

It's a Gray Day

Driving down Lakeshore Drive
a gray day beckons us downtown
we do this trek on our necessary commute
from our ghettoized middle class seclusion
to the bridge that re-connects us to work in the land beyond the bridge.

It is a gray day
and Lake Michigan reflects the dark clouds
lying low over the city and the lake.
It seems they are so low they kiss
in an unholy alliance
of heaven and earth
in the very grayness of color.

The radio drones on and on about this or that news trivia
as they must
and we listen addicted to the endless chatter
No news in the face of news
and pushy BBC anchors in their Holier-than Thou tones
merely add self-righteous British grayness to the mix.

The looming skyscrapers lose themselves
and their sense of importance
as the clouds envelop their upper floors
cut down to visual size now
they too are swallowed in grayness.

Is this to be my day?
grayness?
neither black nor white
nothing certain,
nothing absolute,
am I too resigned to a graying out of clarity?
in that in-between space that I seem to occupy
so much.

Do I find solace in the murky visual acuity
darting in between the fogginess
of things that appear to be
yet are not,
is there a comfort in this? a safety?

I am reminded of those pea soupers in London in the 50's
where mother would make me walk in front of the car down Hendon Avenue
as visibility was down to almost zero.
Less a human shield, more a poor little scout

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she would drive behind my little legs
as if I could see anything more!

“There is no room for this” a voice wake me from my reverie
“these are the High Holidays approaching!”
“you are to be judged once again”
and, of course, found wanting!
the inner Kritik does overtime this season
as the same little boy stands before the black robed judge once more
for the infractions of the past.

Powerless over the same character defects
the same roster of sins are read out
by the same prosecutor.
I think of really old people
what are they asking for this Rosh Hashana?
forgiveness? atonement?
At age 90 what is my father thinking
as he looks back
like I do.
Does he feel
he can repent
at his age? Does he remember his sins?

This grayness invades my bones
it drags me down like wet wool
like swimming with clothes on
I feel I will not make it to the other side
for all this baggage.
For my mother and father weigh heavily on me
what was done
what was not done
now in their old age
in their second childhood.

Yet the raging clouds are alive
with vitality,
it cannot be a blue-sky every day
on the glorious lakefront,
with white whisped clouds gently moving to the
music of the wind.
The lake is still beautiful
even today
I decide
even touching the gray sky.

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We must suffer this graying
of the weather
of our lives
of our dreams.