

Half a glass of rubidium (divided by a billion)

What quantum a human half-life? Less precise
(it seems) than the measure for waning radio-
isotopes. How to calculate

a probability equal or greater than
nought-point-oh-five, when *n* is usually unknown
except in war and cancer wards?

At forty seven and a half, I'm fully semi
ninety-five, if that's the destination point
on my twelve inch wooden ruler.

Like me (perhaps) rubidium holds a half-life
specified at forty seven and a half
(billion) years. A simple matter

of scale. And purpose. And probably audience.
Though unlike me, its first half-life burnt brilliant.
Contagious dazzle. *Look at me* spark.

A-list *must-have*, drawn to water and explosions.
Primordial nuclide, mover and shaker for
nearly fifty billion years.

Three times older than this universe, and starting
to feel it. Purple slippers, early nights, OK decay.
Not like my half-arsed first half-life.

A glass half lived. A life half full. Three times older
than a spoilt miniature poodle Twelve thousand times
a flexing, flailing gastrotrich.

Like kryptonite to Superman I conjure *anti*
-rubidium. Make hidden heavy metals invert
and planetary orbits skew.

My periodic order scrambles. Noble gases
sleep with lanthanides on tables. Reactive ions
forget the rules of valency.

I'll not applaud the slough of tired atoms like
carbon-dated dandruff, brushed from the stooped shoulders
of an enfeebled universe -

nor accept projected decay rate tables for
uranium. I will not u-remain-ium
steadfast. Nor transition into

elemental lead (Pb), a non-negotiable
inert Personal Best - the best to be expected
past this too soon, too late half-way.

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