

# Into the Planetarium

**Bernard Capinpin**

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## **On the Question of *Atlas Eclipticalis***

Nothing stops you from looking even as vision fails in such retinal glow. The fair weather lays a faint arc between chance encounters: hips swaying to faucet patter, a gait stumbling on the steps, teeth nibbling on a nub. You are drawn out to the open, no less ordinary than the evenings on your own. All the names you cannot recall arrayed in a parquet. They themselves mean nothing now, their years already tapering to a final finish. You appear to have lost sight of the way things were. The hues of a wavering rain are not what they used to be. So much of what is visible you cannot grasp as if by touching you burn into chasteness. Then what you hold cannot so much as be seen, what comes back becomes a diminished echo. Even the dead, bereft of light, shut their eyes in their wake.

### **Into the Planetarium**

You claim to have been there just once in your life. During the small hours, the fires outside begin to dwindle, and all objects appear as any other thing. A navigation light, a magic lantern telling you you're here, placeless as before. Nebula ephemeral as ommatidia taking a last look at a trick of light. Just once is enough. Enough to tell apart what is false. Promises tampered with long ago. Fabrications tainted by their own fictiveness. When the stories handed to you have closed, you can only now turn to the coda of your life. *When in the eighteenth century, you first set foot on the moon. Or in some loveless future, your country sloughed by the empire of snow.* And you search for proof of having been there but in the remaining evidence you have you merely possess by memory. What will suffice will be sought in suffering. You only have to hold your breath to be there. Time pacing slowly enough, time being as slow as the speed of light.

**On the Question of Wave and Particle**

You've grown accustomed to the darkest end of the pool where you once strained to outline the ledge only to perceive your own. Not the stretch but an edge takes you as though everything must fall into its rightful place. You find that clarity can only deepen, not drown. And the ripple you cannot help but be part of sweeps you in its parting. Metaphors can displace bodies of light hereafter. Where before they've long been out of reach to you, now they splay towards the gossamer of your hand, light a sundown quickly gone. But you've learnt to trust beyond the lucencies of a cloudless sky, a midnight so complete in its receding. *Where does light abide? Where does darkness reside?* You follow where walking takes you, its gracelessness. You haven't the body that vaults bright across the eye.

### **On the Question of Gravitation**

All gravity abandons you, you feel it in your restlessness. None of the festive lights nor insect lamps can prepare you for mere darkness. You let go of the ground as the streets give way to a bridge of birds in vacant towns. The planisphere decanted down your feet, you dabble among damped familiars. In what direction do the ghostly moths cross on a windless day, you haven't heard. In what orbit that hasn't yet been charted. You've known for sure that they will cross where they have always crossed. Here is a faith left to a reticent cold. You wander through the singularities of the empty rooms before they collapse into a vacuum of sleep. These paths inscribed to you in the effulgence, in the very same intimacies of warmth.

### **Aspects**

Out of obscurity, they teem to cut and bleed out the red shifting dawn. You can hear their plaintive voices beneath the white noise, of desires stifled by forgetfulness, the sheer weight of forgetting. Wherever they might pass, reality loosens like the twitch of a palsied hand, a calyx letting off its wilting chrysalis. Captivated by the illusion, you try to capture what most resembles yours through the pauses between disbelief and the stutters that you make sense of. Some aspect of their velocity escapes you. You consider the half-life of their oblivion to which they fall an inevitable fall. This is their lesson: that you too should dissolve in a last exhalation.