

Alex Skovron

Libretto

Time is a trickster: being nothing, it promises everything.

—Philip Salom, *The Returns*

Crossing into the fourth quarter of our days,
we scale the fortress of memory again,
cross-examine the misty panoramas flickering
below, in and out of view. The trick is
to pause time, like Mozart, which is effortless

and impossible. A shutter can trap a chance
red-handed, then arrest it, but the suspect
will plead the Fifth—tell you nothing
you didn't already know from the mugshot,
its features flattened in two dimensions.

Forget AI: this is serious. There is no point
of entry—flip the picture how you will,
it won't twist into Möbius, twirl a wormhole
for you to whisk into. There is left, just,
philosophy's mixed consolation of Time as—

our true Creator, notating us like a lover,
and we the librettist, steering our *opera seria*
between desire and despair. From above,
our history is translucent, yet we return
nightly to what our flawed dreams project

in the opacity of our cave—as facsimile,
fable, or a headlong flight from the seraglio
of ourself. Time, that nothing, sustains us
even so: a suspended cadence, its Everything
promise no trick, but our singular treasure.