

POETRY

# The Particulars of Time

by Lyde Gerard Villanueva



"The Going Away Mountain" by Karen Fitzgerald

When I think of immortality,  
it makes me want to disregard time as a concept,  
something imagined that is measured in numbers.  
I turn off my phone, remove my watch,  
hide the clock on my laptop.

The Amondawa tribe waits for the seasons to change.  
They don't have a word for time.  
No age, no birthdays, no Tuesday, 9:25 in the morning.  
An infectious prion can sleep in a body for decades.  
No incubation period can tell when the Kuru disease will attack.  
Limbs will suddenly shiver and tremble, signaling the body's demise.

In 1965, in a TV show called *I've Got a Secret*,  
young Ray Kurzweil played a short musical composition  
on a piano. A former Miss America  
asked him if he composed it. Ray answered no,  
but actor Henry Morgan guessed the secret right.  
A machine composed the music.  
Several decades after, Ray appeared on TV again,  
with a thinning hairline and rustic voice,  
and claimed that by 2045  
humans would achieve immortality.  
When an anthurium closes its petal—  
glossy and heart-shaped, sometimes velvety—  
it is anticipating the coming of rain.