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Aletheia

A long-gone hand behind this scrap of map
dips the brush into red lead again
and lifts the wet tip up to fly across
an ocean and touch down in the unknown
where it emblazons its best guesses, draws
ornate conclusions in the far shore's sand.

Now, as ever, dawn illuminates
the landscape's manuscript, over which
the day must pass, peripatetic, before
sunset can rubricate the hour's red letter.

There are still shapes and patterns we are taught
truth takes, contested borders unexpressed,
pretty pictures in complimentary
colors, nations nestled purple against
yellow, crimson cradling blue. What hand
wants to smudge the fine lines and express
the messiness of lives lived liminal?

The globe at least attempts to hold a kind
of truth, dimensionality, orb
born of glued gores narrowing their finer
points poleward, but when the spinning stops,
it's still a toy that tumbles into the same
traps of empire and HIC SVNT LEONES.

I'm not immune to putting the crypt- before
the cart- in all my -ography. In my
heart of hearts, I call my aorta
regina viarum, the Appian Way,
beg each ornery orrery to orbit
me.

Rubbing my closed eyes in the dark,
I might think that I see lights, when in fact
I feel pressure and cells activate
phosphene's entoptic phenomenon, bright
blurs like what a satellite might capture,
whole galaxies or our metropolises'
light pollution, depending where the camera
sets its sights.

Deep beneath the ocean's
swells, bioluminescent creatures
travel currents as predators and prey,
and a black box flight recorder pings its signal
outside the range of human hearing.

I've heard
the box is actually painted orange.

I've heard we have thirty days before
the batteries die and it falls silent.

If we were to trust our actual ears,
we'd think it had been silent all along.

Credit:

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