

Elevators, Like God, Make No Promises

by Felix Jung

I have no faith in architects, no trust
in beams of steel or wood. If steady winds
can push a mountain back to dust, how long

until a wall of brick comes tumbling down?
The ground does not forgive, it never needs
to give more than it takes. Acidic rains

eat statues year by year, the names on grave-
stones smudge away until the weeds and moss
reclaim what, rightfully, is theirs. Sometimes

electric wires short, a fire burns
cold concrete black, sends each atomic piece
of carbon back into the dirt. How can

a building never tire of standing up,
when all the world demands return? I hate
the leap of faith it takes to step between

an elevator's doors – this metal box
that, going up, comes down, but not the way
it should. When I can touch a button and

suspend the laws of gravity, how can
I possibly ascend from floor to floor
without some sense of reservation? How

much did I eat for lunch? How many books
inside my backpack? Will it help to hold
my breath, or does that extra air just make

me heavier? What if the cable snaps
and drops me down the elevator shaft
to crash into the basement? I admit

I'd scream. Who wouldn't? If the movies are
correct, the seconds of that fall will feel,
at least to me, like an eternity.

No architect, regardless of his skill,
can accurately guess the choices I
will make. To wait, to take the stairs, there's too

much randomness to calculate. If I
attempt to raise myself, in rising up
I am acknowledging that failure means

descent. The Devil was an angel once.
If he can fall with wings (with *wings*), what chance
have I? Who says I'm any different?



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