

# Stumble Between Two Stars

*Christopher Buckley*

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*Whoever wears a wristwatch and has seen God*

—Cesar Vallejo

Each day the sea turns out the schedule of death  
as I walk by—kelp, crab shells, razor clams—

And I can no more decipher it than the cuneiform  
of eucalyptus leaves pressed into the ancient

tablet of the sky. Nevertheless, I am here, available  
to the routines of wind that know me

by my throat, the thin skin around which it laces  
its fingers each evening. Will I survive

the next assassination of a star, the slow death of air,  
or today our new neighbor cutting down

the magnolia in his backyard because he lacks any sense  
of community and won't sacrifice a few

minutes to live among leaves? May his roof rot and  
leave him to a merciless sun. Nothing

is disguised by clouds. The finches, now absent there,  
have no recourse given the fortunes

of the earth. I too long for a lost portion of the sky,  
stare off into space, and expect nothing . . .

at the same time conjecture sifts down as knowledge and  
I find it harder to breathe. Each morning

the weeds of my mind take root along the roadside,  
and I take up the tangential lamentations

of my kind, but am ignored even by the finches who  
dissolve into thin air. I'm like the astronomer

who, looking through a telescope all his life, eventually  
expects to see God at the other end.

Who loves us when someone else is wearing our coat,  
our best shoes? What will it matter then

if it's raining, if the sun is shining, or the moon—  
if each wave mumbles my middle name?

Even the soft machinery of starlight breaks down in Time,  
and the flies of heaven will always find us.