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-symmetricity
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 Ullyatt
**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