

Hauntology

by Nate Maxson

The optimistic or the new-age among us might call it a manifestation if it paid in cash, it trudges out of the swamp in your dreams like a beast from the sea, one claw waving a report card full of failing grades

A collective haunting, the Gashadokuro is its name in Japanese and it is a fusion of tragedies risen to terror: skeletal apparitions made from the amassed bones of those lost to famine, while we're being academic about it/ may as well contemplate the monster

A more subtle example though, is the first wolves to leave the Chernobyl disaster zone in generations because they have no fear of human hunters and still carry a seed of radiation in their bellies: wild animals rarely live long enough for cancer, we track their emergence anecdotally but still listen for howls after sundown

A self-defense mechanism, how we craft a specter/ the wings of Monarch butterflies and Death's Head moths

Maybe the folkloric aspect is only visible in hindsight, like the Hubble telescope catching light a thousand years after its escape

My gathering the memories of snowstorms from the well of my childhood and holding them in my hands like tender blossoms drying between pages of books I never finished is a spark-like prayer to the blackout

Rouse it or let it sleep, let it continue, the eventual is only a funeral in the short term: if we wait long enough, its fruit will drip from our mouths and hands, blood to a garden like light to water/ the ambiguous distance between myself and the ghost