Empire Burlesque

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News to Pluto

Do not, under any circumstances, bring up
*The Chuck Berry Sex Video*, for instance,
the news of which will never reach Pluto, one prays.
It may be true they’ve assigned undue
reverence for certain cultural ejecta (their hymns
are based on a Rick Wakeman solo project, it seems)
but when they point backward along the asymptote
through ice and dark matter to that speck of star as tiny as a nit,
our signal flailing against the noise,
and say, *Maybe something interesting’s happen there!*
just know there’s not enough gravity on Pluto
to hold more than one meaning at once, let alone its opposite.
Your irony is out their window. Tread lightly, in other words.
They really want to know.

And when, from your
great remove, and with a few dozen mouse-clicks,
you zoom in like a god, right down to their rooftops,
(at such proximity the resolution goes to shit,
& things begin to blur and get downright blobular),
the trick, then, of course is to jettison the fancy gadgetry
and hand the craft over to a poem

a door clicks
quietly, at one AM, the engine cut—
the sound of tires rolling on gravel to a stop,
(drogue chutes drifting through the pines
like hushed voices),
your eyes adjusting to the light

of Pluto,

when you land,
again, (and here’s the thing: it’s never the first time)
you do so, not because it’s right
or good, or because you hope to make amends,
or resolve a grudge or two,
or, in a weak moment, imagine that you’ve come
to deliver the celebrity commencement address
long overdue but finally bestowed,
nor have you come, as you start to hope,
looking down your derelict block,
because of some colossal administrative error, say,
some spectacularly maladroit transposition
of destinations (e.g. for Paris, Pluto).
On this point, I’ve got no lesson for you.
You’re here, as it starts to sink in (again)
for reasons that simply don’t apply
anywhere, which is the guiding prerogative
of a darkened and now decommissioned planet.
And it’s not your place to tell them what you’ve heard.
The news to Pluto will arrive soon enough
and won’t be what they don’t already know.