

Ticking Like a Mountain – or the Bezoszoic

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In 2018 The Long Now Foundation started construction on a clock that is supposed to run for 10.000 years as a monument to long term thinking. The building site is inside a mountain in Western Texas, on property owned by one of the project's main sponsors: Jeff Bezos. "Look we're not in the Anthropocene so much as the Bezoszoic," quipped Darshana Jayemanne on Twitter (@ShirazHaderach, May 10 2020). This poem is inspired by this tweet, as well as Aldo Leopold's essay "Thinking like a Mountain."

Ticking Like a Mountain – or the Bezoszoic

Somewhere in Western Texas a mountain cannot sleep.
In all its years of slowly rising, 20 million give or take,
It hasn't seen activity like this,
So furious and desperate.

At times there was a tickle on top, very pleasant
Between the scrub oak and the juniper bush
Which kept the grazers in their place,
Safe from their own too-much.

But the current itch is subterranean
Causing old memories to resurface,
From when the mountain was a reef
Bordering an inland sea.

She is a mass of bones,
The mountain thinks,
Of corals and crustaceans
And they're just adding to the pile.

Nothing not to tolerate,
If only for the sound
Of that incessant ticking noise

Disturbing the grave-like silence of her gut.

A mechanical pulse, a throbbing pain
And in time, a car park and a gift shop
But all this business cannot last
Not in this heat.

It was a late-Permian dream
When she held hands with her cousins
Carlsbad to the North
And sister Guadalupe.

A shadowy half-moon, visible from space
Is all that's left of their embrace of the ancient basin,
That and the carbon in the air
Which were neighbouring algae once.

There will be another dying, soon.
For that is how it went before.
We all strive for safety, prosperity,
comfort, long life, and dullness.

Works Cited

- Jayemanne, Darshana [ShirazHaderach]. "Look we're not in the Anthropocene so much as the Bezoszoic." *Twitter*, 10 May 2020, <https://twitter.com/ShirazHaderach/status/1391742115873533955>
- Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There*. American Museum of Natural History Special Members' Edition. Oxford University Press, 1968.