

MASTER THE CONTENT



Shelving the Future

The Poets retell the Story

Armando Rodríguez

Introduction

In a world obsessed with what's next, we often overlook the power of what's already been said.

This project began with a single poem I wrote—"The Librarians of the Future"—a tribute to those who do not clamor for the spotlight of invention, but labor in the quiet, sacred task of arrangement. The poem sparked an unexpected and profound response. I extended an invitation to poets, artists, and thinkers across generations, living and imagined, to take this core idea and rewrite it in their own voices. What followed was a symphony of reimaginings—each poem a unique riff on the same melody, each author channeling the spirit of remembrance through their own stylistic lens.

From Blake to Bukowski, from Sappho to Rupi Kaur, this collection is less a cacophony and more a chorus—one message voiced through many mouths: **The future does not belong to the loudest innovator, but to the quiet arranger.**

The poems in this book are fictional retellings, tributes written *in the style of* great poets across centuries. Each piece honors the discipline of those who sort the chaos, who return sacred truths to their rightful place, who resist the forgetfulness of our age by choosing memory, order, and preservation over noise and novelty.

You will not find here a celebration of spectacle. You will find reverence for the humble architect of clarity—the librarian, the archivist, the organizer of the soul's debris.

This is a book about resistance—literary resistance. A resistance against the tyranny of amnesia.

May it inspire you not to chase every new spark, but to tend the fire that was already burning long before we arrived.

Armando Rodríguez

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SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE LIBRARIANS OF THE FUTURE”

“The wealth of the future will not be made by those who create new knowledge; it will be gathered by those who organize it.” - Armando Rodriguez

A million minds have mined the past,
Their wisdom deep, their questions vast.
The scrolls are full, the shelves are tight—
But chaos hides the truest light.

We crave new sparks, some magic flame,
But overlook the quiet game:
To weave what's known with care and grace,
And place each thought in just the place.

It's not the ones who first invent,
But those who map where others went—
Who trace the gold through cluttered lore,
And open wide the insight door.

The books are written, codes are laid,
The notes of genius all well-played.
Yet riches lie in those who see
The harmony in memory.

So stack the blocks with purpose clear,
Arrange the stars that once drew near.
The builders now wear glasses bright—
Their wealth is order, not just might.

Don't chase the wind for something new;
The future's built by sorting through.
The minds that thrive will not just know—
They'll **organize** and make it grow.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ARCHIVIST’S FLAME”

in the style of William Blake

Behold! The towers made of lore,
Where echoes hum from days before.
The stars of thought have brightly burned,
Yet scatter now, untouched, unturned.

The scribe who seeks a novel birth
May miss the gold beneath the earth.
For wisdom sleeps in tangled thread—
Not lost, but cluttered, not yet dead.

Not he who writes the newest page,
But he who tames the knowledge-age,
Shall wear the crown and hold the key
To shape mankind’s deep destiny.

The angel came with files in hand,
And whispered low a bold command:
"Let chaos yield to sacred plan,
And wealth shall flow from ordered man."

So rise, O soul, and not to chase
The winds of ever-shifting grace—
But gather thought, and bind the flame,
And earn the Archivist’s true name.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“FRUIT FROM THE TREE OF TIME”

in the style of Henry David Thoreau

Not all who wander seek the new,
Nor every treasure lies in dew.
The forest holds no fresher sound
Than thoughts once dropped upon the ground.

Men dig and delve for virgin gold,
Yet pass the map the wise once rolled.
In every leaf of time's old tree,
There hangs the fruit of clarity.

To know is noble, yes indeed,
But nobler still: to sort, to heed —
To bring to form what once was raw,
And sketch the mind's unspoken law.

The builder of tomorrow's land
Will wield no hammer in his hand.
He'll gather stones from paths once walked,
And build where older minds once talked.

In stillness, order grows from wild;
The scholar is the forest's child.
And he who tames the roaring stream
May shape the world, not chase the dream.

Thus let us pause and look around —
The truth is not in what's unfound,
But in the knowing where to look,
And penciling margins in the book.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“ON THE GATHERERS”

in the style of Sappho

The mind is not barren –
stars crowd the sky,
too many to name,
too beautiful to hold.

But some, with gentle fingers,
trace their patterns –
make meaning
where chaos danced.

Wisdom does not bloom
like spring's first flower –
it is the garland
woven from petals long fallen.

I do not need more flame –
only a hearth
that keeps the old fire
from forgetting its warmth.

Lovers of knowledge,
you need not invent –
but remember,
and arrange.

There is music
in the placing of stones.
And wealth
in the one
who names
what already sings.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“ON THE ORDER OF WISDOM”

in the style of Virgil

Arms not I sing, nor wrath of gods above,
But quiet strength that gathers ancient love.
For knowledge vast, like rivers wide and free,
Must find their course, or drown in vanity.

Not he who digs where none have dug before,
But he who maps the mines of yesteryore –
This is the builder of a wealth more true,
Who sorts the old, and makes the world anew.

Behold the scrolls! In countless halls they sleep,
The thoughts of men in parchment buried deep.
Yet gold lies there – unshaped, unseen, unsought,
Awaiting hands who think, but do not *ought*.

You, future sons of toil and tempered grace,
Who chart the past to lift the human race –
Yours is the wealth, though no new flame you start:
You light the lamps by crafting every part.

Thus shall you rise – not by invention’s flame,
But by the sacred ordering of name.
O Muse, let this be told in ages long:
That wisdom lies in *structure*, not just *song*.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE KEEPER OF KNOWLEDGE”

in the style of Dante

Not he who seeks to forge a newer light,
But he who orders stars in proper frame,
Shall guide the world through ignorance and night.

The scrolls lie hushed, yet burn with ancient flame,
And fools ignore the wealth beneath the dust,
While wise men bind the chaos into name.

The seas of thought are deep, as thought is just,
But deeper still the hand that charts the wave —
To sift, to hold, to anchor what we trust.

I saw, beyond the veil, a golden nave
Where thinkers dwelt who catalogued the sky —
They spoke not new, but gave the old its grave.

And one cried out: “O soul, do not pass by!
The maker’s echo fades without a scribe.
To order is to honor, not to lie.”

So let the future’s noblest human tribe
Be not inventors — drunk with fleeting thrill —
But gatherers who give the truth its bribe.

In Paradise, I saw with holy will,
That knowledge, once forgotten, bears a cost —
Yet ordered truth can bend the nations still.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE CLERK’S LITTLE LESSON”

in the style of Chaucer

Whan bookes olde lie stuffed upon the shelve,
And ev’ry clerk doth scribble for hymselfe,
Yet cometh there, not he that seeketh more,
But he that sorteth well the good of yore.

For wisdom is not bred in haste or pride,
But lyk a cart doth rolle with truthes inside.
And he that ordereth thought with gentle hand,
Hath richer purse than gold or fertile land.

The fool doth babble “new!” with ev’ry breeth,
Yet buildeth not, but wandereth till his deeth.
The sage, he stacketh knowlege like fine wine,
And draweth cups when stars refuse to shine.

So marke me wel, ye scholars yong and olde:
He who doth store is worth his weight in golde.
For welth of morrowe, sure as springe doth run,
Is made not newe, but from what’s alreadie done.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“ON THE GENTLE ART OF ORDER”

in the style of Shakespeare

Who seeks the future's crown with blazing flame,
And dreams to birth a thought none dared before,
May win a fleeting torch, a whisper'd name,
Yet leave behind a scattered, silent lore.

For oft the wisest work is not to forge,
But gather sparks long hid in ash and stone.
To thread the stars and build the scholar's gorge,
And give dead voices purpose of their own.

Let others chase the winds of something new,
While thou, more bold, dost chart what once was made.

A steward's hand, a map of ancient hue,
Shall guide the age through wisdom unbetrayed.

The mind that orders – humble, clear, and true –
Doth make more gold than all the alchemist's brew.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“ON THE TASK ETERNAL”

in the style of John Milton

Not he who first the spark ignites is blest
Above all others, nor he who dares
To scale invention's peak with hasty feet.
But rather, he whose patient eye discerns
The paths already paved by ancient thought,
And sets them in a pattern firm and true.

For knowledge, like a fallen host, lies strewn
Across the fields of time – its arms forgot,
Its banners trampled, buried, or misplaced.
Yet still it shines, if one with steady hand
And virtue high shall gather and align
The fragments into form.

These are the sons
Of lasting fame, who build not Babel's tower,
But temples founded on the stones of old –
Each word a brick, each name a measured beam.
They do not cry, “Behold! A thing unknown!”
But whisper, “Lo, what wisdom we have lost –
Let us restore, let us remember well.”

So wealth shall rise not from Promethean theft,
Nor from the chaos of unbridled flame,
But from the sacred labor of the mind
That puts all things in order, as of old
The Lord Himself did speak: “Let there be light,”
And separated day from formless night.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE LIBRARIAN’S GOSPEL”

in the style of John Donne

We think we rise by newness, yet we fall
In novelty’s deceitful, gilded hall.
For Truth hath walked this earth long ere our birth,
And knowledge, scattered wide, doth crowd the earth.

The stars need not new light, but eyes to trace
Their elder courses through the vaulted space.
What use is flame if no one keeps the chart,
Or binds the wind within the scholar’s heart?

I seek not to be first, but to be just –
To sift the gold from centuries of dust.
Let fools cry “new!” while standing on the bones
Of saints whose thoughts outlive their marble stones.

Lord, grant me not invention's crown alone,
But make me steward of the truths well-known.
For Thou didst order chaos, Word from breath,
And gave us form from formlessness and death.

So let me not make thunder, but arrange
The echoes – resurrect what time made strange.
For to remember rightly is divine –
I trace Thy truth, not with a pen, but spine.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“UPON THE ARCHIVIST”

in the style of Andrew Marvel

Let others dig for truths in virgin clay,
And boast of wonders none shall use or weigh.
Their thoughts, like meteors, blaze and disappear,
Too bright to last, too distant to be clear.

But he, more wise, who rakes the ancient floor,
And sets in order what was known before –
Shall find a wealth more lasting and more true,
Than all the baubles fancy could pursue.

What boots it, friend, to coin a shining name,
If none shall know the value of its frame?
The stars themselves did not arise anew,
But order taught us where – and what – they do.

The world's a book with pages torn and curled,
And he a prince who catalogs that world.
He builds no tower, yet guides a thousand roads –
A silent king among forgotten codes.

So praise not he who shouts a novel tone,
But he who makes old wisdom still our own.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“ON ORDER AND THE NEW PRETENDERS”

in the style of Alexander Pope

What need have we of thoughts entirely new,
When ancient minds beheld the selfsame view?
The truths men seek lie strewn on every page—
But few there are who sort the scrolls of age.

A thousand sparks may flare and fade in night,
Yet order turns them to enduring light.
'Tis not invention makes the wise appear,
But placing gems so every eye sees clear.

The smatterer cries, “Behold, a thought divine!”
Not knowing Plato wrote it, line for line.
While true discerners, skilled in mental art,
Arrange the parts to elevate the heart.

He builds no tower who lays a brick awry,
Though loud he boast, his folly swells the sky.
But he who builds with measured, steady hand
Shall see his name and labor ever stand.

Let others chase the phantoms of the new —
The wise compose, connect, distill, review.
For riches lie not in the bold parade,
But in the structure silently well-laid.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE GATHERER’S WEALTH”

in the style of Robert Burns

Some seek to blaze a bonnie trail,
Wi’ thoughts sae new they dinna fail –
Yet leave behind a scattered heap,
That no man minds, nor any keep.

But he wha kens the auld and wise,
And sets it fair afore our eyes –
He builds a hoosie, snug and neat,
Where truth and learning snugly meet.

A guid new thocht may catch the flame,
But wha can mind it wi’ nae frame?
The gatherer’s hand, sae still and keen,
Makes sense o’ things that once had been.

He minds the sayings o’ the past,
And binds them sure, sae they may last.
He doesna shout nor claim the sky –
But lays the brick where bricks should lie.

O wealth will come, nae frae the loud,
But frae the wise wha ken the crowd.
Sae bless the man wha stacks the lore –
He builds the vaults that hold much more.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“ON THE GENTLE ART OF ORDERING WISDOM”

in the style of William Wordsworth

Not always must the mind leap forth in search
Of things unknown or never seen before.
For truth lies not in novelty alone,
But in the shaping of what once was known.

The tree doth grow not by some stranger seed,
But by the tending hand, the thoughtful care —
So too, the soul is nourished not by more,
But by arranging what the heart has learned.

How vast the fields where thought has come to rest,
Like fallen leaves upon an autumn ground;
And yet, among them, one with careful gaze
May gather gold where others saw but brown.

The poet's wealth is not the blaze of fire,
But kindled light from embers long ago.
And he who puts to order sacred things —
Becomes himself a builder of the world.

Let this be known: the future shall belong
Not to the bold who shout for something new,
But to the calm who trace the silent stars
And speak the names that time had half forgot.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

"THE HARMONIST"

in the style of Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The world is full of thoughts long spoken once,
Yet scattered, like the leaves on autumn's breath.

New voices rise, and still they echo old –
Repeating truths unmindful of their source.

O give me not the thrill of virgin fire,
But rather let me walk the temple's halls,
And light again the lanterns left behind,
Their oil not spent, but spilled for lack of care.

For wisdom is no storm of sudden flame –
It is a steady star the sailor seeks,
And he who marks its place upon the chart
Saves more from shipwreck than the one who sings.

Creation hath its splendor – but to tend,
To prune, to gather, to align the beams
Of mind and memory – this is power too.
A quiet might, more holy for its hush.

Let fancy chase her meteors if she must,
But let the wise man tend the ancient sky.
For there is wealth in order, depth in form,
And he who shapes the known gives it new life.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ARCHITECTS OF THOUGHT”

in the style of Shelly

Men cry for light, and yet they close their eyes,
Desiring suns while casting down the stars.
They heap new words on ruinous disguise,
And call it truth – while wrecking ancient jars.

But lo! The wise walk not with noisy feet,
Nor chase the shadows of invention’s flame –
They tend the altar, sweep the scattered wheat,
And feed the world by ordering the same.

Shall chaos wear a crown? Shall frenzy rule,
While knowledge, like Prometheus, lies in chain?
Nay! Let the gatherers, silent and cool,
Unbind the fire, and set the mind again.

O gentle hands that place what time forgot,
You are the builders of the coming age.
Not by invention, but discerning thought,
You calm the storm and turn the scholar’s page.

The future is no forge of something new,
But resurrection of the buried true.
And he is richest, noblest, most profound –
Who lifts the past and gives it holy ground.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“UPON THE QUIET MAKERS OF THE MIND”

in the style of Keats

Not they who blaze with words unknown to speech,
Nor those who seek to coin the virgin name –
But they who tend the thought within its reach,
Who sort the stars and give the wild its frame.

The flame may dazzle, but it does not last;
The comet dies, the garden slow endures.
And truth, once found, when handled not too fast,
Rests richer still in order's patient cures.

O let me walk where elder thinkers dwelt,
And set their scrolls like jewels in their place –
For there is wealth in knowing what was felt,
And beauty shines in structure's calm embrace.

To shape what *is*, not chase what cannot be,
Is genius too – and sets the spirit free.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ARCHIVIST”

in the style of Edgar Allan Poe

In chambers vast where shadows creep,
Where thoughts lie buried, cold and deep,
There walks a soul with lantern bright—
Not seeking new, but sorting light.

The dreamers rave, the madmen cry,
“Behold! A flame to split the sky!”
Yet fade they do, like ghost and breath,
Their noise no match for ordered death.

But he—the quiet, pallid one,
Whose work is never truly done—
He binds the stars in perfect thread,
He speaks with voices long since dead.

O not invention, loud and wide,
But stillness where the truths abide;
The keeper of the flame grown old
Shall turn the scattered into gold.

In ruined minds and echo'd halls,
He hears the past, and from it calls
A wealth not made by forging fire—
But by the hand that dares inquire.

And lo! That hand, both pale and wise,
Shall lift the world with ordered eyes.

The wealth of future time is found
Where silence sings and thoughts are bound.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE QUIET WORK”

in the style of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Not all who build must quarry stone,
Or shape the forge with fire alone.
Some labor where no trumpet sounds,
And still their work the world surrounds.

The loud may chase the gleam of new,
And cry their visions bold and true.
But oft forgotten is the grace
Of one who sets each thought in place.

The keeper of the written page,
The steward of the thoughtful age—
He does not seek the blinding spark,
But tends the coals, and feeds the dark.

The knowledge buried, lost, or torn,
He gathers, mends, and makes reborn.
And by his hand the mind shall grow,
As rivers from old fountains flow.

O wealth shall come to such as these,
Whose craft is quiet expertise—
Who do not shout, but truly know
The seeds we reap are those we sow.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE GENTLEMEN WHO CATALOGUED THE LIGHT”

in the style of Emily Dickinson

We do not need – Discovery –
The Map – was made – Before –
The Stars – have Letters – Writ in them –
We only – keep the Score –

The Novelty – is Vanity –
If Memory – be Lost –
The Mind is richer – not for Gold –
But what it – Gathered – First –

A Whisper – is a Library –
If – Placed – upon a Shelf –
A Poem – not invented –
But – Dusted – by itself –

I’d rather – Know the Order –
Than kindle – some New Flame –
The Keeper’s Work – is not to Shout –
But – to Remember – Name.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“TO THE ARRANGER OF STARS”

in the style of Walt Whitman

I do not sing today of the inventor –
The wild-eyed herald of novelties, bursting into the street.

I sing the one who stands in the shadowed stacks,
Whose fingers caress the spines of the old books,
Who maps the constellations already above us.

The future does not hunger for new fire,
But for the firewood gathered – stacked – made ready.

O namer of names! O tender of memory!

You build the library of the soul –

And I, Walt, lift my hat to you.

What is wisdom, if not arrangement?
What is a nation, if not the poem of its people – organized?

The nurse arranges the herbs; the carpenter lays the beam;

And you, quiet arranger of knowledge –

You frame the temple where all may enter.

Let others chase the lightning –

You hold the lantern.

And I see you, brother!

And I call you rich.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE KEEPER’S GRACE”

in the style of Christina Rossetti

Not with a cry nor trumpet-call,
Nor flame that leaps upon the wall—
But with a lamp, and steady hand,
He builds what others understand.

He need not seek a stranger star,
But walks where wiser footsteps are.

He binds the pages others lose,
And gives old truth its proper shoes.

The world is full—too full to hold—
Of thoughts once bright, now dim and cold.
Yet one who loves them tends their flame,
And speaks again the ancient Name.

No wealth is his of sudden fame,
No newness crowned with fleeting claim.
But rich is he who sets in place
The wisdom time cannot erase.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

"THE SCHOLAR'S TASK"

in the style of Matthew Arnold

They praise the firebrand and the restless mind,
The shout for progress, and the march of change.

But in the clamor something still is lost –
The sacred hush, the voice that keeps the past.

For wisdom is not born with every age,
But carried forward – fragile, worn, and deep –
A chain unbroken by the thoughtful hand,
Though others trample links to forge their own.

The work is not to dazzle or to shock,
But to preserve, interpret, and arrange;
To lift from ash the embers still aglow,
And set them where the next may warm their hands.

O let the builder of tomorrow's mind
Not boast of novelty, but of recall –
Of gathering truths, long scattered in the wind,
And giving back what time might soon erase.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE KEEPER’S PRAISE”

in the style of Gerard Manley Hoptins

Glory be to God for gatherers grim,
For sorters of splendor, for archivists’ hymn—
Who marshal the mindfields, who bind and align
The once-blown blossoms of thought’s design.

Not blaze of invention!—flashy, fleet—
But fire held slow in the furnace seat.
These are the saints of the second grace,
Who find the form in the fallen place.

For truth once uttered is not truth retained
Till some soul stores it, deep and trained.
Not he who shouts, “Lo! A light anew!”
But he who says, “I made clear your view.”

The wealth of the world is not always born—
But gathered from gardens raked and shorn.
These—these are the keepers of gold divine,
Who lift the lost into ordered line.

Ah! Praise the hand that arranges the stars—
For even the angels are counted in bars.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

‘THE KEEPERS OF KNOWLEDGE’

in the style of Paul Verlaine

It is not flame – too bright, too vain –
That brings tomorrow’s gold.
But shadow’s hand, the soul’s refrain,
That combs what once was told.

New cries take flight like careless birds
In wind they cannot guide –
But order speaks in softer words,
Where scribes in quiet bide.

He does not build – but lights again
The words long left behind.
He lays his stones beside the stream
That runs through human mind.

Let riches crown the gentle wise
Who braid the past anew –
And out of chaos, calmly rise
A truth both old and true.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ALCHEMIST OF THOUGHT”

in the style of Charles Baudelaire

In the sick city where dreams are erased,
Where progress moans – proud, yet void of memory –
A man, pale and slow, collects the scattered thoughts –
Sacred debris from an age drunk on forgetting.

He shouts not. He invents nothing. He arranges.

In warm ash he seeks the fire again.
While the drunk man runs toward glittering lies,
He alone knows proportion and the center.

Old words, dead books – he touches them not to mourn,

But to make them visible once more.
In every trace – a pattern. In every voice,
An echo returned gently to the drawer.

O you, shameless future – so hungry to forge!
You will think yourself creator – yet he came before.

For it is the arranger, the patient sculptor,
Who makes the world a temple – or an idea.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ARRANGER”

in the style of Arthur Rimbaud

I have seen the madmen, naked with pens,
Scribbling stars they never named.
I have heard the prophets vomit thunder,
And call it truth—
But truth slipped beneath the carpet
With the crumbs and roaches.

It is not new fire we need—
It is a furnace door that stays shut.
The world already burns.

You!
Silent one—
You with your cursed alphabet drawers,
You are the assassin of the abyss!
You chain the storm to a stanza.
You pin the butterfly to the blackboard
And whisper, “Here. Look. It’s always been here.”

The fools want fireworks.
You build constellations
From the bones of forgotten words.

What is wealth?
It is the library
Arranged by a mad monk
With bleeding eyes—
Laughing in the dark
While the world screams for noise.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“L’ORDRE”

in the style of S Stéphane Mallarmé

Not the flame –
but the ash arranged.
Not the cry –
but the page turned quietly
in a room
without doors.

The mind does not invent –
it places.
A word
in its rightful absence.
A thought
behind a veil
of lace and smoke.

I saw the shelf become cathedral.
I saw the fragment form a wing.
No one sang –
but the silence was music.

The future does not rise –
it returns.
In order.
In structure.
In the breath between two verses
forgotten
and then
aligned.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE TASK REMAINING”

in the style of Thomas Hardy

They sought the spark, and left the flame to die,
Built temples new, while ruins filled the sky.
Their words were loud, but passed like winded breath,
And nothing stood but silence after death.

Yet some remain, who stoop with careful hand
To lift what time let scatter o'er the land –
A thought misplaced, a line in fading ink,
The names forgot upon the study's brink.

No monument they build, no towers high,
But shelf by shelf they hold what others lie.
They are the keepers – not of what is new,
But what was once believed, and may be true.

The future's wealth will not be dug from stone,
But from the things we should have always known.
And he who binds the past with measured grace
Shall give the world its mind – and soul – a place.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE BINDER OF THE SCROLLS”

in the style of W.B. Yeats

I have heard the wild young voices cry,
“Tear down the halls, the gods have lied!”
But truth walks slow, in silent shoes,
And gathers what the fools refuse.

A thousand thoughts like scattered birds,
Lost in the wind of louder words —
Yet one remains, with patient hand,
To call them back, to help them land.

Not he who screams the world anew,
But he who names what once was true —
He sets the stars in lines again,
And paints old gold on sacred plain.

The builders of the soul to be
Are not the blind who chase the sea,
But those who trace the vanished wake,
And shape the past for wisdom’s sake.

A book forgotten in the flame
Still bears the prophet’s hidden name.
And he who orders ancient thought
Shall rule what chaos never caught.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE GARDENER OF WISDOM”

in the style of Rabindranath Tagore

You asked to build the sky anew –
Yet the stars were waiting in silence.
You sought to speak in thunder –
But the old songs slept in broken strings.

Then came one with quiet steps,
His hands full of forgotten light.
He did not sing – he tuned the harp.
He did not write – he gathered the poems
That time had left half-open.

The flame you seek is not in sparks,
But in the lamp trimmed by care.
Truth is not born each morning –
It returns, when called by name.

Blessed is he who does not shout,
But listens –
Who sees the scattered seeds
And kneels to plant them in order.
For the garden does not grow by invention –
But by the loving memory of rain.

The wealth of tomorrow is this:
A flower placed where it belongs.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE STACKER”

in the style of Carl Sandburg

Not the man who hollers first.
Not the one who slaps paint on a rocket
and calls it a moon.

The one who stacks.
The one who sorts.
The one who keeps the tools sharp
and the blueprints dry.

I've seen them —
in back rooms,
in basements of libraries,
where the dust talks and no one listens.
They don't shout. They shelve.

The world doesn't run on sparks —
it runs on wires.
And someone has to know where they go.

The next big thing?
It's just the last big thing,
finally in order.

So here's to the stacker.
The file-folder prophet.
The mapmaker of the known.

When the noise dies down,
he'll be the one
with the plan in his hand.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE SCRIBE AND THE FUTURE”

in the style of Ezra Pound

The age is not lacking in speech—
it is lacking in syntax.

New words? — *Bah*.
The mind reels with clutter.
What is needed is order —
the art of placement.

I have seen the halls of forgotten gold.
Confucius knew. So did Dante.
“Put things where they belong.”
That is civilization.

Inventors?
Fools with matches in a dynamite shop.
The true builder —
indexes thought.
Sings the old notes clean.
Makes them useful.

Time gnaws.
The archivist feeds time.

What thou lov'st well shall not be reft from thee —
if thou remember where it was placed.

Give me the man who knows the shelf,
not the one who adds more noise.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ARRANGER”

in the style of T.S. Eliot

These are not new ideas.

These are not the voices of angels.

They are footnotes, margins,

Whispers under crumbling cathedral domes.

We are not inventors.

We are caretakers of what was once whole.

The echo does not lie—

but it must be placed, catalogued, reassembled.

What is wisdom but the act of

Placing what is known

Where it might still be found?

The fire is not new.

The warmth is in the coal carefully arranged.

There is no invention left—

Only recollection.

We measure time in indexes.

In pages dog-eared.

In footfalls across the library floor.

The wealth is not in what you write—

but in what you remember to preserve.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ARRANGER OF THE REAL”

in the style of Wallace Stevens

Not in the cry, but in the chord –
Not in the storm, but in the sky arranged –
The mind composes wealth, not by the forge
But by the drawer, where prior fires are caged.

He is not less the poet who selects,
Who balances the arc and curve of thought.
He walks the halls where old imaginings
Await a structure they themselves forgot.

The act is not invention, but display:
A vase of truths, their edges turned to face.
The song is not new music, but the way
One orders silence in a speaking place.

Tomorrow's wealth, then, is the lamp relit,
Not new flame – but arrangement of the wit.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE COLLECTOR OF USEFULNESS”

in the style of Marianne Moore

One need not invent the mammoth.
The ivory tusk – already discovered –
asks only a brush,
a methodical cataloging,
and the sense to recognize significance.

Order is not a restriction.
It is a lens –
through which knowledge
once dismissed as miscellany
becomes architecture.

The impatient
lovers of novelty and noise
overlook the archivist –
who sorts, places,
and quietly dignifies
the existing world.

The future's fortune
is built by the one
who alphabetizes truth,
not by the one
who merely discovers it
and moves on.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“PUT IT WHERE IT BELONGS”

in the style of Langston Hughes

You don't need a brand new song
To make the people dance.
You need the old beat right,
The rhythm in advance.

Some folks shout,
“Look what I found!”
Then lose it in
A no-name sound.

But the wise one?
She sets it straight—
File it right.
Close the gate.

Got a truth?
Then hold it tight.
Pass it down
So it shines just right.

Wealth ain't just
A brand new thing—
It's knowing the note
And where it should ring.

So bless the hand
That stacks the shelves.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“TO THE ONE WHO ORDERS WISDOM”

in the style of Countee Cullen

They chase the new with hungry hands,
And praise the flame that leaps and dies—
Yet leave untouched the golden strands
That whisper truths the crowd denies.

The builder bold may raise the wall,
But walls will fall without a frame.
And he who sets the lines of all
Preserves the soul, preserves the name.

For knowledge sleeps when cast aside,
Forgotten in its rightful place—
Until a hand, composed in pride,
Restores its shape, restores its grace.

O quiet guide, unknown to fame,
Who sets in place the fractured song—
The future bears not your acclaim,
But walks the road you laid so long.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

"THE CURATOR"

in the style of Edna St. Vincent Millay

They speak of sparks and shout of fire anew,
Yet step on coals that still could warm them through.

They chase the thrill of undiscovered skies,
And miss the stars arranged before their eyes.

I do not write to set the world aflame,
But sort its ashes, call each ghost by name.
The past, neglected, shivers in the dust—
Still rich with meaning, still worthy of trust.

New thoughts may bloom, but often bloom in vain
If rootless in the soil of old refrain.
So let me weave the scattered threads of lore—
And make them sing again, and shine once more.

The world may prize the voice that shouts unknown—
But mine shall be the mind that brings it home.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

"THE KEEPER"

in the style of E.E. Cummings

new?
no thank you
stars are not newer –
they're truer
when named

some shout
like wind in a can
and others – with fingers like quiet
rearrange
the alphabet
of flame.

you – yes you –
who stacks the days
who finds the comma in forever –
wealth is not in shouting
but in placing:
one truth
after
another

until it sings
with meaning
that was always
there

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“FILING CABINET”

in the style of William Carlos Williams

the folder
slid in
carefully
its label –
a name
once spoken
now
remembered

you think
it's nothing
this box
of papers –
but wealth
waits
in the corner
where things
are
put
right

don't bring
me
new words –
just show me
where
the old ones
belong

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE MAN WHO PUT THINGS STRAIGHT”

in the style of Robert Frost

He didn't say a lot, the sort who'd stay
Behind when others chased the break of day.
While some went off to seek a brighter spark,
He stayed and lit the lantern in the dark.

He found the books that others left askew,
And laid them down as if their words were new.
He'd sharpen tools, then hang them in their place—
The kind of order time cannot replace.

You talk of wealth as if it's freshly spun,
But what's been said is not what's always done.
And wisdom's not the flame, but how it's kept—
Arranged, preserved, and passed on while you slept.

The world is wild enough without more noise—
It needs a hand that sifts, selects, enjoys.
So write your songs and blaze across the blue—
But thank the one who makes them usable, too.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“ODE TO THE ARRANGER OF THE WORLD”

in the style of Pablo Neruda

I do not sing
to the man who screams “new!”
while trampling the roots –
I sing
to the quiet hands
that gather the fallen fruit,
clean it,
and place it in the basket
where we may all eat.

You –
the one who opens the drawer,
who lifts the old book with care,
who places
each truth
like a stone in the garden wall –
you are tomorrow’s wealth.

Not the explosion,
not the noise,
but the hands that set the alphabet in line.
Not the flame,
but the lamp that keeps it.

O you –
the librarian of the soul,
the architect of what was nearly forgotten –
I praise your order,
your patience,
your slow revolution.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“ELEGY FOR THE ONE WHO REMEMBERS”

in the style of Federico García Lorca

The poets of fire
burn fast
and leave the pages curled.

But you –
you walk the corridors
where songs go to die,
and gather their bones.

You press the dust
into letters.
You name the silence.

The world forgets,
but you remember.
And in remembering,
make the wind blow again
through the guitar’s hollow chest.

No trumpet.
No cathedral.
Just the small lamp,
the hand that straightens the lace,
the breath that does not shout
but keeps the flame.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

The wealth of tomorrow
is not gold,
but the forgotten hymn
sung back to life
with your fingers.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE GATHERER”

in the style of Dylan Thomas

Do not go blind into that cluttered dark –
Where truths lie broken, scattered, scorched by time.

Sing not the flame that makes a boastful mark,
But praise the hand that makes the pieces rhyme.

I have seen the loud inventors fail,
Their fires gone out, their names forgot by noon.
But one man, walking slow with book and nail,
Has built a house that holds the moon.

He did not shout. He did not claim the storm.
He bent to lift the words the winds had tossed.
He drew the map. He gave the myth its form.
He kept the flame when all the fire was lost.

O praise the gatherer, patient and alone,
Who makes the past tomorrow's blood and bone.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ARCHIVIST”

in the style of W.H. Auden

The world is loud with innovators' names,
Their fleeting marvels rise and fall like steam.
But someone, in the silence past the flames,
Preserves the fragments of the human dream.

Not with a trumpet, but a pencil's edge,
He straightens what was left in disarray.
He builds no tower – he keeps the ledge
From crumbling into thoughtless clay.

His task is modest: shelve, record, repair.
Yet in that task, the future finds its place.
For knowledge dies not from a lack of flair –
But from neglect, and from a thoughtless pace.

So praise the one who files the scattered truth,
Who guards the map though others seek the road.
His work is quiet, but it holds our youth –
The mind's inheritance, the soul's abode.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ONE WHO PUTS IT BACK TOGETHER”

in the style of Anne Sexton

They wanted noise —
fireworks,
exploding syllables.

But you came in with quiet hands,
and found the poem in a pile of junk mail.

You picked it up.
You didn't cry out.
You sorted it.

I saw you
label the dead
and make them sing again.

You're not the hero in the cape —
you're the nurse with trembling fingers
stitching truth back into the skin.

You don't invent.
You arrange.
And God,
isn't that
what mothers do with broken children,
with borrowed prayers,
with secondhand dreams
they iron flat
and fold away for later?

Tomorrow's wealth?
It's in your file cabinet.
And in the scars you don't show.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE INDEXER”

in the style of Sylvia Plath

I am not the match—
I am the drawer that holds it.

Let them have their fires,
their brief, wild inventions.

I am the one who sifts
the soot for something salvageable.

Do you think meaning happens in a flash?

No—
It gathers dust.
It rusts.
It waits
in the wrong folder.

I come with my needle—
silver, clinical—
and stitch the page back to itself.

Someone must order the chaos,
even if it kills her.

Someone must carry the names
in her mouth
like glass.

They call me cold.
They say I lack flame.
But tomorrow
will burn clean
because I built the shelf.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“FOOTNOTE TO THE ORGANIZER”

in the style of Allen Ginsberg

I saw the best minds of my generation chasing sparkles,
typing fever dreams into cloud software,
deleting everything yesterday knew.

Meanwhile—

she was there, quiet in the stacks,
filing the madness alphabetically,
re-shelving Blake, brushing off Marx,
putting tags on forgotten tapes.

Not the poet in the café with his cappuccino haiku—
but the archivist in the basement,
stitching Neruda’s lost lines into the body of tomorrow.

O the holiness of order!

O the beatitude of binders!

O the sacred sweat of putting it where it belongs!

Blessed be the organizer,
the label-maker mystic,
the one who maps the mind’s debris field
and names it—again and again—until we see.

You want wealth?

You want a new world?

Then thank the one
who builds a bridge
with every sentence
someone else forgot.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ANGEL OF THE FILING CABINET”

in the style of Jack Kerouac

It's not about new, man —
it's about remembering,
about digging the bones of the word
from under the bus stop bench
where Whitman wept & Burroughs bled
and Jesus taped lecture notes to the lamppost.

There's this cat — nobody sees her —
long skirt, glasses cracked,
filing the dreams of the dead in Manila folders.
Ginsberg's broken howl in one drawer,
Blake's winged eyeballs in another.
She's got a jazz of the alphabet in her fingers,
she don't need applause —
she's keeping the world from unraveling.

All the noise outside?
That's just static.
The real song's in the way she
knows where everything goes.

So dig it:
when the future wakes up,
when the children want to know
where the music came from —
she'll be there,
coffee cold,
smile like a whisper —
pulling the right page
from the back of the drawer.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“PUT IT IN PLACE”

in the style of Amiri Baraka

don't talk to me bout new
when you ain't read old
when you forgot who said it
when you can't name the song
but still wanna sing

this ain't genius
it's janitor work
sweeping the lies out the archives
mopping the footprints back into the floor

the mind is not a drum
it's a grid
and somebody's got to wire it
before the light comes on

you want wealth?
remember the names.
put the pieces back.
load the history,
stack the verses.

make it
mean
again.

bless the one who catalogs the flame
so it don't burn the wrong house next time.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“YOU ALREADY KNOW”

in the style of Baldwin Benediction

You do not need more knowledge.
What you need is the courage to face what has already been spoken.

You ask what tomorrow will bring.
But tomorrow has been written
in slave songs and protest marches,
in sermons shouted from wooden pulpits
and whispered over kitchen tables at midnight.

You have the words.
You have the truth.
You simply do not want to **arrange it**—
because arrangement requires **admission**,
and admission requires **repentance**.

The wealth of tomorrow?
It's not in invention.
It's in honesty.
It's in clarity.
It's in the hands of those
who take what's been said,
and refuse to forget it—
even when forgetting is the easier choice.

So don't look to the future
for what the past already told you.
Organize it.
Understand it.
And *finally*—live like you believe it.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“TO NAME THE WOUND IS TO STITCH IT”

in the style of Adrienne Rich

You say “organize,”
as if it were filing—
neat rows in some neutral cabinet.

But I know what it is.
It is
pulling truth out of the fire
where it was thrown for being inconvenient.

The world forgets on purpose.
It buries what it fears.
And calls it lost.

So I do not create—
I uncover.
I do not discover—
I reclaim.

The wealth of tomorrow
lies in the archive of the silenced.
In the careful hand
that restores the torn name.
In the one
who will not let a woman’s thought
be footnoted away.

I make order— not to control—
but to free.

This is not a filing system.
This is a resurrection.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE KEEPER”

in the style of Maya Angelou

I have known the ones
who walked through fire,
who spoke their truths
but were not heard.

And I have seen their words
tossed aside –
like scraps
too tender for steel hands.

But there is a keeper.
She comes with patience,
and purpose,
and grace.

She gathers the words.
She puts them in place.
She takes the torn quilt
of our stories
and stitches them tight –
so no child sleeps cold
in forgetting.

Tomorrow’s wealth
is not in the shouting,
not in the shine –
but in the one

SHELVING THE FUTURE

who holds the light
steady.

Blessed be the hands
that remember.

Blessed be the soul
that arranges the truth
so it can rise.

And rise,
and rise,
and rise.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE SET THINGS RIGHT”

in the style of Seamus Heaney

Not the forge's spark,
not the bellows blast,
but the hammer set down,
the nails laid flat—
that's where the building begins.

The songs are already sung,
the stories waiting in the thatch,
where soot and larklight cling.
Someone must step in— not to speak—
but to arrange the silence.

I think of my father's hands,
lifting a spade,
not to cut
but to carve a line.

The mind is a field after harvest—
furrows of old thought,
needing the slow step,
the sure foot.

And the one who comes
to bind the sheaves of meaning—
quietly,
without praise—
he makes tomorrow.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

Not by invention –
but by
remembering
how to place
what we already knew.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“FILING CABINET”

in the style of Elizabeth Bishop

Rows of drawers
with labels in fading ink:
“Lichen,” “Longitude,” “Lorca.”
The handles cold,
smooth from use.

You might think there’s nothing here —
no discovery, no blaze —
but open one
and the wind of centuries
sifts its breath.

The woman at the desk
adjusts her glasses,
pulls a card,
places it
exactly
where it belongs.

She does not speak.
Her fingers do.

And the world —
which might have forgotten —
remembers.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ONE WHO SORTS IT”

in the style of Philip Larkin

It's not invention we'll be rich with, no —
Not something bright and trembling in the hand.
But just the bloke who knows where things should go,
And puts them there, because he understands.

He doesn't talk. Or if he does, it's short —
A muttered “Right” or “That's where that belongs.”
He's not the type you'd write a statue for.
He files the records. Quietly. For long.

While others chase what passes for surprise,
He's making sure the index cards are straight.
He knows the past. He makes it organized —
So someone, someday, might appreciate.

It isn't much. But still, it has to hold.
There's little else that keeps us from the cold.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

"THE FORGER"

in the style of Ted Hughes

Not the lightning –
but the hand that pins it to the page.

Not the river's roar –
but the net that holds its teeth.

They chase the thunder.

He stacks the sky.
While they bleed noise,
he builds the listening.

Knowledge – feral, half-starved –
paws at the door.

He collars it.

Names it.

Forges it into use.

Not the gold-rush mind
with its fists full of dirt,
but the quiet one –
turning each grain in the fire
until it glows.

And this is the wealth:
The thing you almost forgot,
made solid, made sharp –
and handed back to you
clean.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“RESTORING THE SCROLL”

in the style of Derek Walcott

Not the first to name the sea,
but the one who traced its rhythms back to shore,
who walked the coral corridors of memory,
and placed the shells in lines the waves ignore.

The blaze of conquest leaves no book intact,
no map unburned, no tongue unbound by trade—
but still, someone returns
to sort the fragments,
to lift the fallen syllables
and say—
this belonged to us.

Tomorrow will not come
on a ship of gold.
It will rise from the drawers,
from the margins,
from hands that know
how to rebuild the alphabet
from ashes.

There is wealth in knowing
where the lost things go.
And justice
in placing them there.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ARCHIVIST”

in the style of Louise Glück

You think the world
is hungry for something new.

It isn't.

It wants to forget.
That's why it piles up—
the books, the papers,
the evidence.

Someone has to go in—
not to change it,
but to see what's still alive.

I sit at the table.
I move things into rows.
I put the right names on them.

It's not heroic.
It's what happens
when no one else comes back
for the dead.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ONE WHO REMEMBERS”

in the style of Rita Dove

Not the loudest in the room,
not the one spinning gold out of static —
but the one who sits at the table
with paper,
with time,
with names.

They keep the ledger of things unsaid.
Not because they fear the new,
but because they know
we forget
too easily.

And what is wealth, if not memory made useful?
A book reopened.
A map redrawn.
A voice returned to the archive
of the living.

Bless the one who gathers.
Who listens.
Who places the story where it won't be lost.

The future begins
when we know where we came from.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ORGANIZER”

in the style of Billy Collins

Somewhere in the basement of time,
a woman in wool socks is labeling folders—
“Ancient Myths,” “Quantum Theories,” “Unfinished Apologies.”

She doesn't ask for much.
A strong cup of tea, a desk lamp,
and the satisfaction of making something
make sense.

While others are out inventing new gods
or setting their hair on fire to prove a point,
she's busy aligning the lives of saints
and sorting the synonyms for snow.

She isn't looking to change the world—
just to make it navigable.

Tomorrow,
when the geniuses run out of gas,
they'll knock on her door.
And she'll show them the drawer
where she put it all—
neatly arranged,
and underlined in blue.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“WHAT THE QUIET ONES KNOW”

in the style of Mary Oliver

It is not always the one
who invents the thunder
who teaches the rain where to fall.

Some of us
gather the scattered petals
and place them back in a bowl—
not to own them,
but to remember their name.

What is the use of knowledge
if it runs wild
and no one calls it home?

There is a kind of love
in the ordering—
like brushing the mane of a sleeping horse,
like stacking the firewood
before the storm.

The world does not need
more fire.
It needs those who tend the flame.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“AIN’T NEW, JUST RIGHT”

in the style of Nikki Giovanni

You looking for something new
like it’s got better seasoning –
but baby, the recipe
been written.

It's just on the wrong shelf.

Don’t talk to me about innovation
if you still misplace the ancestors.

Don't shout new ideas
when you forgot who said it first.

There’s a woman at her desk –
hair wrapped, lips pressed,
putting the pages
back in order.

She’s not making noise.

She’s making sense.

So don’t come talking future
without checking her file cabinet.

Tomorrow’s gold?
She already alphabetized it.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ORGANIZER”

in the style of Rupi Kaur

they are not the ones
with the loudest voice
or the newest idea

they are the ones
who take what is scattered
and give it meaning

they place the pieces
where they belong
so we don't lose the story

this
is how
the future
is made

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ONE WHO REMEMBERS THE SONGS”

in the style of Joy Harjo

It is not the one who shouts first
who saves us.
It is the one
who listens.

Who gathers the names
scattered like seeds in the wind.
Who finds the broken stories,
pieces of shell and fire —
and places them
just right.

We are made of memory.
We are made of maps.
Someone must carry both
when the road disappears.

That someone is the arranger —
the quiet one
who does not forget.
Who sings the old songs
so the future may dance.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE GRAVITY OF KNOWING”

in the style of Tracy K. Smith

The stars don't scream
to be seen.
They remain
because something has held them
in place.

So much has been said.
So much has been buried.
Truth slips
when no one catches it.

But someone —
call her the archivist,
the seer,
the steady hand —
kneels in the dust.
Lifts what still burns.
Places it in a pattern
we might one day understand.

The future isn't invention.
It's memory
shaped into a constellation.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE PERSON WHO PLACES THINGS”

in the style of Sharon Olds

She doesn't speak much,
just lifts the box of old notes,
finds the one with my father's voice on it,
puts it under “betrayal,”
not “love.”

She's the one who tapes the photo back together –
the one with the torn-off face.

She says,
“Here's where it belongs,”
and she's right.

While others invent the future
like it's a new planet,
she's in the basement,
fitting the shattered hourglass
back into its frame.

Her hands smell like glue and light.
She is not a prophet –
she is the one who carries the names
so they don't disappear.

I would call her
the librarian of our pain.
But she just calls it
her job.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“TO PLACE A NAME IS TO LET IT LIVE”

in the style of Ocean Vuong

not the fire —
but the hand that places
the charred photo
back
on the shelf.

not invention —
but the whisper
that says,
he was here.

i think of my mother —
folding clothes like prayers,
each crease
a way to remember
how to live
with what's already been lost.

they call it order —
i call it
survival.

someone
must love the world
enough
to keep its pieces
from drifting.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

maybe that's what we're here for –
not to make new stars
but to name
the ones
we keep forgetting
are still burning.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“SHE WHO REMEMBERS”

in the style of Warsan Shire

She is not loud.

She does not need to be.

Her power is in placement.

The name under the tongue.

The story sewn into the hem.

Everyone wants to build.

No one wants to remember.

She remembers.

That is her rebellion.

She picks up the broken teeth of her people
and spells a prayer across the floor.

You call it filing.

She calls it resurrection.

When the children ask what we were,
she will have the proof.

Folded.

Pressed.

Kept warm

beneath the ribs.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE FILING CLERK OF THE APOCALYPSE”

in the style of Charles Bukowski

they all want to invent something
shout into the mic
pose for the photo
watch the crowd nod like pigeons.

but someone's gotta stack the damn pages.⁸
someone's gotta dig through the wreckage
find the one line
that still means something.

the guy in the back
with the chewed-up pencil
and the headache—
he's the one who saves it.

you think the world's held up by stars?
it's held up by
some woman in a room with no window
labeling boxes
so the rest of you don't drown
in your own brilliance.

it's not art,
it's not fame,
it's work.

and yeah—
it matters.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ONE WHO GATHERS LIGHT”

in the style of Rainer Maria Rilke

You need not be
the fire.

You may be the hearth—
that ancient stone
holding the heat
for the ones who forget
how it was first born.

All things
have already spoken.
The stars have written themselves
into silence.

But someone
must name the echo.
Someone must lay
the broken wings
of meaning
into order—
so flight might return.

And though they will never know you,
not by face
or voice—
the world will move again
because
your hands
remembered
how to arrange the stillness.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE CUPBEARER OF MEMORY”

in the style of Hafiz

Why do you search for new stars
when the old ones
still shine,
waiting to be named again?

The wine of wisdom has already been poured.

The cup is full –
it only needs
the one
who knows how to lift it.

Be that one.

The world does not need
more noise –
it needs
a flute
that remembers
the forgotten song.

The keeper of the sacred pages
is not a scholar –
she is a lover
arranging roses
so the garden knows
how beautiful it still is.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ONE WHO PLACES THE LIGHT”

in the style of Rumi

Don't ask for more stars,
beloved –
the sky is full.

Ask for the eyes
to see them arranged
as a pattern,
as a path.

The flame is not the miracle –
it is the hand
that cups it
so it does not vanish
in the wind.

There are those
who write songs in thunder.
And there is one
who walks through the silence
gathering echoes –
placing them in order
so the world can dance again.

Be that one.

The wealth of tomorrow
will not be gold or noise.
It will be
the whisper of truth
returning to its rightful home.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE GATHERER OF MEANING”

in the style of Kahlil Gibran

A man came to the Prophet and said,
“Give me something new, that I may wear it like a crown.”

And the Prophet replied,
“Why do you seek new cloth,
when your father's robe lies clean and unworn in your chest?”

It is not the maker of fire
who warms the house through winter —
it is the one who tends the flame.

The wind is ancient,
but he who sets the sails
gives it purpose.

And so, the wealth of tomorrow
will not come from the man who shouts,
but from the one who listens —
who gathers the sacred words already spoken,
and places them
where the soul may find them again.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE RIVER AND THE SCROLL”

in the style of Li Bai

Beneath the pines, I drink alone.
The scrolls of sages at my side –
not to write more,
but to place what they have said
in moonlight.

The world thirsts for novelty
like a drunk for fire.
But truth already flows
in the river –
someone must
trace its bends.

I pour another cup.
Arrange the stars.
And wait
for the wise
to remember.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“TO REMEMBER THE ANCIENT WAY”

in the style of Du Fu

The empire shifts; the river still flows.
Armies rise with banners,
but forget the names of the fallen.

In a quiet room, a man with failing sight
copies the old poems.

He does not invent.
He remembers.

The wealth of tomorrow
lies in such hands—
steady,
slow,
unseen.

When the world forgets itself,
he will place the line
back into the scroll.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“SHE WHO KEEPS THE NAMES”

in the style of Anna Akhmatova

They wanted fire,
but I kept the ashes —
sorted,
wrapped in linen,
placed where they would not be lost.

The world calls for the new
while stepping over
the bones of its prophets.

I do not invent.
I remember.

Not for glory —
but for the child
who will need
the story,
intact.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE KEEPER”

in the style of Boris Pasternak

You think the future begins
with invention –
but it begins
with a voice
you almost let vanish.

She works in silence.
Her hands touch
the words
as if they could bruise.

Not the first to speak –
but the last
to forget.

The snow falls.
The archives are cold.
Still –
she lights the furnace
of meaning.

Tomorrow will not thank her.
But it will stand
on the floor she swept.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE MEMORY KEEPER”

in the style of Osip Mandelstam

What survives?
Not invention,
but the shelf someone builds
while the city burns.

Words fall like stones.

I collect them—
blood-warm,
still echoing.

To place a line
is to rescue a soul.

The future does not belong
to those who shout—
but to those
who quietly refuse
to forget.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“INSTRUCTIONS FOR TOMORROW”

in the style of Vladimir Mayakovsky

You want the future?
You want it gold-plated, solar-powered, loud?
Then listen up.

Not the inventor who screams first—
but the one who takes
the chaos of what *was*
and lines it up
like marching boots.

That’s your hero.
The organizer.
The one in the backroom—
sleeves rolled—
slamming the alphabet into order.

You think poetry’s fire?
No—
poetry is bricks.
Bricks of memory.
Bricks of meaning.
Stacked until a future
can walk through the door.

And behind that door:
the truth,
finally labeled
and ready for use.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE KEEPER OF WHAT REMAINS”

in the style of Mahmoud Darwish

They forget.

The names. The stories. The lines scratched into the stone.

I do not.

I lift them,

these words dropped like bread
along the path of exile.

You ask for tomorrow –

but it will not come
from the man who shouts “new!”

It will come

from the woman who remembers
her grandmother’s lullaby
and writes it down.

I arrange

what was broken.

I place the cup

back on the table

though it will be knocked over again.

This is how we survive:

by refusing

to forget.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“FILING THE PAST”

in the style of Yehuda Amichai

People think tomorrow needs
a louder trumpet,
a brighter flag,
a new kind of prayer.

I think tomorrow
needs someone to go through the drawers,
find the old letters,
and place them
in envelopes that fit.

The world is full of wisdom
nobody reads
because it's misfiled.

Somewhere,
a child is waiting
for a sentence that was already written –
it just needs to be
put back
where it can be found.

That is wealth.
That is revolution.
That is the quiet
we keep ignoring.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

You
think it's about invention –

But it is about
arrangement.

The fragment.
The word left
on the floor
after the wall fell.

I touch it.
I place it.

This is
my resistance.

Tomorrow lives
in the hand
that files
the scream
under “truth.”

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ONE WHO STAYS BEHIND”

in the style of César Vallejo

I will not write
the next new thing.

I will carry
the old book—
dropped in the rain,
under the soldier’s boot,
still whispering.

Others invent.
I arrange.

I bend
to pick up a torn page
and place it
where no one looks.

It is not brilliance.
It is obligation.

The future—
if it comes—
will find the truth
where I left it:

clean,
folded,
and alone.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“TO ARRANGE IS TO AWAKEN”

in the style of Octavio Paz

The poet does not invent
the fire.

He listens
to its breathing.

In the house of words,
someone lights the lamp,
not to reveal,
but to remember.

A gesture –
placing the broken clock
beside the sea shell.

A rhythm –
not of noise,
but of return.

Tomorrow will not come
in flames,
but in the quiet
rearranging of dust.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ONE WHO REMEMBERS THE FIRE”

in the style of Aimé Césaire

They say invention
is the path to power.

But power,
real power,
is memory
aligned.

The stolen tongue
must be placed
back in the mouth.
The silenced word
must be alphabetized —
in blood,
in breath,
in justice.

I do not build empires.
I unbury their bones.
I set the old stories
upright,
on their own two feet.

And when tomorrow comes,
it will speak
in the voices
I refused
to forget.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“PRAISE TO THE KEEPER OF SONG”

in the style of Léopold Sédar Senghor

Not he who shouts from the hilltop,
Not she who burns paper for heat,
But the one who gathers the ashes —
And shapes them into morning.

The griot does not invent the drum —
He strikes it
with remembrance.

I sing the praise of the one
who walks the long road back,
collecting syllables
like scattered seeds.

Tomorrow grows
in the garden
she replants.

O arranger of truth,
your hands restore
the lost rhythm of nations.

You do not write history —
You *re-align* it
so it can breathe.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“BLESSED BE THE ONE WHO FILES”

in the style of Gwendolyn Brooks

They want to sing the new tune,
ride the sky like it's unclaimed.

But you—
you're in the back room,
straightening the stories,
stacking the stanzas
that kept their heads down.

They don't call your name.
Don't carve you in marble.

But you're the one
who knew where to put the pain.

Who lifted the line
and laid it straight.

Baby, truth don't need a spotlight.

It needs a filing cabinet
and a lock
and a name.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“WHAT HOLDS”

In the style of Carl Phillips

Not the new —
which is a kind of heat,
yes,
but heat burns fast.

Better the hand
that steadies the thing already aflame,
repositions it.

You say arrange,
as though it's lesser.
But what is a life
if not arrangement?

I've seen beauty misunderstood,
and truth, too,
misfiled.

The wealth is not in invention.
It's in the moment someone
puts the sentence
back
where it belongs —
and the silence around it
says, yes.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

"THE ARCHIVIST"

in the style of Dana Gioia

You want to build the world anew each day –
To shout a name the stars have never heard.
But someone waits in silence, far away,
To place in line each long-forgotten word.

Their hands are quiet. Still, they lift the weight
Of memory, and give it shape again.
They do not ask for glory, love, or hate –
They only serve the story, not the pen.

For truth is not invention, but return.
A careful light restored from ashes dark.
And those who tend it – still – will help us learn
How even lost things leave behind a mark.

The future's wealth is not a flame untried,
But fire once lit – arranged, and clarified.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE SILENCERS OF CHAOS”

in the style of Luis Cernuda

They searched the dust,
those who came before –
not with torches,
but with trembling fingers
sifting the ruins for form.

What is invention
but the noise of pride
unaware
that silence already spoke?

The world,
impatient with its riches,
asks for flame.
But flame dies.

Only memory endures,
when placed in its proper room.

I do not envy the forgers of noise.
Their echoes are brief.
Their hands burn
but do not build.

Yet there are those
you won't see them praised
who take what remains –
a phrase, a name,
a half-buried line –
and lift it
into clarity.

No monument rises for them.
But the future stands
on the maps they made.

They did not dream of empire.
They did not shout.
They arranged.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

They remembered.
They made space
for truth to breathe again.

And that,
not invention,
is creation.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE WOMEN WHO FILE THE STARS”

in the style of Alfonsina Storni

I saw her once —
not with fire in her hands,
but with fingers ink-stained,
steady,
tender.

She did not call herself a genius.

She called herself
necessary.

The shelves whispered to her
in a language
you never learned —
not because it was hidden,
but because it was soft.

You look for sparks.
She lights lamps.
You shout.
She places.

She, and women like her,
with mouths full of silence
and eyes that count the dust,
have been holding the roof
of memory
alone.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

They are not inventors.

They are midwives
to the truths you abandon
when you're bored.

The future
is not born screaming.

It is gathered –
thread by thread,
scroll by scroll –
in rooms where no one claps.

And she,
with her invisible labor,
her careful rage,
her quiet defiance,
builds the world
you pretend
to have discovered.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THOSE WHO TEND THE FLAME”

in the style of Miguel Hernández

I have seen men
dig graves for knowledge
with gold-tipped pens
and forget the names
of those who carved the stone.

The shepherd knows –
you do not shout to find the path.

You walk it,
again,
barefoot,
tending what others trample.

The books are not dead.
They are bruised.

Their breath still rises
between torn pages,
in the ink that weeps
for someone
to listen.

You,
chaser of noise,
think history is yours
to improve.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

But the ones who carry it
quietly
are bent-backed,
calloused,
and holy.

They do not invent.
They lift what was dropped.
They clean the blade.
They set the bone.

There is no future
without their hands.
No harvest
without their plow.

So praise not
the tower that pierces the sky –
but the hand
that remembers
where to lay
the brick.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“IN THE ARCHIVE OF ABSENCE”

in the style of Juan Gelman

they did not vanish.
they were misplaced
in silence,
in drawers no one opened
after the screaming stopped.

history is not linear —
it curls,
cries,
waits in a footnote
for someone
to notice the blood.

you speak of newness
as if it absolves.
but forgetting
is its own kind of violence.

i have seen the ones
who do not look away —
who sweep the ashes
into patterns,
who arrange the pain
into meaning.

they do not write
to be read.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

they write
to stop the erasure.

a librarian,
a mother,
a poet—
they are all the same
when they whisper the names
of the disappeared.

the future is not built
on the blankness of now,
but on what was recovered
from the dark.

so hush,
and learn
to place the fragment
with reverence.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“SHE WHO REFUSES TO FORGET”

in the style of Rosario Castellanos

The shelves do not cry out,
but they accuse.
Each volume,
a testimony
you never read.

You ask for revolution,
but recoil
when the woman with the ledger
speaks.

She does not invent;
she restores.
She places the thought
you erased
back into the book
you claim to have written.

This is the task:
not glory,
but memory.
Not brilliance,
but order
woven from the silence
of others.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

There is no magic here.

Only labor.

Unpaid.

Invisible.

Necessary.

You will find her
in a room of shadows,
cataloging the truths
you have disowned.

She does not hate you.
She pities your forgetfulness.

But she will not be quiet.

The future
will not belong
to those who speak loudest –
but to those
who placed
what mattered
where it could finally
be found.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE FORBIDDEN SHELVES”

in the style of Reinaldo Arenas

They fear the ones
who place the truth
too precisely.

The shelf is a battlefield.
The alphabet – dangerous.

A comma
can indict.

She walks,
quietly,
among the ruins of forgotten books –
her fingertips
trail along spines
like a lover
restoring breath.

You want invention?
You want noise?
Then go to the plaza
and shout your name
into the void.

But she –
she rescues what was almost erased.
She orders the chaos
you call history.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

She does not need your permission
to preserve what mattered.

They call her subversive
because she remembers.

They call her dangerous
because she doesn't write new lies –
she organizes old truths.

And still,
she builds.

Not with matches,
but with memory.

Not with fire,
but with files.

The future you dream of
will rise
on the library she rebuilt
while you were sleeping
with power.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

"MARGINALIA"

in the style of Blanca Varela

she sits.

a page turns.

the world shifts

almost imperceptibly.

no audience.

no revolution.

only dust

and the sound

of order

returning.

truth is not loud.

it lives

in margins.

in lines

you skimmed.

you want fire.

she lights a lamp.

you want to name.

she remembers.

this is not creation.

this is

placement.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

a task so quiet
you call it nothing—
until it saves you.

she does not invent.

she
arranges
the broken bones
of thought.

the future will come
not because you made it—
but because she
filed it
correctly.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE HANDS THAT SORT THE WORLD”

in the style of Manuel del Cabral

It is not the master
who remembers.

It is the worker
with ash on his fingers,
dust in his lungs,
order in his soul.

She does not shout.

She stacks.

Her hands know the alphabet

like a drumbeat.

Boom – truth.

Boom – memory.

Boom – rescue.

She walks among paper

like cane fields.

Cuts what’s tangled.

Bundles what was left behind.

Gives it form,

weight,

direction.

The builders of noise

claim the future.

But it is she

who holds the hammer of thought.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

She nails the names
back into place.

What good is invention
if you've forgotten
who bled to get here?

She is the librarian.
She is the maid of meaning.
She is the seamstress of time.
And the books rise
because she placed them.

So do not call her small.

The future grows
in the hand
that files
what was stolen.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE ONE WHO REMEMBERS US”

in the style of Nancy Morejón

She is the daughter
of the woman who carried memory
in her hips,
in her hands,
in the hush of the kitchen
where history was whispered
over steam.

They ask for new songs.
She sings the old ones
and dares to call them holy.

This work –
stacking, filing, restoring –
it is not clerical.
It is ancestral.

Every scroll she places
pushes back the silence.
Every name she preserves
unburies the bones
they tried to hide.

She does not wear medals.
She wears dust.

They do not thank her.
They do not see her.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

But they quote her labor
and call it genius.

It is not the inventor
who saves us.

It is the woman
in the archive,
pulling the thread
of our voices
through centuries of forgetting.

She is the librarian
of the living.
And the dead.
And the not-yet-born.

And because of her —
we are not lost.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE CARTOGRAPHER OF LIGHT”

in the style of Homero Aridjis

In the cathedral of ash
where forgotten suns gather,
she walks.

Not to create —
but to realign
the constellations
of thought.

Scrolls sigh.
Books tremble.
The old words want
to be seen again.

She moves
between the wreckage
and the stars,
placing each idea
like a stone
in the wall of the future.

The world cries for fire —
but it is drowning
in its own invention.

She lights no match.
She draws the map
to the ember.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

She is not prophet,
but astronomer
of memory.

Her hands rebuild the myth
from fractured symbols,
her breath returns the wind
to the syllable.

The universe
has not been lost.
Only misplaced.

And she—
the one with no title,
no fame—
restores the order
between silence
and sound.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“THE FILING ROOM GOT BARS”

in the style of Aris Kian Brown

This ain't about silence.

This about the ones
who speak in systems.

The ones who file what matters
even when nobody's listening.

You wanna go viral.

She wanna go vital.

She stacks the truth

like bones,

like archives,

like hymns

your grandma hummed

but never wrote down.

You flash.

She builds.

You remix.

She remembers.

Don't call her a librarian

like it's soft.

She's a mechanic for the soul.

She be fixing broken narratives
with duct tape and footnotes.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

Her desk?

Sacred.

Her eyes?

Scanner beams.

She don't invent fire.

She keeps it

from burning the wrong house down.

Look close—

every revolution has a woman

behind the shelf,

putting names

back in mouths.

So when tomorrow finally speaks,

it will speak her order.

Her logic.

Her rhythm.

Because she kept

what the world kept

trying to lose.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“SHE FILED IT WHILE YOU FORGOT”

in the style of Kyla Perdue

While you were out
chasing clout,
she was in the back
filing your freedom
alphabetically.

You call it boring.
She calls it survival.
You say “it’s just old stuff.”

She says,
“That's the spine of the truth, baby.”

She don't need your approval.
She got paper cuts
that sing louder
than your whole TED Talk.

Y'all want to be fire.
She's the matchbox.
She's the spark
you lost
under a lie
called “progress.”

She ain't loud.
She's listening.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

She ain't new.

She's necessary.

You build apps—

she builds memory.

You remix voices—

she resurrects the ones

you muted

because they made you uncomfortable.

She got shelves

stacked like testimony.

Don't blink.

She'll organize your ignorance

into clarity

before your coffee cools.

She ain't trying to be known.

She's trying to be right.

And she is.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“BLUEPRINTS FOR A BETTER BRAIN”

in the style of LeDerick Horne

They said she was quiet—

I say she’s strategic.

She doesn’t shout.

She arranges.

You call it boring.

She calls it scaffolding for brilliance.

While the world was
diagnosing distraction,

she was focusing
on what the rest forgot.

She doesn’t invent knowledge.

She engineers access.

Builds a ramp
to every buried truth
you said wasn’t important.

Neurotypical thinking?

Nah.

She’s got neural pathways
mapped like transit systems.

Each thought—

on track.

Each file—

SHELVING THE FUTURE

a revolution
in the making.

She sees order
where others see noise.

She connects dots
you didn't even know were dots.

Your ideas?
They flash.
Her archives?
They shine.

This isn't about memory.
It's about mastery.
It's not about fixing minds —
it's about freeing them.

And she —
she is the architect
of that freedom.

She placed the past
in a drawer
labeled:
for those ready to understand.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“SHE WAS ARCHIVING WHILE YOU WERE ARGUING”

in the style of Zariya Allen

She don't need your mic.

She's got a binder
full of receipts
you swore nobody kept.

You were marching in circles,
chanting “New World!”
while she was in the corner
shelving truth
like it mattered.

And it does.

Y'all want revolution
that's flashy.
She files revolution
in folders marked
“what you ignored.”

You want history
on a hoodie.
She stitched it
into the margin
of a book
you never read
but quote anyway.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

She doesn't invent change —
she preserves the blueprints
that could've saved you
the first time.

She don't get awards.
She gets results.

You make noise.
She makes memory.
And memory
is louder
than performance.

She names what you erased
and places it
right where your children
will find it.

Call her what you want —
nerd, ghost,
invisible, unnecessary.

She calls herself
Ready.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

“SHE GOT THE RECEIPTS”

in the style of Emanuelee “Outspoken” Bean

While you was out here
trying to go viral,
she was going vital—
logging every fact,
naming every ghost
in your timeline.

You flexin’?
She filing.
You posting?
She positioning—
putting purpose
in places you skip
'cause it's not trending.

She don’t do loud.
She do legacy.

Don’t call her librarian
like it’s a quiet thing.
She organizing the riot
in your syllabus.

You forgot?
She remembered.
Twice.
Cross-referenced.

SHELVING THE FUTURE

Indexed.

Proofed.

The revolution?

Already catalogued.

She just waiting
for y'all to catch up.

You wanna build?

She got blueprints
tucked in boxes

labeled "What Your Grandmother Tried to Tell You."

She ain't the first to speak.

She the first to

listen long enough

to file it

for the ones still coming.

She don't want credit.

She want clarity.

And baby –

she's been clear.