

Who Will Write the Epitaph?

You are looking, just now, for the first star
but its light has not yet reached the eyes.
When, beyond the destination of defeat and dispersal,
hundreds of light-years have been subdued,
then you, at the utmost margin of the sky,
will be listening to stories about the earth-born.
From space within space
planetary systems will call to their sparsely inhabited
worlds.
Earth, too, will start at the familiar knocking.
But, then, who will speak?
The rose garden, color, fragrance
twittering trees and roaring forests—
all alone, what will they do?
Day, night, wandering from town to town,
Day, night, wandering from town to town.
Whom will they pat to sleep, whom will they awake?
Warming themselves at a fire in some dismal village
to whom will the idle lines of hands
complain of their existence?
Who will commiserate
with the life of stones returning to ice?
When all the dreams of crowded galaxies in space
within space,
dreams laughing at tales of love and parting,
after concluding their last rotation,

remain unexplained,
who will weep at this failure?
Who will write the epitaph of the earth-born?

Translated from Urdu by Waqas Khwaja