

Jessica Jacobs

And I, i did not know it.

While galaxies surged and flared above, Jacob
saw only what needed to be done—he smoothed
his bedroll, tidied his sandals, all the small things

before sleep—his lamp’s glow a shield
against the unfathomable dark. When he
lay back, though, despair slid over him

like a stone so heavy it would take three men
to shoulder it from the mouth of the well.
Yet as smoke spiraled from the candle’s wick,

patient stars lustered up like a forest of trembling,
luminous leaves, like fluorescent reefs
in the deepest sea, and the earth tipped, plunging

him into sky; angels scaled the ladder
of his spine; his body hollowed, a conduit
for the divine. Waking, he saw what had been

there all along—quartz veining the stone
beneath his head, the tear in his bedroll
darned by his mother, how his sandals held

the press of his soles; he saw
the site holy and said, *God is in this place*
and I, I did not know it. But why the double

I, the nervous stutter? In that moment of sight,
it was not God but himself he’d unnoticed—
freeing him, for an instant, from the self’s hold.

Even our feeble flames are enough
to divert us from seeing,
so we access God by unknowing the I,

taking us back to ourselves, fully,
for the first time, in a place made holy
by simply being seen.

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