

Three Formal Poems

by [Sam Buntz](#) (September 2020)



Autumn Sea, Max Pechstein, 1933

Broken Shells

Look at the shells that grate on the shore—

Beauty fresh, broken down, and all worn through.

Millions of lives cast off and millions more
Wait for their end in the murmuring blue.
The world's untroubled by beauty consigned to waste,
Lost forms sunk low that no eye or ear can wake:
Sight stripped of color and tongue without taste,
A lame hand that can neither give nor take.
Beauty runs like a fugitive down here,
Hiding from light, evading the microscope.
Its persistence is obscure, its end all too clear,
If not for this bright and definite hope:
The world's beauty, the soul, sunk in time and space
Will be fished out at last by the line of Grace.

Ghazal: In Light

Prune the garden with your shears of discernment
While the contents of your heart remain in light.

See the struggles and contests of the outer life—
Burning drops race down a windowpane in light.

Look at us, errant offspring of the billionaire
Who once let His gold coins rain in light.

The mole rat tunnels upward all day long,
But weak underground eyes feel pain in light.

On the solstice, dawn devours the dusk
And the Lion of Judah shakes his mane in light.

God's reflections return His words in garbled speech—
Wet cobblestones glitter along the lane in light.

The heart's dust glimmers with a sudden breeze—
Has it gone mad or ultra-sane in light?

Knowing God how a vine blindly knows its wall
My leaves stretch open to rein in light.

To the spectacle of shadows that gather round
Samuel marvels at the poses you feign in light.

The Reservoir of Her Mind

The cool, quiet reservoir of her mind
Is always fresh, its springs always beginning.
Her understanding ripples before and behind
From a single point of focus, widening.
She reminds me, in how she gives and receives,
Of still lake water yielding up the light
Along with the brilliance of autumn leaves
Doubling their richness in a second sight.
And now the wind brushes back the surface
As if a little worry were to intrude
But it fades into her silent witness
Peacefully observing her own mood
With a living stillness, by no means numb,
Able to bear whatever storms may come.

«[Previous Article](#) [Table of Contents](#) [Next Article](#)»

Sam Buntz a legal writer and part-time freelancer based in Chicago. He's been published in *The Washington Monthly*, along with articles in *Fare Forward* and *Pop Matters*, *The Stonefence Review*, and in the now-defunct *The Fossil Record*.

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