

Matthew 28:19

Their planet felt impossibly alive;
thickly wooded islands rising out the sea like welts,
waves throwing fog to shore like censers.

Our landers followed the forest edge until we found the moulds
shimmering like oil slicks on undergrowth:
shallow sheets a hundred feet in length, richly veined,
filtering the forest floor for rot and waste.

Millions of microscopic lifeforms fused together,
as if a city of humans had chosen to share a skin.

I led my Apostolates in song as they felled a clearing for our church,
its steeple taller than the forest's tallest tree.

We didn't know the nature of their souls,
but we would have them, each mould a nation,
adapting our doctrines to a species without sight or sound or
impulse.

For them, Heaven would be the richest soil,
the warmest rot.

I spent months translating hymns into chemical and texture,
learning how to harmonise the alkaline and acidic,
to help the moulds sense eternity
in the smoothest stone.

They had an uncomplicated worship,
always finding the shortest path to glory.

The Trinity came easily to them,
understanding that many persons can be one,
but refused the Resurrection,
seeing a return from death as selfishness.

Believing a body should be shared.

So before we could stop them,
they went through a reformation,
each mould holding a dozen denominations;
contorting into stars as they pulled themselves apart.

Constellations on the floor of their far and lovely forest.

We found them clinging to our church like hoarfrost:
smaller, sharper, saved.