AS LONG AS IT LASTS

—". . . I sang the best songs that were sung in the world
as long as a song lasts . . .” –W.S. Merwin

the cool caress of down-canyon breeze at dusk
last scratch on the page when the pen runs out of ink
on my tongue, remnant fire after a bowl of green chile stew
glow from the last ember on the hearth
whisper of a cricket below my window
the *amen* of a canyon wren’s song in San Ignacio’s tower

before the orchestra is tuned, the tuning fork’s vibration
the last reverberation of a cello string
glitter from one last star just before dawn
lingering sweetness from the datura bloom’s silver trumpet
the shimmer of mountains in a desert mirage
after the pond’s cacophony, a final spadefoot murmur

the last drop of water on the tongue
shadows of clouds dragging across the mesa
before lightning, the smell of ozone
a grumble of thunder after the flash
the scent of petrichor after the rain
rumble in a dry arroyo just before the wall of water

and at the end, that is just another beginning . . .
taste of water from a melting glacier
the last view of this wild and awe-full world
as they close my eyes, the gentle touch of fingers
glimmer of fireflies or velvet darkness
or music or what comes next?

musk of molecules splitting and merging in the alchemy of rot
the whisper of a feather lifting on the air
becoming invisible
fragments
of memory
drift
in an abandoned
house

by Janet Ruth

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