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## The Old Philosopher

Linda Sillitoe

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# The Old Philosopher

Linda Sillitoe

It is worth the coin in pain to wrench my head,  
confronting the repeated noise of bird  
that interrupts internal tedium.

There. Upon that slanting post a red  
smudge between dark wings, a robin's word  
to anyone, "here I am, I am,"

is the second thing I like. The first is this:  
my cell is three doors past the delivery room  
and every child drenched in sudden air  
who finds his toes unraveled from his hair,  
hands flapping no boundaries, the womb  
well lost, wails his knowledge, I exist!

*My numbed and stricken wife, for my pleading  
blinked one eye to affirm identity  
true as one Indian intricately beading  
a bricklayer slapping strophe after strophe  
like a typewriter bleed blow breath  
build brick whack blood death*

These thoughts unlatch the joinings of the walls  
which float away. The sounds of bird and squalling  
infant keen the idiom of skies—  
not of stars, but of unseen thinkers differing  
as star from star. One like a comet falls  
in wingless flight, a newborn human cries.

My voice is mine, my hands grope loosening air,  
within my brain a heart, within an ear  
which hears another voice. Know that I  
am Alpha and Omega, Lord of sky  
and Earth, beginning and end, exalt and damn.

*The robin spoke the word: Ego, I am.*

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Linda Sillitoe is a graduate of the University of Utah and a widely-published poet.