

EMILY GROSHOLZ

## Among Cosmologists

*for Sarah Shandera*

Breathlessly, with a shrug and a vague gesture,  
Empty hand palm up, collecting something  
From empty space that is by all accounts  
Not empty, rather like the four-dimensional  
Surface of an  $n$ -dimensional cauldron  
Where bubbles form and wink out of existence,  
The young expert on galaxies suggests,  
“A hundred billion?” However the next Sloan  
Survey announces the count of galaxies—  
Red-shifting as they leave us past the tall  
Implacable vast light cone we cannot see  
But know it marks the boundaries of seeing.

“Doesn’t it keep you up at night, this outward  
Rush of galaxies fleeing themselves and us  
Into the infinite arms of the multiverse?”  
I ask. “Oh no,” she answers, “catching her breath.  
What keeps me up is our recurrent failure  
To know the universe before inflation,  
Or offer quantum mechanics a foundation.  
It’s not the future, but the hidden past.  
It’s not what’s overhead, but underneath.”

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