**Black Holes Here on Earth**

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At what point does an unsuspecting vole reach the event horizon

of its own demise? It's not as it passes the hook of the owl's beak,

for death likely came as the bird's powerful claws first pinned

the vole to the damp leaf litter. No, the moment the owl's lurid eyes

make its mark, the story is told, any hope of return vanishingly

small. That is the moment when the vole's fate is usually lost

to the fierce gravitational pull of the owl's intent.

I think owls know a thing or two about black holes, their prey

quickly dispatched and compacted into impossibly small pellets:

tiny skulls, claws, feathers, bone. Several tiny creatures crushed

dispassionately into a spiral both intimate and forsaken.

This singular bird loves to hold the darkness, storing dense parcels

in a hidden vent until the urge to hunt and eat requires expulsion,

the forest floor nothing more than a common spittoon.

I speak of owls, but in truth, I've seen black holes at work in humans.

The rabbit hole of an obsessive idea, the loss of balance in the face

of an outsized love, the warping of self that comes from trauma.

Worse still, the stark internal paralysis from old habits that can't

be shed—trapped in the unflinching gaze of a temporal universe

that will pull us in tightly, then just as coolly, let us go.