

Interrogating Past & Future Constellations

My oldest son asks
where stars come from
and I tell him what
I've been taught about
the stars being millions
or even billions of years old
since that's how much time
it takes for their light to reach
us down here on planet earth.

Didn't have the heart to tell
him that also means the stars
might already be dust or gone
when they arrive in their splendor
for us to gaze and admire—
their metatrophic link to black
bodies riddled with holes that
shimmer and shine light years
from their primordial infliction.

We stand under an unlit street-
lamp, calling out all the stars
that we can see, trying my best
to map out all the constellations.
His eyes are fast becoming
moons but the motion of his
five-year black body is what
concerns me—the years of his
childhood becoming extinct.

We are taught an object a light-year away or more's being seen as it was at the time light left it, not as it would appear if one was near it today. Somehow, we have managed to make sense of a night sky riddled with holes that shimmer & shine. This is proof that we have no qualms with admiring the dying.