



# *After the Extinction*

by Susan Carroll Jewell

And when you pass,  
an unfamiliar drip and splash  
globule in space, know

that we are your arrogant  
twin, newly cosmic and drifting  
through the galaxies, vibrating

strings of collective energy blown  
into the heavens from Earth,  
remnant strands of humanness

formed from the streams of birthday  
leftovers and nests of ribbons  
unboxed. A face on a backdrop

of starlight declares who we were,  
closed lips and a pointless nose,  
a hollow ear and open eyes startled

not at the speed of light but of extinction.  
Our brain still circles with inescapable  
science, our art left behind, the Gothic

glass and Pollack paint of a wasted  
culture. And if you see these colored  
cords wiggling like conceited wires

through the universe, know that they  
hold badges of mistakes, a neck  
that connects to nothing but a lanyard

with a label—*Hello, My Name Is*—  
like a poet grasping for a last line,  
a saving grace.

Image: "Brainyo" by Dana St. Mary. "After the Extinction" was written by Susan Carroll Jewell for *Rattle's* Ekphrastic Challenge, October 2019, and selected as the Editor's Choice.