

SILENCE DEEP AND DARK

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First Place, Poetry

Before each beginning, after each end there is silence.
Before two gametes join there is silence.
Before a leaf unfurls its flag or spent, twirls to the ground,
silence takes an unsung breath. Even
letters need silence to become a word.

In my car one stormy night, suspended in dark water
no words to Yahweh or Jesus or the Buddha, nothing
could help. Only silence would birth me
from that egg, bobbing true while others
around me bouldered and drowned.

After, I dreamed of New Orleans. Not the jazz,
not the food or the rich or the poor. (Who is not poorer for it?)
I saw cocoons, children over dark water
ferried on backs of neighbors. The river exploded and rose,
a world so heavy no one but them could hold it.
Shoulders bent, Saint Christophers all. And the silence.