
 and harness to my life's necessity.

Angel, I'm far from home,

lost in starlight splashing to the ground.

As above, so below: star, star-shadow.

Give me the relativity you yield with flight,
your luminous wings,
unfurling
as the night.

-Robin van Loben Sels

dei gratia

by what grand grace
do I leave behind
the human race
to jet with stars
and kiss the God
who has a
face

-Zita S. Consani

Star Witness: On Karen Arm's Painting of Stars for Gisela

1.
It's a matter of time: they will pale slowly
their delicate shimmer squandered
as they peter out in the vast cosmos
sputtering like exhausted candles
before oblivion triumphs, their purpose
served - as if we ever knew what
that might be or even why it must be
realised in the great scheme of things;

stars so quiet their disappearance goes
unnoticed except by astronomers and artists.

2.

With their demise the stars will take
with them a vast history of metaphor;
lovers, if any remain, and devout
admirers of the night will have to find
new idioms for their passion's discourse:
in the expiring moon's last rays perhaps
or in night's unromantic void.

3.

So: where does one find consolation
in such apocalyptic bleakness?
The answer lies well beyond scientists'
smug predictions about the end of the world
or the biblical assurance of a Judgement Day.

The stars will be there tonight.
Be sure to look up at them:
tomorrow some will have gone
the ones that died a million years ago.
Look up at the stars while you can.
They'll be waiting for you, even
as their constellations change;
changes so small we hardly miss
the ones that vanish.
Look up soon for in time there will be
nothing but paintings and photographs
to remind us they ever existed.

4.

And yet despite the prospect of an empty sky
I shall die blessed, having known love
having seen stars in the night sky.

-Tony Ulyatt

**Gentle Star
For Gunner Dean Peterson**

Gentle star shimmers,
then starts his Earth-bound journey
Out of midnight's depth.

The cool, stark sunrise
beams beckon and startle him
as re-birth begins.

-Karen D. Benson

Buddha

As if he listened. Silence: for so far...
We hold our breath, then breathe and hear no more.
And he is star. And other dazzling stars
we cannot see, arrayed around him here.

But he is everything. Are we waiting for
him to see us? Could he have needed this?
And if we threw ourselves on the ground before
him, he'd still be deep and sluggish as a beast.

Because what throws us to his feet has
circled through him for these million years.
He who forgets the things we bear
and who bears what cuts us off.

-Translated from the German of Rainer Maria Rilke by Teresa Coe

The Halo of the Buddha

Center of all centers, seed of seeds,
nested almond self-enclosed and sweetened—
toward all stars your kernel flesh proceeds.
You are the universe: Receive my greeting.

Now you feel that nothing more constrains you;
in the neverending is your shell,
and there the potent juice is urging through.
It is helped by rays of light that rise and fall

as high above, your suns come out,
full and fiery, turning about.
Still, what already has begun
in you will outlast every sun.

-Translated from the German of Rainer Maria Rilke by Teresa Coe