

The Intimate Space Between Molecules

The world of *White Noise* is fractured. Seemingly disconnected events form narrative as the universe itself is constantly being divided and isolated. Throughout the novel there is a careful dissection of things; a pulling apart of the fabric of the world into its constituent fibers, a reduction of the sum into its parts. At the same time, there is a stark lack of compassion in the novel. Relationships seem strained or mediated; intimacy is strangely absent; romance is simply non-existent. It seems evident that the dissected nature of the novel is connected to this lack of intimacy: once the human being is split into its constituent parts, how can one then view themselves holistically? How can one then connect to others? The novel is aware of, and concerned with, this inability to find intimacy; in both the actions and words of the characters, but also in the very structure of the writing itself, there is this struggle with detail. There is a constant breaking-down-of-things into definable and small pieces. It is through this breakdown that an attempt to then restructure the whole as a sum of parts is ultimately unsatisfactory, for the novel neglects an inexplicable connection, a space between things, and in doing so condemns the world of *White Noise* to be meaningless and distant.

Firstly, a background of the lack of intimacy in the novel is necessary. Taken as a whole, the sense of disconnect is palpable. There are no strong moments of romance or compassion – everything seems distant from everything else. This can be seen in the scene where Jack and Babette discuss Babette's infidelity. What could be the emotional highpoint of the novel is strangely empty of passion; after the scene ends, the marriage reads almost exactly as it did prior. When Jack finds out about the infidelity, he asks about the number of sets of genitals and the number of times she went to the motel (DeLillo 185). There's never an intense emotional reaction, only a collection of questions and statements about particulars. In the absence of

emotional experience, there is only sexual details. When discussing their fear of death, Jack and Babette focus on how they chew gum, break out in sweat, and look at clocks (188-189). In this moment of potential intimacy, there is constant distancing through detail, rendering the scene void of emotion. Another moment that potentially highlights the lack of intimacy in the novel is when Babette and Jack go to have sex by reading porn. Once again, there is a distance between the intimate act and actors; the intimacy is rendered distant through pornography. Yet, the scene never actually occurs, and instead leads to one moment that seems to break this mold: the photo album. Unemphasized and quickly glossed over, this scene is one of the rare moments where glimmers of genuine connection may be seen. This scene will be returned to later, so for now it simply stands as a singular possible instance of intimacy in the novel. Overall, however, the novel is clearly devoid of true connection and fraught with an empty sense of disconnect.

What made the infidelity scene so disconnected? Why did the emotional highpoint of the novel read with the same intensity as a Homeowner catalogue? The distance arose from the details. Rather than discuss their fears and their feelings, they instead referred to clock times and sweating bodies. The focus on the detail disallowed a sense of connection. To further understand why, a closer look into the novel's treatment of detail is necessary.

The novel is preoccupied with a constant reduction of things into pieces. These pieces are specifically *definitive* and *small*. One understands the sense of specificity when Jack learns of Dylar. Scientists had "isolated" a "sector" of the brain; Dylar "specifically interacts with neurotransmitters" (190). The language here is clear; the pieces are defined and categorized. The drug is specific, targeting isolated sectors. Scientists are later said to be able to document "the number of molecules in a certain region," again highlighting how these pieces are clearly defined and countable (190). Dylar itself is hailed a marvel in that it is so controlled – the dosage it

provides is regulated, even, and defined at a “carefully controlled rate” (178). Every piece can be recorded, written down, mapped onto a page. Throughout the rest of the novel there is an equal concern for specific detailing of parts. One passage where this is especially evident is when Jack outlines the steps to mailing a check. Step by step, he pulls apart this incredibly mundane and casual activity and renders it as a collection of discrete steps, one through twelve (220). This is also evident when Heinrich discusses the parts of the eye. Heinrich here explicitly calls attention to the scientific names of the parts of the eye; he takes the organ and reduces it to its components, each with a name and distinct scientific value (151). When Jack goes to the doctor, they describe how everything he is can be represented as “bracketed numbers with pulsing stars” on a screen: mathematical, scientific, precise (135). All knowledge of who he is presented on a spreadsheet— except, of course, knowledge of when Jack will die. There lurks in the background of such scenes that which is inexplicable, with a focus that nonetheless remains upon the definable pieces. As such, it is clear that the novel foregrounds this dissection of things into pieces and parts, taking care to note how isolable and definable these pieces are.

Even in the novel’s structure this intense attention to the specific is noticeable. On the first page the reader is immediately presented with a block of text filled with details- a random collections of things, each individually marked and noted. This comes before the “I,” before the listing of things can be perceived as the worldview of a character. Unfocalized, the novel is simply presenting this stream of particulars. Later, Babette reads from a tabloid; her headlines become mini paragraphs, contained, and specific (140). There is no narration between these headlines, the text simply lists these details; they are presented in isolation, separate, and discrete. In the aforementioned dissection of mailing a check, each step is actually separated by a parenthetical number for the reader. The reader is *addressed* directly as “you;” this dissection of

things is not constricted to just the dialogue between characters or the concerns of Heinrich but is a constant tangible aspect of the way the novel is constructing a piecemeal world. Even as this world is presented to the reader, it is presented in parts.

In addition to the specificity and compartmentalization of the parts there is also a sense that these parts are small. Dylar contains a tiny hole – this hole is made by laser, almost too small to be seen to the naked eye (178). Dylar interacts at the level of neurons and neurotransmitters, interacts with cells and molecules. Jack explicitly notes how “a murderer used to have a fearsome size to him. His crime was large,” contrasting clearly with the novel’s otherwise preoccupation with the tiny (190). There is a sense that the large is being broken up, reduced, and boiled down to smaller and smaller parts. This is evident in the largest event of the story: the airborne toxic event. This event is clearly depicted as large – larger than anything else the novel encounters; it is “enormous” and “part of the grandness of a sweeping event” (124). The size of the cloud is almost “religious;” it is almost unknowable it is so big and vast. Yet, the cloud is purportedly removed by nanobots. The largest event in the novel is broken down into tiny, microscopic parts by tiny, microscopic robots. Even in the description of the cloud it is referred to as “packed with chlorides, benzines, phenols, hydrocarbons” in a “precise toxic content” (124). The vastness *must* be deconstructed, its contents *necessitate* precise dissection. It is clear, then, that there is a constant recurring theme of the large being broken down into the small and definable. The human being, once so large as Jack notes, is reduced to specific regions with tiny molecules.

What occurs after this reduction? Once things are broken into distinct, isolated, and miniscule pieces, what of the whole? The resulting picture of the whole is an inherently fractured one. The human being becomes, as Jack notes, “the sum of our chemical impulses” (190). Once

this breaking-down has occurred, there is no possibility of viewing the whole as unfractured. The doctor who spoke to Jack of his “bracketed numbers” then describes to him how he is “the sum total of your data” (136). The human being is a collection. When Jack performs his ‘lending of brilliance’ to Murray, what is being done except to paint a pointillistic portrait? Random life facts and tiny details are collected together and dubbed a whole – a whole composed of parts. Hitler is understood by Jack through this reduction of him to pieces, to statements about Christmas concerns and a “buzzing in his left ear” (72). Unconnected statements are simply left in isolation, and the whole is assumed to be the absorption of these parts. As such, throughout the novel there is a reduction of things (envelopes, eyes, Hitler, human beings) into the distinct and miniscule parts that form them.

An easy register to understand “why” such a breakdown is occurring is the prevailing sense that it is only *through* such a breakdown that a holistic view can be possible. As Babette tells Jack, “I know how to break things down, how to separate and classify...How else do you understand the world” (183). There is an element of logical knowledge that comes with such a treatment: if things are broken down in the smallest possible quanta, and these quanta are clearly defined and in boxes, then every aspect of the whole is understood. If every part is understood, then thus the sum is also understandable. The whole is understood only through the composite pieces. Murray, throughout the novel, clearly embodies this. He is constantly picking at the detail, smelling bottles of pain reliever, and scribbling notes at TV commercials and supermarket sales (19). He is squeezing every scrap of knowledge out of the pieces, in attempt to perceive some “physic data,” trying to “decipher” the collection of parts (36). Dylar, the miracle solution, is an attempt to understand the fear of death through its specificity, an attempt to grasp this large fear by reducing it to chemicals. Yet, Dylar doesn’t work. There is something missing.

Upon the restructuring of the fractured things, there is a created distance. Jack says Heinrich's brain theories are "unbearable to think about" and how they "can't be true" (190). There is an unease at simply stitching together the parts and calling them whole, an unease clearly present in Jack's reaction to Dylar. The human person cannot simply be a collection of parts. When the family discusses random facts from their youth, spouting off rock types and presidential slogans, one is not getting a sense of the whole (168). One is only getting jagged pieces in isolation. Even Murray can be understood as not fully "getting it all." One critical scene has him and Jack discussing the man teaching Jack German. As Murray speaks, he begins to note tiny details about the man, once again dissecting him into traits and parts. As he continues, Jack gets excited, asking him "What else?", trying to figure out what is this unnamed quality that Jack is looking for (227). He is grasping at something, hoping (like Murray and Heinrich) that the answer is in the pieces. Yet, Murray doesn't have an answer. He provides detail after detail, with Jack asking for more and more. Ultimately, when Murray responds days later with a final word, he says "He looks like a man who finds dead bodies erotic" (227). This isn't satisfying. It is jarring, abrupt, and makes the reader pause – but it doesn't quite capture the whole. What does such a person look like? As Jack and Murray attempt to dissect the man, there is a gesturing towards the inexplicable, towards the impenetrable character of the man – but by constantly trying to explain and dissect something intangible like personality, their results are absurd. Nonsensical. What is missing, then? If all tiny pieces are accounted for, if every molecule is labeled and defined, every minor impulse categorized and isolated – what more could be necessary? What is lacking, quite literally, is relationships.

Relations, interconnectedness, intimacy, compassion: these are all largely absent in the novel. They are absent because there is no *space* for these feelings. When the whole is being

broken down and reassembled there is no consideration for the *connections between pieces*. Jack describes the parts of the station-wagon train – but never gives the reader an insight into their connection. The family list off random facts from their schooling, but with no consideration to how those facts relate to other parts of themselves. Murray lists off facets of the German man, but never details how those facets exist in relation to other parts, and to the whole. The human being is reduced to chemicals and molecules, but there is never a discussion of the intangible breath of life that brings those pieces into relation. What lies in between neurotransmitters? What forms the space between atoms? It is as if the human person in the novel is a mosaic: small tiles are studied and color coded; every piece of the mosaic is defined. Yet there is no mortar between pieces – it is as if one takes the tiles of the mosaic and simply places them together, steps back and says, “this is the unbroken whole!” Such a treatment neglects the mortar, neglects the empty space that separates the individual parts and simultaneously connects the pieces together. The novel focuses so intensely upon a grasping of the particular that it neglects the relations *between* particulars.

It may sound obvious, and rather trite, to say that what is missing in a novel lacking intimacy is ‘the relation between things.’ It is clear that a novel lacking relationships would lack...relationships. Yet it is in the *details* that this becomes important – it is in the constant reduction of things and people to constituent parts that neglects this seemingly obvious aspect of relation. Let us return to the photo album: what made that moment strangely touching? Was it simply the photos themselves, the pieces in plastic boxes and isolated? The allure of the photo album is the memory undefined and in between pages; the joy comes out of the dynamic lived experience *between* the still photos, the details and remembrances not clearly outlined in polaroid. The events uncaptured, the smiles unphotographed, and the moments unmediated

through a lens: these are what form the beauty between the pages of the photo album. There is an understanding that these photos are not the whole story, but rather just isolated moments: the true beauty is in the relation between photos, the empty space in which they become intimate.

This space, this emptiness between, sounds quite abstract. The novel seems to concretize it as white noise. White Noise is the spaces between sounds; it is the static between distinct TV channels; it is the mortar between noises. Yet white noise is also the culmination, the cacophony of distinct voices in multitudes heard at once. White Noise is the space between things that allows for the whole to be possible. White Noise is the vehicle through which the novel embodies the lack of relations and the culmination of pieces; it is what lies on the periphery of the novel, never given full attention but always present. Statements about blue jeans tumbling, TV channel audio clips, or supermarket announcements embody this white noise as always on the unfocused periphery (18-19). If one reads *White Noise* as also symbolic of death, following Babette and Jack's description of death as "electrical noise...uniform, white," then the reading is even more clear (189). Death is pushed away, the fear of it hidden and un-discussed until Dylar – yet the fear of death is constantly present, in blue jean dryers and in supermarket shelves. Afterall, does death not operate to breakdown the human being into its constituent parts? Death embodies the very decomposition the novel obsesses over; it breaks the human down into parts and chemicals and dust. Paradoxically, it is the fear of this reduction that seems to drive the novel's constant dissection. Death is what separates the parts of the body and therefore is found not in a neuron, but in that which ultimately separates the neurons; death, like white noise, is found in the undefinable spaces between. In any regard, it is this space between parts that the novel never allows for, a fear of this space that is constantly medicated away.

Such a reading is admittedly abstract, and difficult to pin-down. What is this supposed missing space? It may be called White Noise or death, an ‘intimate space’, but these names are still abstract. The struggle is that, by its nature, this space for relationships cannot be defined. One cannot break it down into concrete microscopic pieces to be labeled. This space between things is a background, a foundation, a mortar for the rest of the pieces to find meaning against. In a Post-Modern world, this space is forgotten. Rather, empty details and repetitions of the microscopic are assumed to form the whole. Hitler must be a collection of traits. The brain is simply chemicals. A personality is simply dried spittle and erotic bodies. This space has no words. It cannot be defined, written about concretely, categorized or printed out with a label. Yet – it is this space that makes those brain theories bearable. It is the undefinable hatred within Hitler that made him so fearsome and large; it is the memory between photos that makes them beloved; it is the mortar between tiles that creates the mosaic. In the novel, this space is never allowed to flourish, and the distant relationships attest to the failings of such a view of things. In the world outside the novel, this space is equally hard to find. In a culture of definitions and language, in a technological world of personalized hyperlinks and biomedical advancements, it is hard to allow for things to be placed in relation. It is difficult to allow for a space of undefinable nothingness. Yet without this space, this white noise, this death, this emptiness – intimacy will only be possible as a ratio of chemicals; compassion is condemned to be nothing more than misfired neuron.

At this point, if the reader wishes to stop here, put the paper down, and not read any further, feel free to do so. Thus far this essay has primarily focused on the literary analysis with a sprinkle of metaphysics – from this point forward, the focus will be bringing that metaphysics from the literature into lived experience. This will be arduous. Language will be philosophical. If

such an endeavor is boring to the reader, this author appreciates your patience thus far. Pages 17-19 contain some poetry, if you'd prefer to skip there. Let us give those readers wishing to depart a moment to gather their things.

Now. The current reader may indeed wonder why this "space" has been referred to as such, why the metaphor employed thus far has been spatial. In fact, it is increasingly likely that this essay, though written with the intent to clarify a lack, may have created more confusion. What is this "space"? Is it death or White Noise? (what's the difference?) How does this relate at all to intimacy? In light of these questions, this final moment of the essay will have nothing new to say, but by perhaps restating everything differently will provide a final route into the insight as to what this "space" is.

Firstly, this space between is only a "space" in the same sense that a wooden bowl is a "space;" it is the undefinable and empty quality of a thing that makes the thing *what it is*. A bowl is not a bowl because of wooden curves – it is a bowl because there is a *space* that forms the bowl, a space defined and created by its own *emptiness* and *relations* to that which surrounds it. In the case of the mosaic, the "space" would be the overlapping colors and jagged relations of piece to piece that come to be in the mortar; the mortar is experienced as pure relation – it exists only so far as to be a conduit and space for the relationships within the art to come to being. In the human being, this space could be read as the "self", that area containing the mixing of facts and numbers and mothers and fathers, these overlapping influences and relationships within this ground that is therefore itself relational. For this "space between" is not just that which relates the self to the cells of one's skin, or brain chemicals to emotions, but also the horizon on which relationships are revealed as *ontologically constructive*. It is not *truly* spatial, but simply easy to conceive as such. The "space between" is simply "the between," the "ground" between, the

“horizon” between, or any other word that indicates a zone of relationality. Once this space is opened and acknowledged, one can see that the whole human being is nothing *but* relation; the human self, in its complexity and mystery, is not found in irreducible parts but is the relational *space* between parts. The space is not truly spatial, but is similar metaphorically to the way that many like to conceive of the “self” as a spatial kernel inside one’s chest (where do you point when you say “me”?). What one calls the “self” is not a collection of skin cells nor a suspended point in one’s chest; it is the nexus of relations between the genetic and philosophical, between the concrete and the abstract. This space is not a location but a basis of relation. If this space is flourished and understood, one will see compassion and intimacy not as emotions to be cultivated, but as fundamental descriptions of how one is – oneself is in relation. In this way, this *space* can be understood as a *space to be with* others, a grounds for relation, an empty zone of no-thing that enables things to be differentiated, separated, and thus related. After all, the *experience* of oneself is one of relation – when I, as a subject, experience the loss of a loved one, why does it feel as if a concrete part of myself is gone? Why can I suddenly feel a *gap* where the person used to be? Why do I experience a viscerally painful grief in my bones, and not a release of chemical packets across synapses? I do not experience other people as isolated parts – I *experience* them as part of me. We, in a sense, *share space*. Thus, this “space-between” can be understood as the foundational metaphysical ground we all stand upon - a ground that is inherently relative.

Now, hopefully, the spatial metaphor is slightly clearer. But perhaps one is now asking: why is metaphor necessary? Is it not a cop-out to say that this space “cannot be defined, written about concretely” (p9)? What follows is a means of understanding the indefinability of the space. In the previous paragraph, there was a discussion of “in between;” now there will be a discussion

of this space as “surrounding”. There is always the veneer of the inexplicable surfacing every experience. If I were to adolescently, thus unfortunately culturally frustratingly, but nonetheless validly begin the reduction of everything through an all-questioning of “why?,” I would discover the inexplicable. There is that which resists dissection. If knowledge requires complete understanding, then no, I do not know why I am writing right now. Lists of reasons biological, social, pragmatic, neurotic and primordial dominate such a question, notwithstanding the undeniable presence of an experience of my free choice. Yet, in a sense that is rooted as deeply as the tone of your mental voice, there is a component of that question which withstands the onslaught of “why” by finally remaining silent in its face. The knowledge of this component already has a name: phenomena. Pure experience. When reduced, there is that in an encounter which is inexplicable since explication is a necessary *product* of the chemistry of phenomena. Just as a property of a leaf is its taste, as experienced by one with a tongue, a property of experience is an inexplicable ground upon which to explicate from, as experienced by one with consciousness. Metaphor, too, requires a partner: the concrete can only be made as such if the abstract cannot; infinity may be a line of endless dots, a flat space, or a vast emptiness but it is still only constructed as such: it has another side, a side of the abstract of the metaphor, a side where the best approximation of description is perhaps best mapped through sensation. There is no denying the inexplicable which surfaces experience – yet *White Noise*, in its dissection, seeks to do just that.

There seems to be a faith in accepting something magical like an inexplicable swelling of kindness, something faithful in believing that it is indeed raining outside, but as *White Noise* has demonstrated, more accurately there is an incredible *fear* lurking behind inexplicability. Experience requires what feels like a faith because it is entering a register of cognition not

existentially related to explanation; the deepest answer to why I am writing this is blithely silent, yet that silence itself can still be heard speaking unspeakable rounds in my head. There is no empirical evidence of the fear of death, no molecule to point to – but the experience of death itself yields an inexplicable knowledge of mortality. Seeing a Great Billowing Cloud does, as Jack notes, give a sense of the religious, in that one realizes mortality cannot be explained away with Nyodene Derivative. There is a fear in accepting the moment as experienced, yet a relaxation that comes from faithful willingness to be vulnerable to the inexplicable harshness and supple curve of experience. In this way, not only is the neglected space in the novel a space for relations at the very center of being, but it is also a space of inexplicability surrounding the experience of being.

Has this been less than elucidating? Here is a final summary: The postmodern landscape of *White Noise* is one dominated by dissection. Within this dissection, there is only a consideration for the *things themselves*, only a consideration of *parts* and of *pieces*. Death, being undefinable, is suppressed and medicated away – yet death, like white noise, is present around every moment and in between every scene. This space, this death, this white noise, this silence, this emptiness, this zone of relationality, this unexplainable and slippery surface of things is empty *unto itself* but is constantly filled with ever-changing connections and relations. One does not *experience* the world in such fragmented ways– one experiences the world with inexplicable spaces. This space surrounds and is surrounded by everything that is concrete and particular – this space is how the particulars enter into relation. I experience sight, not light registered onto a retina. I experience touch, not a nerve signal. To regard the human being without this ground of nothingness, without the importance of this experience, is to regard being without non-being, to regard presence without the compliment of absence, to regard metaphor without genuine

acknowledgement of abstraction. Without this space, the self must exist isolated, the cells of one's skin must exist only biologically, and the human being must exist confined within one's epidermis. However, with this space, if one truly opens their "self" as containing a space empty and brimming with overlapping connections and relations, the human being is suddenly a conduit of compassion, a drop of water in an intimate stream, an extended cognition defined by relationships. I touch things, and am touched by them. I see those around me, and feel *seen*. The human being ceases to exist as a sum of isolable parts and instead can flourish outwards as a nexus of intimacy – the self is seen as illusory in its singularity, but expansive and intimate in its composition as relative.

This final elucidation may have proved useful, and this author surely hopes so - for such ideas are not merely confined to metaphysics or literary theory. This is directly relatable to modern life. In the era of the Internet, one is constantly provided with a convincing portrait of *parts*. One can read Wikipedia articles, listen to podcasts, experience VR, watch video and read journals that provide a truly alluring illusion of completion. It would be easy, without a consideration of this "space", to regard the internet as complete. It would be easy to erroneously paint personality portraits from Twitter Feeds and Instagram Stories, to think that an experience of Madrid can be known through photos and testimonies, to think that a full understanding is possible if only one understands all the pieces. Afterall, if one regards the world as dissectible, reducible, and intelligible entirely in parts, then is the Internet not reality? If Heinrich's brain theories are true, then is experience not totally captured on the internet? If it is possible to medicate away the fear of death, then is it not possible to live a virtual life indistinguishable from reality? Without this space, this emptiness between things, this inexplicability between the explicable, the internet almost seems to become complete, to become more real than reality, to

become more convincing than experience. If one does not consider these abstract grounds, these empty spaces, these intersections of relations, it will be easy to see reality as indistinguishable from virtuality.

Are we currently considering the Internet as such? In our modern world, do we not pretend that we can understand everything *if we just have enough information*? The internet provides a dangerously deceptive impression of totality – in its infinite capacity for *pieces*, one could easily mistake those pieces as forming a whole, as if the internet was a web of relations instead of a collection of databases. Do we not refer to the internet as infinite? As a web? As total grounds for relations, knowledge, and understanding? “*You have your phone – you can learn and master anything you want!*” Does not such a statement remove a space of inexplicable relational experience? *White Noise* provides a chilling marker to perceive where the world could go, and indeed may be going. The absurdity of a doctor speaking about brackets and stars is reminiscent of the absurdity of claiming to be able to *truly* learn a language using a CD-ROM. The insanity of denying the rain outside feels as insane as denying climate change because certain pieces, in isolation, paint a false whole. *White Noise* provides a disturbing look on how we could all be connected to avatars over the internet, and absolutely disconnected to the real, experienced, and partially inexplicable people around us. We could share pieces, and never share spaces. Nature becomes less experienced, and more photographed. The sounds of life lose their beauty and living simply dissolves into a black silence.

A Pinch of Salt

When I read in my recipe book that a pinch is required
I feel my cheeks pucker under grandmother thumbs,
and flick my hand the way my father does,
and go in semi-circle over the pot like my mother does.
I'll never understand those Pinterest Pictures
Stylish Home Magazine catalogues
promoting Fun! scoops of dashes, tads, and pinches
a meniscus marker to denote a drop
a volumetric flask to scoop a smidge.
A recipe book is already violent,
a forced flattening of a misshapen design,
a reduction to simmering parts a whole that contains so much flavor.
A pinch of salt is a measurement for my fingers,
a nod to me and my hands as objective truths,
reminding me of wrinkled grandfather skin,
showing me how much space lies between my fingers,
a call to the part of me that cannot be measured by pound
cubed and diced into packets and pockets,
but can only be weighed between the hands of family.
A pinch is a part of me learned
by relatives and ancestors
and by tasted fingertips and deeply inhaled steams,
I cannot weigh the salt in my skin any more
than I can taste which spice reminds me of a warm October;
this is not a simple smile at Old Family Recipe,
or a kitsch nod to lacquered kitchen counters,
or a diatribe against measuring cups
or a bitter nostalgia for gardens;
there is a space between my finger and thumb
where I can squeeze immeasurable quantities,
open an openness to the flavor of broths,
empty an emptiness revealing a pinch
of delicate taste.

Waves and Radiation

my experience of life is fractured and piecemeal,
a spotted cheesecloth;
 It has thick dangling threads.

I slip hair between my fingers, pulling at wax and lipstick.

Sometimes I spend minutes
balancing the tip of my finger on my thumb
until only their shapes overlap;
 I feel a thinner air.

I flick my head to taste the heaviest second
and breathe a surplus moment
immobilized in a second hand glaze;
 The pause drips stillness.

When I grab a palm-sized rock from low-tide
I grip until I'm white,
Weighing the object I wait until it falls;
 The space empties so gently.

They say that death is abstract alchemy wrapped in cloud.

On mornings of atmosphere layered in sheets,
where fog is friendly with sugar
my tongue can almost bear not getting wet –
 I can savor a wet-wrapped space.

my experience of life is empty and filled with sensation,
 I radiate deliciously into space.

Blue Jeans Tumbling in a Dryer

if I exist alone,
 surely I exist in a prison of clay,
an epidermis inescapable,
 touching with gloved fingertips.

if I exist with you,
 surely I exist as sunlight on water,
a sparkling crystal,
 touching flesh.

we experience
 an atmosphere shared
between lungs,
 a mirror descending
into luscious green.

the tree sways in gentle wind,
 shade and dappled sun pierce
through me,
 I spread my arms and branches,
open to a breathing blue,
 resting, with you.

Works Cited

DeLillo, Don. *White Noise*. Penguin Books, 2016.