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Crisis in the Present Tense

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CRISIS IN THE PRESENT TENSE

Sandra Starr

A summons
Her companion peeks through bars of light to reveal
A table beneath a canopy of cottonwoods.
An ivory face glows, a withered hand reaches out,
Isolation invites Death to tea.

Portly and rosaceous the "Preceptor of Life" salutes her with his silver
flask.

"Nothing for me madam, I travel with home made brew."
And he tipples the swift narcotic.
Intoxicated, Death's fingers encircle a shrunken arm,
As Isolation recoils.

Let us stroll beside these gnarled trunks and rippled waters.
"Where is your trust in blissful mortality?"
With one gesture, water spirals and time retreats.
Death reveals a mournful past.
And Isolation shivers.

Rather too wild? It was not always so.
As Narcissus seals his Songbird in a cocoon.
Quite like Satan, he torments her
With no connection but to himself.
Isolation grieves.

"Why Demise, my cousin, takes his son, and there is no pain."
"Ha!" Death tipples.
And sets the Songbird free.
Addicted,
Isolation offers Narcissus hot water for tea.

Sing. Sing to the rafters.
For once within the villain's grasp
Narcissus steals you back,
Reveling in gifts of love.
Isolation stirs.

Ripples of water turn silken,
And silence becomes the Songbird.
"Isolation, life is a puzzle, you are a missing piece.
May I offer you a tippie instead of tea?"