Missing; Links

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Half-life; Cradle

She arises from the bedrock and
Goes to examine her face in the mirror.
Overnight, it has sagged.
These new striations make her look ancient.
She is the kind of tired that
can only be described as geological.
Something lurches mildly in utero.
It's definitely too late to abort.

If she had time enough on her hands,
she would sit on the banks of a river
to watch tufa forming.
But instead, said precious time
must direct the decay of elements and
renegotiate existence into something else.

> All this she must achieve while being
> both river and rock: eternal chemistry.

It's not that she wants to.
It's that the universe decided it would be fun:
Won't you just quickly gestate
a whole new species of hominid
to test out a novel concoction?
Put them there, her boss said,
in the place with all the limestone
where two formations touch.

> That way, if they don't make it,
> the ones that do might find
> their fossils later.
> Everyone loves a good mystery.
> She didn't bother to ask why.
> She knew the answer would be, why not?

An invitation goes out for the baby shower.
The theme is "monstrous incubation" and
dressing up is encouraged.
The centrepiece: a placenta-shaped mud cake.
The venue: a cave accessible
along a fracture of irregular width
or via sinkhole drop-in.

Metaphors; Useless

Deep time.
Long time.
Extending carelessly behind
tirelessly forward.
A few milliseconds
at the end of the last minute
of the last hour of a single day.
That's us: homo whomever.
Not even half of a half
of a half of an inhalation.
All time is written in rock.
Another way to say it is
rocks write time,
in real time.
Better yet:
time writes rocks.
Or to be more precise,
time materialises in rock
in real time.
In fact, the only way to write time
is with rock itself.
Rock is the solitary accurate language
for depicting time's truth.
The original of any map,
rock offers honest time code.
Neither representing it,
nor standing in for it,
not imaging it, nor re-showing it:
rock is time.

In other words:
it is time we
show a little respect
for how matter matters.

Clues; Investigation

Disturbance is always a sign.
What can be washed here by water?
What cannot?
Not every bone becomes fossil.
All bones beg to be read but
they can only say so much.
See, there is either natural flow
or deliberate placement.
Here lie in formation
eighteen complete skeletons
submitted to sediment
swapping out elements.
No disappearance, only change.
Chemical precipitation.
Chaotic deposition?
Death trap. No doubt: death.
Dirt under a fingernail.
A curvature in the hands, for climbing.
Eyes that could see in underground dark.
A slight body that could nimbly step,
through a narrow, jagged chute
possibly while carrying another.
A small brain.
Too small for murder?
Look at the gravel.
Can you see the elements that form these shards?
Ablate a laser millimetre of rock
in search of four specific atoms.
What do you find?
Is there a weapon, a motive?

An explorer lost in cave-mazes;
No one knows what he wanted to prove;
He died trying;