

## **A Universe Inside the Skull**

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There are galaxies in here, I think.  
A universe tucked underneath every skull.  
Billions of suns, stars, moons,  
constellations of thought and light  
and memory and dreams and motion.

There is chaos, but the chaos forms color,  
the color forms pixels,  
which make photos,  
which make movies,  
which make memories,  
filled with sound,  
with touch,  
with smell,  
with taste.  
A song, a name remembered, the warmth of a loved one's hand.  
Everything we are is written  
in that dense mesh of sky and stars.

Sometimes, stars burn out.

The circuits that let us love go dark.  
Those that let us laugh forget their path home.  
Loneliness creeps in;  
a cold vacuum, once filled with meaning,  
now quiet.

I once met a man  
whose smile had been taken.  
Unjustly, unkindly,  
by a single anarchist nerve.  
Each attempt at joy,  
at smiling,  
was answered with pain and lightning.  
The hardest part was not the pain – the pain would pass –

but the distance.  
No one knew this pain.  
Empathy had bounds, here.  
He was alive, but alone,  
hurting.  
A flame, smoldered.

But then, slowly,  
through medicine,  
through patience,  
through faith in an eventual repair,  
through partnership, through care,  
the light began to return.  
That anarchist nerve,  
calm.

The man smiled again.

This is what healing is, isn't it?  
Teaching each universe to love itself again.  
Coaxing every grand universe to  
remember its bounds.

I'd think neurologists live for those moments,  
when dark becomes light,  
and silence becomes sound once more.

Inside every skull  
there is a cosmos burning.  
Fierce yet fragile,  
and sometimes needing a faithful hand  
to remind it how to shine.