



SEVEN EARTHLIKE PLANETS

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What else is there to say but everything?

—*Gwendolyn Brooks*

Everyone wants to be an astronaut
but nobody wants to be a prophet—
always a few minutes late, mostly
barking in the dark about skies
coming apart & the heart's flooded
catastrophes. Honesty in the forsaken
buildings downtown that echo
a forgotten brick chorus. & honestly,
what's the point of seven more
Earths when we can't even get
the true testimony of cops in the salt
cities on this one? In a thin metropolitan
park, beneath the tree's abundant
leaves, cops chase down whoever
they can see as the unacknowledged
& almost planets condense the evening
like people gawking the crime scene—
Pluto, Eris, the new, chain gang ones
with numbers instead of names
in long trails of wanting-to-be-seen.
What else is there to say about now?
It will take Eris 561 years to get back
around the Sun & by that time, Earth,
the faces shining in the badge light,
& the dimpled leaves on the fawning trees

in all of the parks will have dropped
out like bad teeth. No more hand-scrawled
flags or patriotic planetary names. Even
neglected astronauts & ignored prophets
need some kind of listening audience.