Graphene

Clifton Holt Jolley

Between the eye and what the eye sees is seeing. The light that knots believers to God is the slenderest thread. To kiss is not a kiss, as easily blown to one’s beloved on a breath as put upon a mouth, a forehead, a hand, a breast, and ever without a measurable mark, a remnant to be weighed. None are counted by that counting that measures least to be Graphene (or rewarded, as the case may be). Perhaps it’s simply what doesn’t stick. Graphene would not have been refined into this thinnest wonder were it not for methodology: tape on tape transferring the shadow of it, stronger than the shade of trees or buildings or anything made of not-Graphene.

But without a Cossack to make more of it, to find a sticky stuff to shred the wind, the light, the water to which ships go down and elemental that bends us to the eternal flux of one into another, who can know how much more likely to plumb and set upright the world is what we have not yet refined: transparent, so we cannot see.

Graphene is the thinnest, strongest thing (if you believe the recent progeny of science), a Philosopher’s Stone and alchemy of magicians less likely than Newton or da Vinci or the Greeks. A single atom deep, deeper than previous physicists could reach, imagination Scotch Taped by improbable geeks, the fin of a serpent of a sea so much increased the ancients named it “Deep” and warned us by charts (after anyone had other use of them to go to sea in ships or wonder at the edges of the world): “Beyond here there be serpents.”
Serpents are the stuff of the unseen:  
Christ and Lucifer, both of whom we keen.  
When Moses lifted up his staff to part the sea,  
the miracle was what might have been, war  
and victory or defeat the intention of a serpent.  
“Beyond here there be dragons,” which have wings,  
whose gift is not treasure or to fly or to define  
the limit of things, but the mystery of having seen.

Even if you could find wetter water into  
which to cast and deeper seas, Graphene  
is a net too unlikely to catch fish or squid,  
neither copper nor iron nor true alchemy,  
but our most recent most thing: most strong,  
most thin, most least, making of it mostly  
air, as is the most of all of us, the empty  
in-between that makes us most like everything.