

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