

tears, et cetera

by strannikov

the physical pain

tears testify to can be
unreliable.

other pains take note
and find deeper recesses
for tears to travel.

one sequence of tears:
memory itself conceives,
is what tears express.

tears give substance to
and make memories alive,
joy and loss (as pain).

tears of self-reproach
(never? sometimes? rarely?)
threaten to drown us?

my tears must be cold:
had I ever felt their heat,
would I dare now burn?

regrets don't steer time
nor do they postpone our graves:
tears fall, as we do.

only do regrets
precede our deaths, only when
resolve intervenes.

no one's tears endure:
all enemies are mortal,
all families, too.

tears not seen, not heard
in decades-long private rooms
return to their hearts.

no days are retrieved,
tears wash only as they fall,
no year is restored.

my heart, struck with drought,
pumps its powders into my
desiccated eyes.

will tears find me yet?
which absence dares to explain
my drought-ravaged heart?

I'm as vanished on
the threshold of this desert
as any sands here.

a ghost is just this:
a memory unable
to obtain its tears.

ghosts are local plagues
of unexpended grief—tears
can't be bodiless.

the validity
of tears: could that which we mourn
return the favor?

who sheds tears because
of the incapacity
to weep and shed tears?

tears prefer the dark,
they can't stand spotlights that would
evaporate them.

tears fall in silence:
they can be heard only when
their liquid salt spills.

onions do not have
the stamina to produce
the tears we require.

tears do not console:
the pools they form must be deep
enough to sail in.

a fire I lit blows
out, then its smoke rises up
straight into my eyes.

