

Richard Jackson

an excerpt from

Incompleteness

What would you call his feeling for the words
That keep him rich and orphaned and beloved?

—William Meredith, d. 2007

If we know Gödel, we know every bird has a ghost in its mouth.
We remember we are dead so much longer than we are alive,
that there is always some truth we know but can't prove.
Some things will never stand for anything because they are
too much themselves. You can say the universe is
a blanket dimpled with planets and stars, but you still
won't understand the gravity that shapes it. There is
always a beat of the heart the clocks don't count.
Some things don't even stand for themselves, as now,
when I'm trying to tell you about the death of a man whose soul is
the distant humming astronomers once thought they heard.
I can't worry about the way the scythe of the moon rips
through one darkness only to reveal a deeper darkness,
nor about the disappearing honeybees that threaten
our food supply. Anything complete is by definition
incomplete.