My Work Brinks Me

Building a telescope involves twenty-three power struggles per funding period per bathroom on the second floor.

While concrete is poured atop a dormant volcano, machines in DC laser-print contracts for the Coudé-haunch.

My eye-twitch worsens. Who approves the grinding of mirrors and the making of motors to turn tricks?

This one is designed, line by photon-fine line, for ground-breaking science from the ground.

Another’s in orbit, tossed to space by an Atlas-V, blinking its bits to me by antenna, all high-gained and slow-slewed.

The cords under my desk come to life, hissing little electrical breaths … alter- (inhale) nating (exhale) current. I must feed them formula from my fingertips.
The data dare me, pixel by pixel, 
to face them. Optical eye to optical eye, 
my mind to their mind, two parts 
exploring their piecewise ways.

A knowing scurries 
from a corner of the sky 
to the light fixture in the other room 
then grows sickly once captured 
in the glass. 
I do the only thing I can – 
truncating the wings and 
normalizing to unity.
Step by Step Instructions for How to Think Outside the Box

Get in the box.

Later, ask yourself if you or your thoughts ever left the box.
A *Predator of Light*

**H** ere, the mountaintop edges into mortality and telescopes perch white as snow leopards eager to leap skyward, eager to capture the math of the heavens in their animal pupils.

I am a predator of light, stalking photons in a drought of sound. The stars mute their ticktick-ticking, not oscillating for ears desperate to hear beginnings and ends.

I point mirrors and farm coordinates. A slave to the sky, I am satisfied only when meaty sequences in a star’s life are pared into bite-sized equations.

In the hush of the hunt, reason grinds itself into a knuckle-biting mortar and pestle, a suspense equal to the pause of the predator before its pounce, or the comma of the mind before comprehension comes like rain. Then my research drags its hind legs a few squares ahead on the graph paper.
Sputnik, listen up

O man-made moonlet with a made-in Moscow beep, you are more politics at 40 megahertz across a new, now-moaning sky.

You are a trilling ovum, streaking the first human glow. Your batteries die and you drop like a silver canary, mute, no longer in a constant bath.

Dream von Braun sends you a playmate, quick, before.