

IN RHO OPHIUCHI

[in] Rho Ophiuchi, one of the regions of star formation closest to our solar system... young stars appear red because of the dust that surrounds them. They are hugged by gas discs that will go on to become future planetary systems.

—Visual Galaxy: The Ultimate Guide to The Milky Way and Beyond

So you are telling me
that after a time so much longer than length,
planets form from dust floating in gas.

Dust and gas will still mix it up:
merge or explode, blow up and grow up,
in this uterus of the universe.

This stuff you're calling dust
is floating fluff and luster in the picture,
not the dust I know.

The dust I know is small—
particles of my skin, pollen dropped from trees—
smaller than seeds or sand.

My head can't scale how small the tall trees
by the stream are, locusts so high
the hunting hawks return to them to rest.

Why am I so small, what did I do to get
this little life, why will I ride away
so soon, and will my buried dust surround a sun.

I watch the hawks through muffled mist,
a colorless and style-less imitation
of the ruffle of red stars.