

Luke Fischer

## Horizon of Alps (*K*)

At the Château de Lavigny, Switzerland

Always at the boundary of vision, of thought  
even when we look the other way. Though  
often concealed in cloud and mist  
veiled in haze, we know they endure.  
Seemingly impenetrable matter  
we sense a hidden truth, that they are minds  
absorbed in contemplation.

On halcyon mornings Lac Léman  
almost renders them as they are  
in an image on diaphanous depth.  
Their peaks shorn of vegetation, sheer faces  
of stone, absolute architecture, prefigurations  
of the crystals they hold.

Frozen tsunamis, primeval modernists  
their abstraction rises above the lake and  
its scattered sails—white chips in blue paint—  
above the foothills' sprawl of villages, the tangle  
of forests and human lives, above emotion.

Resembling a heterodox order of monks  
great mathematicians, geometers whose bible  
was Euclid, their enlightenment consisted  
in continuous meditation on the axiom  
of axioms, the formula of themselves.

With a sister order they communicate  
in antiphon. Snow imparts: *Out of moisture*

*air and cold we make your structures light,  
lighter than the empty bones of the tiny birds  
that nest in your pockets. They reply:  
We keep you from dissolving, lend  
you a feeling of permanence.*

At times dark clouds envelop the summits,  
tense as the disputes at the First Council of Nicaea.  
On holidays the iconostasis opens  
revealing Mont Blanc, the hooded high priest,  
as censers spread their smoke  
around the lower pinnacles.

Still epics, skeletons of mythic creatures, crystal skulls  
pure forms, the moral law, metalogic, consonants  
isolated from vowels. Your secret name:  
the voiceless occlusive  
*k*

Note:

The 'k' in the title and at the end of this poem should be pronounced like the 'c' in 'cat' but without any vowel sound succeeding it.

'Horizon of Alps (K)' was previously published in *A Personal History of Vision* (Crawley, WA: UWA Publishing, 2017).