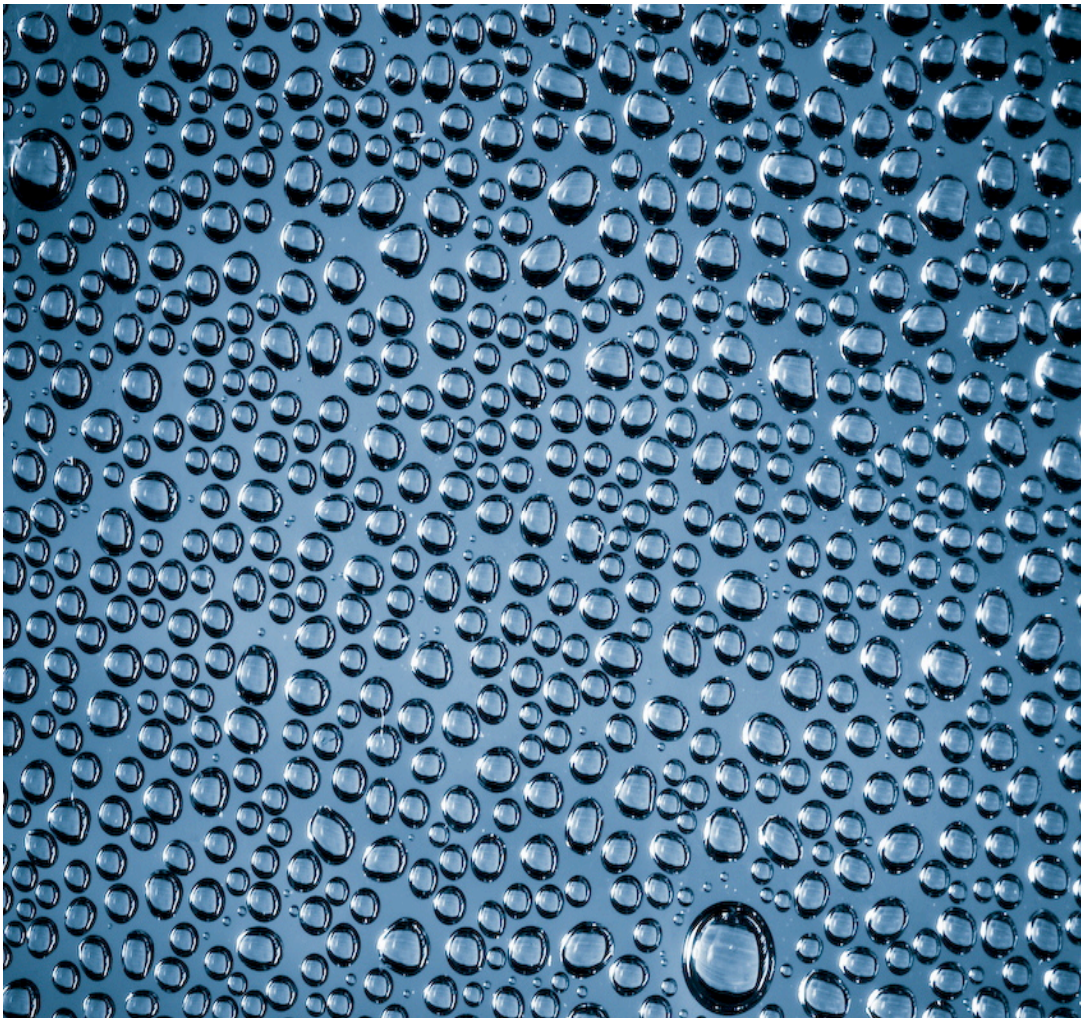


Three Poems

Rae Armantrout

Life itself is a process of transcription. Poetry imitates that process. Specifically, the second section of my poem "Around" is a transcription of a dream. The first part of "Running" is a twisted version of a passage from Lee Smolin's The Trouble with Physics. "Concentratrion" ends with an impression of the way nature might measure and transcribe itself.



Around

Time is pleased
to draw itself
out,

permit itself
pendulous loops,

to allow them
meaning,

this meaning,

as it goes

along.

*

Chuck and I are pleased
to have found a spot
where my ashes can be scattered.
It looks like a construction site
now
but it's adjacent
to a breathtaking, rocky coast.
Chuck sees places
where he might snorkel.
We're being shown through
by a sort of realtor.
We're interested but can't get her
to fix the price.

*

"The future
is all around us."

It's a place,

anyplace
where we don't exist.

Running

Let's say the universe
is made of strings
that "vibrate" or thrash
in an effort

to minimize the area
that is the product
of their length
and their duration in time.

*

Let's call contraction
"focus"
or "pleasure."

*

You'll step forward,
I know,

into the contracting
light

ready to like
anyone.

How far will you get?

You'll be far ahead
and distracted.

By what?

I won't see it.

I'll be running to catch up.

I'll know you
by your willingness.

I won't believe
that what's continual
is automatic

Concentrate

The point at which
you can get
your eyelids to drift,

tethered,
like seaweed,

by thinking about it.
Then imagine yourself eyeless.

*

The spontaneity with which
a bubble breaks away,

flies to the surface
and pops

as if finding something out.

*

Now
in a vacuum

with virtuals
as probes

or as little
alarms
going off