

WITH LOVE, JAN

but to go there
the mind
endlessly
is singing

— SAPPHO

[These are not propositions, but several halves of several potential metaphors.]

*Like wind turns a strand of exhaled smoke
in a helical twist like a skipping rope, before it vanishes.*

[A dialogue, in its call and response, would enact this explicitly.]

[Humpback whales suspend themselves upside down and perpendicular to the direction of sea currents before they begin to sing.]

[Being personal and being intimate are significantly different qualities. Being personal risks the writer's self-awareness, being intimate risks the reader's sense of self in relation to another.]

[If one considers our associative intuition of metaphors as a pre-linguistic event of consciousness, one might be tempted to understand language use as half-formed metaphors exchanged at the goodwill instant of their gesturing across.]

[The *is* of a metaphor is an apology to silence.]

*Like the hind-shot wolf who wobbles,
like an unfledged dart, toward his target, the treeline.*

[At the moment we recognize someone is crying out of joy and not sadness, the heart tacks.]

[During engaging discussions people will gesture with their hands, arms, faces, in manners as unpredictable as the effect a brisk wind will have on the flight path of a butterfly. Or in the way a sudden light source deflects the vector of a moth.]

[So meaning doesn't exist, as such, but rather occurs.]

[When someone we know well is alone we cannot know who they are. They become unfinished metaphors (brought into relation with, compared and contrasted to *what?*), whose meaning for us dwells in a deferred state, as though adrift in another element.]

*Like the caffeinated earworm that repeats,
like a hound circling to find its spot to sleep.*

[A single honeybee will return to its hive and transmit the location of the more rewarding foraging sites to thousands of other bees by way of a 'tremble,' or 'waggle,' dance. The dance consists of runs and circular or zigzag bodily movements; the direction of the runs indicates the relative position of the sun to the foraging site, and the waggle's duration is correlated to the distance between the site and the hive.]

[It is said that up to 80 percent of meaning conveyed in a dialogue is derived from facial expressions, posture and other physical gestures.]

*Like people who appear not to need people
come to need people who appear.*

[The more intimately we know a person, the fuller their silent gestures become for our understanding of what they attempt to mean.]

[What do we mean when we speak of gestures? What does *gesture* mean?]

[
possibly
the delicacy of her wrists, moving
as she spoke, unnerved me.]

[The writer's attitude *anything goes* does not go far. It is a monologic misunderstanding of language, to believe that using language necessarily entails a relativistic insensibility rather than a resonant undecidability that seeks to inform all aspects of apparently exclusive or contradictory contexts.]

*Like bees hovering, static in the solar glare,
like keloids on their skin of air.*

[It is to write with the presumption that one can never, and therefore should never seek to, acquire wisdom through communication.]

[Which is not to say that there are no meaningless things, and that they cannot be beautiful. Quite the contrary – take dancing, for example.]

[In much the same way physicists resort to spatial metaphors to describe time and temporal metaphors to describe space, philosophers and poets alike rely on non-metaphorical language to explain the concept of metaphor.]

The poems we haven't read
must be her fiercest:
imperfect, extreme.

— JANE HIRSCHFIELD

[Like a metaphor, a gesture entertains the likelihood that it both is (moves toward being) and is not (remains unfulfilled in its desire to be) the objects of its attention.]

[However unintentional, conversational gestures are the body's inescapable brashness; its truth.]

[The human brain is like a Hadron Collider in miniature – language is sets of discrete photons, the collisions are metaphors, and the debris, splintering off as indiscrete waves and particles in incalculable directions, is meaning.]

*Like the god of the sea who beckons us in,
like those at their windows landlocked by the interim of hills.*

[The more complex the system of mechanical parts the greater chance there is for a malfunction of the system. The more complex the system of conceptual parts the greater the chance for discovery within the system.]

[Lonesomeness, loneliness, aloneness: the distinctions and similarities between them.]

[Incidents of fatal grey whale strandings proliferate due to mid-frequency sonar pulses sent out in increasing numbers from U.S. military submarines conducting drills in the Pacific. The latest mandate calls to further extend the coastal range of these drills.]

[Silence, someone wrote, throngs.]

[You cannot sustain an intimate discussion *in absentia*, be it a temporal or spatial separation, as much as you may attempt to continually clarify your intention across the divide.]

*Like the six-frame drift of sound from an image that repudiates
wilful disbelief. Like value unsynced from the going rates.*

[Our memory resists this impasse in its reimagined recollections, as does writing, which, in its way, is a species of memory; the mind's ability to pause mid-current, cant across flow and sing to itself in another key.]

[Time flows over us. We pass through time. These are not simply symbolic statements, though they are of a metaphoric order.]

*Like the cabbie who takes a wrong turn innocently,
his hands constant on the wheel. Like the argument that comes next.*

[Worker bees are inexplicably disappearing. Their colonies are collapsing as a result. It's been diagnosed as a syndrome arising from the combination of extenuating ecological factors rather than as a singular pathogenic effect.]

[Being alone in a room together. Just that. There is wonder in mere presence.]

[To describe an intimacy is personal, to undertake to gesture is intimate.]

*Like the blossom of her youth so, too,
will my pain fade. Like memory's chagrin at being left behind.*

[Her jeans were covered in honey when she arrived at my apartment that day. The jar she bought at the farmer's market had broken over her lap in the car. The look on her face, the swarm of her hands as she explained herself, were eloquent and impressive as ____]

[A well-wrought metaphor that renews its tense each reading.]

[The sun, sifting through the gang of things seen; oceans of it for all of us.]

*I am afraid of articulate light, and the wind, and hands and
flowers that are necromantic in some countries. And the frown
of memory passing like wind sweeping the boughs, like wind
I am afraid of my soul. I am afraid for my soul caught
in the trees as the wind rises. Like the bleating noises
below the trees. Well after the moment an animal refuses
to struggle. It's difficult to believe I am not eternal.*

God, you look good. No, I haven't grown.

— DAVID SEYMOUR

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