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Snowman argument

by Wilmer Mills

The snowman looks a little worse for wear,
Melting away from his intended ties,
However slim, to Man, to me; his hair
Made from a broken mop, his acorn eyes,
They cease to imitate their maker's face.
"Props in a childhood theater of lies,"
The poet said. It's true, we limn our race
In clay, paint, stone, and word, though each, like ice,
Forgets the living likenesses we trace,
As if the arts were nothing but a vice
Of verisimilitude, analogies
That don't ring true then fade to fail us twice.

But if our metaphors and similes
Are only simulacra we assign,
Does nature have its similarities
Apart from how we draw a common line?
If we were gone, would all our mirrors melt
To nothing like the snowman's vain design?
Dust in the window light where I had knelt
Appeared to ricochet at random, drifting,
Darting, lacking a pattern spun or spelt
From entropy except for how the sifting
Particles resembled swarms of gnats
Or microscopic life that's always shifting.

We don't need scientists who read the stats
And call the motion "Brownian" to see
That correspondences exist in cats

And rats despite the animosity
They show each other. I watch the snowman fade
To nothing, but what approximated me
Is similar to how my mind was made,
Imagined in an image I can know
Each time I see the “somethings” that have stayed
With parallels in sand or wood or snow.
I am most like a snowman in the sun,
And most alive, when, also melted low,
I sense affinity and joy, made one,
With whom I suffer in comparison.

Wilmer Mills (1969–2011) published the poetry collection *Light for the Orphans* in 2002.

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