

Here are some of the submissions from our eighth Invite to Write
inspired by the following work:



Oh Deep Canyon

Long I stood on canyon brim,
A wanderer, a seeker and lost to me.
My child's sail brought tight to trim,
I sought the depths beyond the sea,
And found red rock and dusty pinyon pine,
distant clouds scuttling darkened skies,
Why me? I lament and wail opine,
my fears turned angry savage cries.

I felt my Paleozoic heart in heavy chest,
The dream led me here as before,
Yet still I stand I must confess,
I did not know this heart could soar,
And then in mortal fear I leapt
To discover my own bottomless depth.

-Laura Smith

The Winds of Change

If you can ride with the winds of change,
steer your course with the reins of trust,
you will know that thoughts of tomorrow
are simply ripples left behind by the gale.

Rise up and cast your sight far and wide,
hold fast to your one thread of life,
and you will know that impermanence
is the only form of permanence.

Stand firm on that highway of collisions,
sink down to the still soles of your feet,
and you will know that all that matters
is the matter of which you are made.

- Cristina Olsen

Of sediment

and years, you and me,
rudimentary

but infinitely complex.
Let's journey back

together, re-evolve
from elements, cosmos.

See how separate
we are not.

- Carolina Read

While sitting on the lip

my heels stubborn against rock
palms pressed together
fingers interlocked
still, way over nothing —

I consider fault lines
 layers of Past — eroded
sand — the twitch
 of a river
that's the width of a worm —

 how it's all reduced to whites
& greys — I remember
 the last thing —
 Listen

- E.E. Nobbs

Where Everything Matters: Tseng Kwong Chi's *Grand Canyon, Arizona*
for Gisela always

*Once in a lifetime, if one is lucky, one so merges with sunlight and air
and running water that whole aeons ... might pass in a single afternoon.*

Loren Eiseley

What impertinence is this?
To think such a vast wound could be bandaged
in the flimsy gauze of a poem
or even covered by a photograph.

Here is the stuff of epic journeys, of epic poems
in search of colossal metaphors,
of perilous risks and towering accomplishment
their grand design ornate as the landscape:
layers of recalcitrant rock succumbing
to the persistent knife-edge of the water's rush
to the sea; it's that old stone and water cliché again
fraught with morals of perseverance
resolute character and similar righteousness.

Yet in this place, language fails,

words capitulate to the monumental:
there is no vocabulary for the ineffable
so amazement lingers silent on the tongue.

So what of the myths and ceremonials
with their sanctity and truths rooted
in the canyon's furthest reaches, in its deepest ravines?
How can they matter to us now living
on a small and finite planet
at the tail end of a universe?

When we find ourselves sitting alone
at the edge of a canyon like this
hearing ancient voices guiding us
to that essential river we need
to erode the fossilised carapace around the heart
then rock and river, aspen and scorpion,
myth and bliss, everything matters.

Us too.

- Tony Ullyatt

Perching

Flights and perchings abound
For raptors and passerines alike,
Humans, too, sometimes,

Especially when pondering
Matters of meaning
From a precipice.

Shall I fly, soar, circle, wheel,
or plummet into the unseen,
the ordinary wildness of the particular?

- Karen D. Benson