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Two Poems

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The cormorants and the crows

I want to know where the central fold in our origami day
ran through the hours

the morning was fog making inkblots out of towering Douglas Firs
the evening a brief appearance of sun beneath the cloud layer backlighting power poles in the
alley

the morning was cormorants flocking at radar-avoiding height
the evening the crows returning to their spot near the freeway and Boundary Road

In between was the seal on the rocks and our crazy climb around to get a closer look
Your tall tale voice adding details that happened for sure

the morning was domestic and warm
the evening was scene after scene playing over in my head where you died

But in between was the seal, us worried for him on the rock, thinking his
movements meant distress
imagine what they think when they see us swimming

and in my evening mind, in between the seal and the sea
you didn't fall from the cliff
you became the seal, and dove into the green chop

to fish and find your way

History and science fiction can't prepare me

I'm worried that I'll become unmoored again
floating without even the threads of our settler past to secure me

And the peasants will be there when I land
like in *Andrei Rublev*

I'm worried that my soul is stretched too thin, wrapped and snagged around poles and on tree
branches across the world

I'm not going to be able to unwrap all of that in this lifetime and maybe not even the next

I'm worried for you and for our boy as we stare down the barrel of our own governments while
telling ourselves it can't get that bad

And the future history won't sound strange to those who live it

Because science fiction isn't history, and history can't be science fiction

I'm worried that the only thing I'll know how to do will be to run but not far enough

Another place and a new place and the far away place

Maybe it's all just running

But with my soul stretched so thin, I don't know how to look at anyone
and I know that I can't touch them

Because everything is a violation because there has been so much violation and the future
will be violation on a scale that we used to *do*, not be done

So now it's all *nolo me tangere* with a top knot and homo economicus evolves in the
behaviourist lab

Because the future will be violation on a scale that we used to

Another place and a new place and the far away race

I'm worried about you and our little boy getting tangled up in my too-thin soul, stretched across
a doorway above stairs or something like that

So I'm working to gather it all back in, like the skin on a man who has lost hundreds of pounds

I took a bunch of courses to try to sort it out, but they stretched my soul more and I stopped

I think sometimes that I'd know what to do if it all goes to shit
because I've been gathering clues and tips for the apocalypse

But science fiction and history are poor guides to the past and the future
despite their best intentions

BROOK PEARSON is a philosopher, scholar and poet who lives with his family in Vancouver where he teaches at the University of British Columbia. He is the author of *Corresponding Sense* (2001), and is particularly interested in the ways in which the ancient world continues in our own.