

Richard Meyer

Black Hole

Darkness Visible, Finally: Astronomers Capture First Ever Image of a Black Hole (The New York Times, 10 April 2019)

Past swirling galaxies, through time and space
we searched, then finally glimpsed the great abyss —
a cyclopean eye that lacks a face,
and now it's looking looking back at us.

We squint and pry beyond the light year haze
to plumb the bottom of its mystery,
but it returns an ever darker gaze
beneath which blackness we can never see.

Surrounded by a flaming oval ring,
extinction's portal, vast and pitiless,
the gaping chasm swallows everything,
collapsing all to utter nothingness.

That dreadful eye, a black unblinking hole,
stares back, devoid of mind and heart and soul.

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Conflagration

The gargoyles grin, engulfed in smoke and flame,
and turn their backs on ravaged Notre-Dame.
Not God's unbending will or Mary's grace
can spare the burning of this Gothic place.

A crowd looks on. Some murmur, gasp, or shout.
A few kneel down and pray the rosary.
The spire flares, then topples like a tree.
Rose windows shimmer, glow from inside out.
The roof collapses, crashes to the nave.
Slim buttresses hold up a limestone grave.
For TV news a prime catastrophe:
this medieval monument ablaze.

The fire halts. What can be saved they'll save
and build again on top of what survives.
We turn away, resume our little lives
upon the scaffold of these numbered days
where things are burning down in other ways.