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Discussion With an Expert on Metamorphosis

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Discussion with An Expert On Metamorphosis*

I explain to her that when anthropomorphism
Was new to the human psyche, some remnants
Of animism persisted. Take Poseidon's beard,
For example; why do you think it's so wavy?

To emulate the sea, she says,
Playful yet astute,
Half-a-grilled-cheese sandwich
Borne up in her gesticulation of waves.

She is nine years of age.

I conclude that nothing is ever
Completely lost in transition,
For she suffers her own changes,
Her appendages lengthening,

Her ribs separating--
Growing pains, the doctor consoles,
A growth-spurt morphosis rocketing
Her between natural milestones.

I also once told her that as we age,
Our bodies change so much, our cells dead,
Clones in their place, that every seven years
We are like new people.

I regret having told her this.

She weeps some nights
Over places she has lived before--
Her connection to various rooms,
Toys misplaced, neighbors she has known--
All severed nomadically in transit,

Already the anxiety of being
A ten-year-old bears down on her;
For good measure, while biting her nails,
She hordes every toy and trinket,
Rocks, even, for she knows too well
The sad chasm of loss.

When she makes her inquiry to me of Arachne,
She asks if the transformation of the hapless seamstress
Into the first spider immortalized the otherwise mortal woman.
After all, do we not see spiders everywhere?
Is Arachne herself present somehow in this ubiquity?

She has finished her sandwich, and I my lunch,
And the urgency of schedule
Pulls us from this quiet moment,
As it has done so many times before.

No, sweet child, I promise you this:
No mortal pain is forever.

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