

RIPOSTE

Bryce Christensen

*“If a man avoids thinking about distant matters,
he will certainly have worries close at hand.”
—Confucius, *The Analects**

Some far-off time exhausts the sun’s last fire;
galactic winds disperse the final sparks.
The atoms born in flame, in ice expire,
as protons shatter into frozen quarks.

A thousand years degrade an empire’s pride
to crumbling ruins occupied by ghosts
who cannot fathom how their heroes died:
New Romes must fall beneath new barbarous hosts.

A hundred years suffice: our world is gone.
The faces we have loved all hide in graves,
while our remains feed nitrogen to lawn,
or oxide ash to hungry ocean waves.

Why scan the distant prospect? It’s just death.
Let’s cherish worries here. Let’s prize this breath.

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