

Waltz of the 101st Lightborne

Joanna Newsom

I believed they had got what they came for
I believed our peril was done
On the eve of the last of the Great Wars
After three we had narrowly won
But the fourth
It was carelessly done

I saw his ship in its whistling ascension
As they launched from the Capitol seat
Swear I saw our mistake
When the clouds draped like a flag
Across the backs of the fleet
Of the Hundred-First Lightborne Elite

As the day is long
So the well runs dry
And we came to see Time is taller
Than Space is wide
And we bade goodbye
To the Great Divide
Found unlimited simulacra to colonize!

But there was a time we were lashed to the prow
Of a ship you may board, but not steer
Before You and I ceased to mean Now
And began to mean only Right Here
(to mean Inches and Miles, but not Years)
Before Space has a taste of its limits
And a new sort of coordinate awoke
Making Time just another poor tenant:
Bearing weight, taking fire, trading smokes
In the war between us and our ghosts

But I saw the Bering Strait and the Golden Gate
In silent suspension of their golden age!
And you can barely tell, if I guard it well
Where I have been, and seen
Pristine, unfelled

I had a dream that I walked in the garden
Of Chabot, and those telescope ruins
It was there that I called to my true love
Who was pale as millennial moons
Honey, where did you come by that wound?

When I woke, he was gone
And the War had begun
In eternal return and repeat
Calling, Where in the hell are the rest of your fellow
One Hundred-One Lightborne Elite?
Stormed in the New Highland Light Infantry

Make it stop, my love!
We were wrong to try
Never saw what we could unravel
In traveling light
Nor how the trip debrides

Like a stack of slides!

All we saw was that Time is taller than Space is wide

That's why we are bound to a round desert island

'Neath the sky where our sailors have gone

Have they drowned, in those windy highlands?

Highlands away, my John