

# O Fortuna

*by* Michael Parker

Fate is against me in health and virtue, driven on and weighted down, always enslaved. So at this hour without delay pluck the vibrating strings; since Fate strikes down the strong man, everyone weep with me! — “O Fortuna” from *Carmina Burana*

After lengthened years, I have been considering our collective downturns

          leaving the good many of us exposed to life's harsh sufferings.

And I have even been postulating there is no worse curse than what has been launched on this rent man.

For I have been drawn out like many deep waters.

My lungs have been laid open like a restless sea.

The moon, with its invariable force, has pulled  
          at this body, as if it wants to separate blood  
          from vein and veins from flesh.

That is what it feels like even seasons after an attack of two embolisms; one in the right lung, the other in the left.

For years, I was losing myself—exsanguinated,  
          as if the pressure of the daily measurement of oxygen was reversed, and the result was the drawing away of my spirit  
          from its bedding of tissue and bone.

I have never wanted this tragedy to break me.

But I would cry in the nighttime;  
          feel beaten, thin as the shadows, small  
          as the dust in its diminutive realm of solitude.

I felt closer to the boy poet, David, whose fortune  
would change but not until he was tested, walking  
aimlessly in the spiritless valley of shadow.

Solitude. Spiritless. Aimless. Darkness.  
This was becoming my bleak mantra for my new days.

I have known speaking a word can be a creation of goodness.  
If I died gasping, I wanted others to remember me better than I  
am or  
than I might appear.

So, let me admit unequivocally family, friends, neighbors and  
carers are  
as a grand community of trees in the forest, their roots  
acting  
as a support for each other.

In my suffering, I felt the fullness of that communal spirit and  
support;  
but also a kinship with all other silent things: The moon,  
the stars,  
the shadows that eke out across the stretch of the street,  
or  
over the tiny world of my room behind my window.

And there were small blessings in the grand record of these  
things:  
wisdom, humility, ministrations, a coming to my calling,

Which is intrinsically connected to all things, in the end — the  
universe;  
the sparse islands of incandescent stars mesmerizing our eyes.

Because possibly, if we gaze long enough at any bright light,  
maybe  
that resplendent light is what we will become.

