

2020

6 am

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Catherine Esposito Prescott

6 AM

Our electric car hums.
My boys drape their eyelids
over unfinished dreams.

The sun is a rumor. The sky blinks
with hunters, warriors, and every human's fate,
ancient mappings of this world,

which my boys would never accept
as truth unless it were proven in a Ted Talk
or a self-appointed scholar's YouTube video.

My boys are a ram and a twin,
one thinks the other is his mate,
the other is stubborn and solitary.

I would tell them as much,
but they're not listening; their eyes
turn in and out of sleep.

As we approach the bus stop,
the car is stone-quiet. Before they walk
away, I want to say something

like *carpe diem* but wittier,
like *This moment is all we have*, but less alarmist,
like *Be both the lion and the lamb*.

I want to speak in metaphors
and aphorisms that will bloom in their minds
during third period, to sing them with grace.

This morning, I'm searching
for a phrase that's both spark and amulet,
but the silence between us

insists on staying empty
like a bowl of air carrying
the gentle charges of neutrons, electrons,

and protons, deeper quarks
and nucleons, the atomic and subatomic strata
pulsing inside layered atoms,

every energetic particle
moving in its own orbit,
maintaining an essential distance

from the others, so the entirety
doesn't collapse. These are distances
we have yet to measure—

the boys and I, and the world
outside, the invisible threads of all
I must leave unsaid.