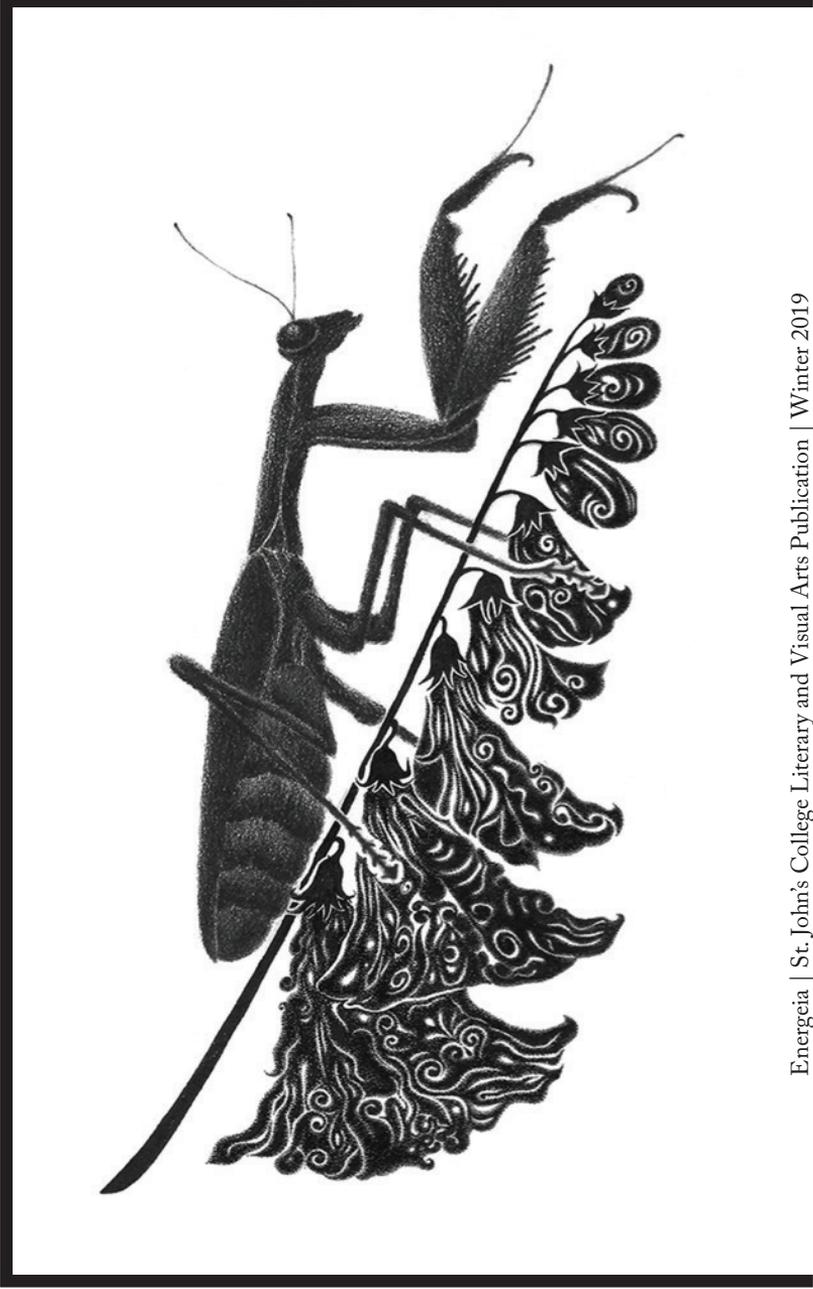


Winter 2019



Editor's note

We have included a few blank pages in this edition for you to use as you see fit. Write down a few notes or sketch your friends. Perhaps you could add something that you felt this edition was lacking. A blank page has limitless potential. What does it mean to you?

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Genesis and Exodus, Condensed

Nothingness was boring
So God created stuff,
Creation really wore him out
And then he said enough.

Look out Adam, here comes Eve
She's gonna wreck your life,
The days of wine and roses
Will turn to toil and strife.

An apple was the problem,
They ate it to the core,
And had to leave the garden
And roam forevermore.

Cain brought God some taters
Which he knew how to grow
Abel brought a little lamb
Its fleece as white as snow.

Abel found approval
But Cain was turned away
Our world became a crime scene when
His brother he did slay.

God was thinking to himself
Humanity's a dud
I think I'll wash them all away
And turn the world to mud.

The animals were rescued
By Noah and his kin
They built a giant floaty boat
And stuffed the critters in.

Then there was a little town,
They used to call it Sodom
And if you went to visit there
You had to guard your bottom!

Lot's poor wife just had to look
And ended up as salt
But all of us are curious
So why is that a fault?

Abram gave his wife to kings
And made a lot of money
Then he took her home again
To be his special honey.

When they both were very old
And rocking on the porch
God told them it was time for kids
To carry on the torch.

Isaac almost bit the dust
On top of Mount Moriah
But Abram killed a ram instead
And burned him in the fiah.

Esau was so hungry
He had to have some stew
So Jacob stole his birthright
And took his blessing too.

Judah slept with Tamar
He thought she was a whore
But when she had his baby
He bothered her no more.

Joseph was a dreamy boy,
But Jacob loved him best
His brothers couldn't stand the fact
That he was better dressed.

They didn't treat him very well
But still he rose to fame
And when the times were really bad
He saved them just the same.

The family stayed in Egypt
For several hundred years
And all the things they built there
Were watered with their tears.

Then when it was time to go
Old Pharaoh didn't get it
Oh yeah said Moses watch your back
I think you'll soon regret it.

God sent Egypt awful things
That finally made them weep
Get out of here the Pharaoh said,
You're dangerous to keep.

When Moses led them to the sea
Continue on they couldn't
The water made a path for them
By doing what it shouldn't.

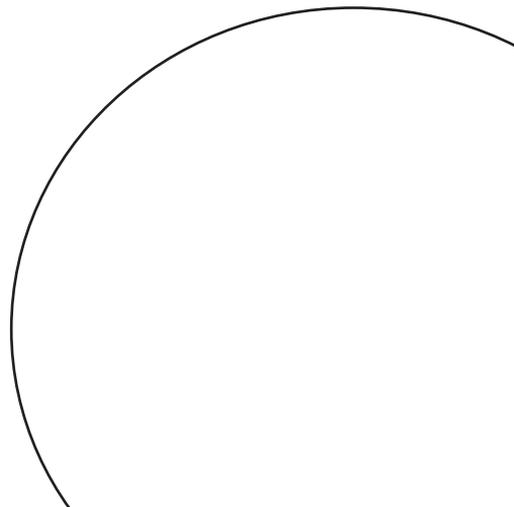
Moses climbed a misty hill
To get some dos and don'ts
And bring them to a stubborn crowd
Inclined to wills and won'ts.

The people made a golden calf
But all it said was moo
When Moses saw it he was mad
And slaughtered quite a few.

So then they wandered all around
Until they got to Canaan
But Moses couldn't enter in
Cause God said "You're remainin'."

And then begats begat begats
And all the land did fill
The patriarchs became a horde
For Cecil B. Demille

The apple also has a tale
From Eve to Isaac Newton
And now it is a glowing brand.
For us to do computin.



Invocation to the Muse

I.

It is the aftershock of a violent dream
and the soul's afterbearance
that stills me this morning, and it is the light,
bright and pale, that opens into me as though
I am some newborn thing, fresh to the world.

What question was posed to me last night
with such a -- such a clarity as to frighten me?

Wandering down the winding nighttime paths alone,
I came across two Sisters, standing hand-in-hand.
One was eyeless, and her name was Beauty.
The other mouthless, and her name was Truth.
Beauty spoke of her blindness
and Truth could not speak, nor did she need to.

These Sisters are the daughters of Life:
may they guide my hand.

II.

I write, sitting naked on a wind-worn bluff,
as in the beginning, with the wind and the spring sun against me,
waiting for that old dream to come to me,
for a god to speak, pen poised, thinking,
Oh, I could use a Muse,
I could use a Muse -

Muse, mary of the wind, take me, I beg you,
dance the invisible dance with me,
may I have this dance? may I kiss your hand?
what do you take me for? what do you see in me?
I am sick; the artifice of my own life and the life of
my people, my culture, my great illuminated world,
is eating at me.

I am made moth-cloth. I need to get all of this shit off me.
Muse: may I write, may you grace me with purity of purpose.
Bring me to madness at least, if nothing else. I would not mind
lunaticking for you if it is a performance you require of me.
Drive these crows from my shoulder. Blister my fingertips.
I want you to force my hand, make my stomach ache, my eyes dark.
I am desperate for grace. I am not magnificent when I pray.
I am desperate for grace. I let the breath spread thin out of my lips,
I lick my lips, I go back to my work.



Voro Testamentas The Spider's Testament

Grižtu namo. Ant mano stalo
Advokatas mėnulis
Rašo vorui testamentą.

Baltimore, 1970
Alfonsas Nyka-Niliūnas

I return home. On my table
the adovcate moon
writes the spider his testament.

Annapolis, 2019



The Spatial Ambiguity of Forks, Washington

[Reader, note: The supermassive black hole
guitar riff is of course blaring]

allows us to situate it in, say, a TGI Fridays parking lot I am of course
wearing the beanie Hayley wore in the “Decode” video

huddled in an atm nook an irrelevant detail - I won't pay for
this summer for months

& between the front seat and the barstool we are three beers
in & my tongue is getting restless as usual

Behind the trees the camera sways like a voyeur behind our backs & sometimes I
wish everything you needed to know about me could be summed up

in a poorly edited research montage
It's funny in it's own way, get this:

I'm surprised a co-worker hasn't found me on grindr so I open up all my
filters My throat is too ticklish to be bitten for long
so i bare what i

can Close up on my bio and the word “undead”
or a word which might as well read: “undead”,

read: a bio unto itself co-worker reads it out loud
and an eyebrow is raised

are” Okay but I'm kind of tired of having to

“I know what you

“Say
it”

Later A cigarette is lit and I almost forget to flinch
I'm doubly fucked – I never learned how to
inhale

& now I have to pretend even to

breathe

“It's the

fluorescence”
when I got bit I let all the air in my lungs go free and I have been
trying to convince it to come back to me ever since

I overestimated – I thought that just because my body was a pretty home it was a good one

Babe once upon a time I glittered like a diamond *very* glam

every other morning i would flaunt myself in front of the
vatican I still get out there when I can

the problem with a body made out of diamonds you never do get used to others
sharpening their teeth on you

and they all will remark on the taste of it
– never agreeing on the particulars,

never realizing that the
taste Is just the echo of spit

Heads up, due to budgetary
reasons

I will be collapsing into dust at the end of the night



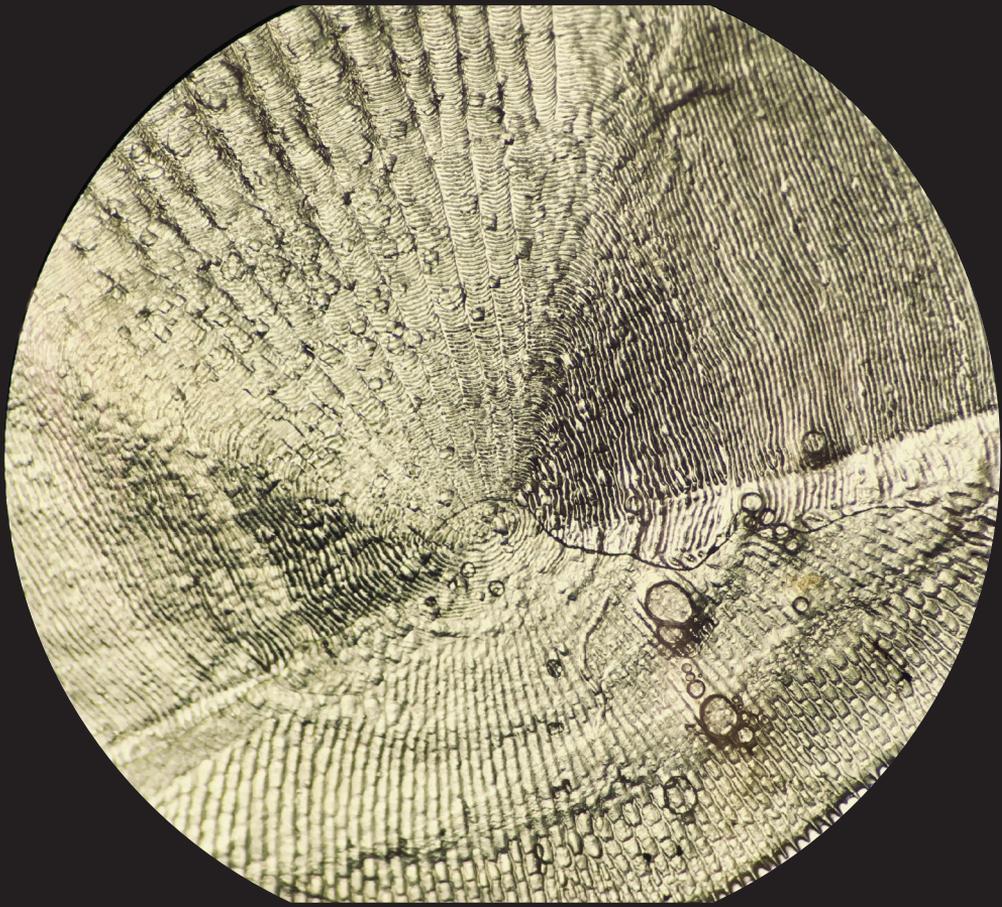
Sheep Pluck Dissection

To fall asleep beneath the knife
A heart that pumps its fill of life
The waterways that bear the dead
Are flowing now with voiceless dead

Lungs that kissed the sweetest airs
Remember not the mortal wears
And time pulls back the fleshy pews
Inheriting pastoral views

Of sleep the scalpel plays the pipes
Which whistle tunes of many types
Motion fills the hollow parts
The melodies of broken hearts

Deduce the life this sheep once held
The fields and hills in which it dwelled
Breathe in and shepherd now the song
Night as dark as wool is long



Eros in Bones

Here he is, before me
Eros in bones, near the
Breakfast plate

North Star beautiful
Eyeing me like a cloud
Wondering what one does not know

I look at the sun and ask who he is
The sun looked back and said
Love

Stargaze

After the setting of Eros
Love has moved the clouds
And turned the moon off
As the roses of the night are seen
That are seemingly light years away
But still close to home
Blooming in the eyes of the romantic

Blood Moon

A great gore
Is on the horizon
Colossal
A rathe rose
A circle of bright wine
A uterus leaking of
Maroon
And that intense sun
Now a black heart
Dead in the sky
Warmth and shine gone



What Keeps People Together?

She asks me, "What keeps people together?"--
her mother thrice wed, she hand-wrought by sperm
donation, driven fond by youth's fair weather
to climb famed peaks of fun and sweet unburned—
'til conversion. No wonder they become
run-down and Christian: fearless born to make
God's children fatherless, soft eyes hearts strum
'till shoulders curl and tongues of men forsake.
Oh, why'd God make His lords of all Creation
depend on dreamy play and kisses gone
for birthright, tending, and continuation?
Delights fast-fading be the Master's pawns.
Her name is Kalysta, most beautiful:
Odysseus she'd wild, while dutiful.



Scenes of Fall

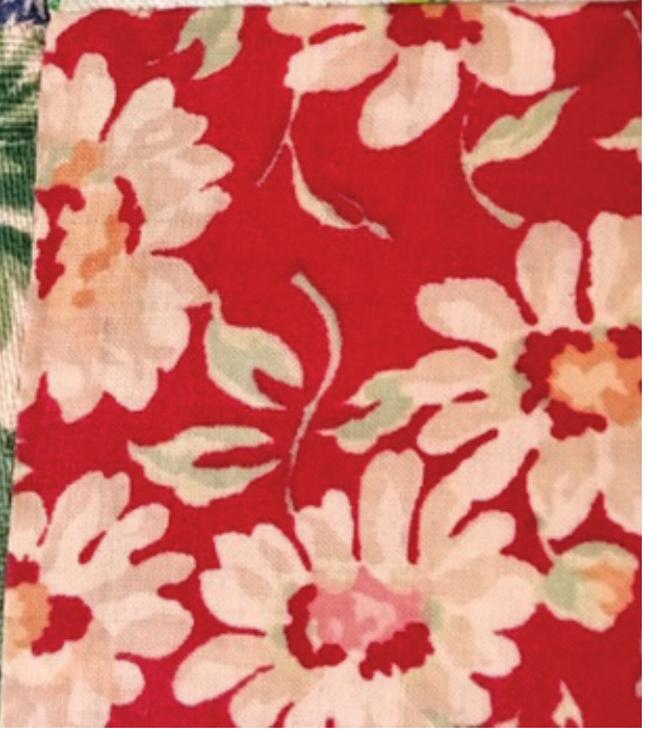
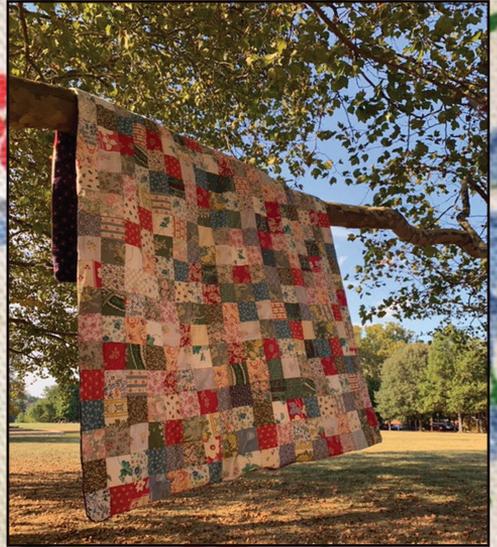
Marigolds of morning
Ascend my sweet September's
Honey hues mate magenta sunsets

Embers of October excite my wonders
With cinnamon sweet that suckles my pleasures
Susan's of black-eyed encompass this entity

Lilacs comfort, Ivory oh cozy
A sweet alyssum
My asylum of protection

Nirvana nights next through November
Chrysanthemum cues
Grace of my awing Autumn





I told most to fuck off

I've had a trillion men who couldn't fuck me
Not one could screw the pipe hole, at least correctly
Not one could put the cherry on the shake
I told most to fuck off

Only a few, a couple tens have given me
The tour of France, not on a trait du nord or catamaran
But I rode them as it was
Occasionally I told them to fuck off

Rarely has one ever gave me
An appealing excursion or cushty gallop
Once while reading
Twice in an art gallery
I didn't tell them to fuck off

I put in picture for them to fuck me harder
I can't bear a slow fucker
I want to be fucked fast
If you fuck me like a tortoise
Then you can fuck off





HERON

“Hello, Heron,” I might have whispered then
when I saw it sitting so still.

I might have looked at it twice, then
again, it was over my senses still

or I might have walked further when
I was pulled by one Autumn chill.

I could have said something too loud
or I might have been too quick to stay

when it speared into the water-soft quick
and flung unto the pier a fish

and looked at me with blood on its beak
and I could say no more

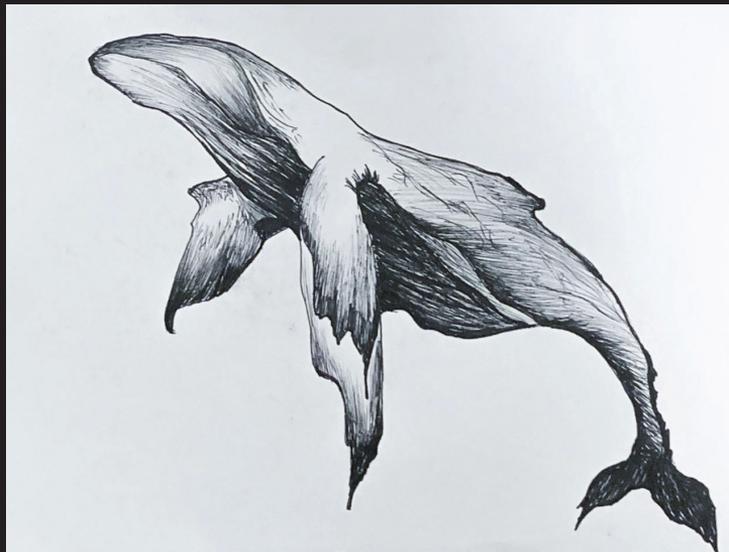
by the corpse on the pierfloor bloody
and was all still alluring, alluring still

and it might have told me in savage accents:
“goodbye”





a golden mess



There were times on earth
when roaming colors in the wind
and waves coming slow
gently seduced my faith.

Those were times of naked madness,
pearl walls were built from the bottom of the sea
and all beauty was cursed for birds to crash;
amused and helpless.

Soon that unkind earth begun its careful wrapping,
for the leviathan to hide in shallow whispers
crawling like a hurt beast in my dreams
with its delicate dreadfulness, its magical sins.

Now to your eyes alone I offer
the door of this golden mess
for when you grow old and weary
here is all, your fingertips had put at rest.

Here is to the lost tender beauty
to the green upon your face.

Omnis

The nicked-ear tabby cat napping white eyed On
the sun-bleached and wind-worn farmer's porch A
forty-minute drive south of Auckland.

The grape shot shards of Hadean iron
Flashing into naught over Neptune's
storms, Ending an eon-long narrowing
waltz.

The case of atrial Wenckebach
block Occasioning a flutter and a
skip In the pacific passage of your
heart.

Those little ghosts and Elysian dreams Can
all keep their vaporous realms and tombs
Were it that this and all the worlds unseen
Be mine to witness, breathe, and consume.



EUCLID'S BOOK I DEFINITIONS

Euclid's *Elements* begins with 23 definitions. Lists (such as this one), one of my teachers remarked, are always interesting: they have a beginning, middle, and end—an order. Any order, if it is an order, is a sign of intelligence at work. The order *means* something. The order of the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad II* (Odysseus' is in the middle) is not likely to be just happenstance.

What is the principle of order of Euclid's 23 definitions? "Principle," from Latin *princeps*, "first," is here equivalent to Greek *arche*, "beginning," or more precisely, ruling source. A beginning that rules is one that points to the end (that which comes after the middle), and also somehow governs the character of the end. Is this what prompted the thought that a good beginning is half the task? Does understanding a beginning *as* a beginning mean we can at the start discern, even if dimly, the shape of the end, and so of the whole?

Book I "begins" with the 23 definitions (along with the five Postulates and five Common Notions) in the sense that these are what's presented first. It "ends" with Proposition 47 (and its converse, P. 48), the theorem named after Pythagoras, in the sense that 47-48 are what appear in last place. But what did Euclid *think of* first? Did thinking about what a point is lead him to P. 47? Or did the Pythagorean Theorem lead him to think of the geometrical point as that which alone among geometrical objects has no part?

What would be a good geometrical image of Book I, of the movement of its argument (or inquiry)? A straight line would image a one-way trip, no looking back or return. A circle would suggest return to the starting-point, on the same level (in the same plane).

I propose the cone; more precisely, the spiral path traced out by an ant crawling around and around the cone surface until he reaches the apex. This image represents a motion that starts with *the* point (Def. 1, what has no part) as the extremity of a line (the ant's starting-point) and ends with *a particular* point, the apex of the cone. As we ascend in understanding (continually changing planes), we can look both backward at where we came from and forward to where we are going (P. 47).

At 47, we can look back (re-view, or re-collect) and try to see how we got here from Prop. 1. At P. 1 (if we don't chose to look ahead), are we likely to see the possibility of 47? We certainly won't if it doesn't occur to us to ask the question.

But to ask, at the beginning, the foreseeability of the discoverable end is to ask what the governing principle of order is. How Proposition 1 leads to Proposition 47 is same question (with different material) as asking how Definition 1 leads to Definition 23.

Can it be just happenstance that the middle definition is 14, a figure (Greek, schema) is what's contained by a boundary or boundaries? If the definitions *are* in some order, and if 14 is in the middle, what can we say about the principle that governs the arrangement of the whole list? How are 1-13 (the "beginning," or if you like, the "first half") different from 15-22 (the "end," or if you like, the "second half")? [I'll return to 23].

Definitions 15-22 classify the figures lying in a plane, according to increasing number of boundary-lines: the circle (one "side" or "boundary"), 15-17; semi-circle (two sides), 17-18; and the straight-sided figures, 19-22. The figures are also classified according to whether the boundary-line(s) are curved (the circle), both straight and curved (the semi-circle), or only straight.

If 15-22 are a taxonomy of planar figures, what are 1-13? Might we say the "elements" of figures? (What, for Euclid, is an "element"?). Again the ordering is from simple to complex—point,

line (2-4), surface (5-7), angle (8-12), boundary (13)—from element to structure.

The singling out, among angles, of those made by straight lines (Def. 9) brings this particular sub-set of angles to the foreground of attention while at the same time implying that there are angles contained by lines that are not straight. The singling out, among rectilinear angles, of the right angle (Def.10) marks it as of particular importance for the argument of Book I.

The right angle is special because it is the equal-to-itself angle (Def. 10, Post. 4) that lets us compare all other angles as either obtuse or acute (Defs. 11-12); and because it is the ordering principle of the taxonomy of rectilinear figures in Defs. 21-22; and because it is the apparatus for determining whether two straight lines in the same plane could meet if produced indefinitely in both directions (Def. 23; Post. 5).

What we're looking for is the ruling beginning of the arrangement of the definitions. Noticing the terms that are *not* defined may provide a clue: "part," "extremity," "evenly," "inclination," "set up on," "adjacent," "standing on," "contained," "falling on," "bisect," "direction" etc. And perhaps most important of all, "equal." What is Euclid assuming his students (us) bring to the book, before we even open it to the Definitions?

I propose that he takes for granted his readers' experience of the world, its shapes, sizes, places, and motions (e.g., of the sun, moon, and stars), its samenesses and differences (spring comes every year, but not always on the same day; spears are straight, shields round, the path of an arrow curved). He takes for granted, that is, that we know, albeit imperfectly, not only *that* order is, but also *what* it is.

If this speculation is sound, we might say that Euclid's principle of order in the Book I definitions, the source or starting-point that governs the subsequent direction of the inquiry, is order itself. On this view, his project would be to give an ordered account of order—to show the bones of order, so to speak, and therewith the reasons why the elements of order hold together *as* ordered in the *Elements*. Is Book I the beginning of a *logos* of order itself?

Reading Jean Genet and

As I slipped into further imagined degradation, I began to read and write in a new way. I saw the dirt on my invisible soul and saw that it gave my soul form and I, being far gone as one who is always doubting, flung upon it in ceremony more dirt and thus buried my soul as I gave it form. In this day and hour, I am a student across the long wooden table; I have just defeated myself. I saw myself as nothing, under my gaze, and where intersecting impossibilities collided, a second self was birthed from that nothing and I became again something new. (If I continue to writhe in this shell of skin, I will be free from it and what tormented me before will torment me no longer.) I am a student across the long wooden table, I am reading the work of a French vagabond, I am realizing the weavings of self and language, myth and double, real and imagined spectacle, long wordless in me: I have a word for the grotesque holy shadow of implication that has haunted me:
the word is psychology.

At this point, I am just living at the speed of thought. Each poet writ what I could not but craved to: post-verbal, enfevered, stuck dumb in my senses, leaning into each great wind that came down around me. This cold finds you anywhere in all this wind: it's straight bitter.

Things are not so sterilized by the cold now: long distances made shorter, sharp light made somewhat softer. It's odd that someone of such marmoreal beauty could eat with such ugliness. I had violent dreams last night but I can't remember them.

My measurements are a half-smoked cigarette and a single sock sleepless. Too many bodies on the high wall. Am I too grotesque for the world today?

I want to be shot dead. Shoot me dead. I said. I said. I
Knew how bad she wanted to fuck me, swear to josh.

The god-shaped space in your brain. The task of granting grace.

Self-portraits in a river's ripple.



Ripple

“Rhymes with Cripple”

Ripple's gone past faster than a vessel
Struggle for to pace up with the
stream Missed the bus at six past two
another Hour til the next one comes
and Credit card says you must wait As
shrubs that grew before you thresh All
Timothy, Buckwheat and Wheat

The rain I speak fell not today but
Last year when the rain fell plenty
So much so the tomatoes were
Ravaged and the field slid
sideways

Bristle up against the earthwave
That hill moves but it moves
slowly And if ever it moves on
fully That will be just one more
ripple

When the bus comes no one pays The one who
gets on is not me Against the cold the window's
rapped on We see that I am undressed under
dressed and so smile cus the winter falls this
day and not any other I am outside under black
sun, beneath cold sun, burning trash

Rippling heart when I leave his house
Nothing more than when I came
Southern Malus, prune, and dogwood
Lost their leaves unrecognized He artist
or a student who did art but hasn't done
none art in two whole years he's always
online

Now I was cold and one night homeless
Though I would never claim the
struggle We had pizza without wheat
And rapped the door outside Penn Station
A gambler who'd been at casino Made to
me humane complaint “Man, they would
not treat a dog Like this it's too damn
cold We wait outside they cops inside
Why not open we won't pay?”

Bored as when small a man's pleasure
Rippled as the ice outside had Jacked
up clover grass and such I packed up
found phone charger And returned to
class unconscious Gave my only coin
to Charon Never spent one more
night frozen Although outside grasses
brown On the outskirts of our town
High waves gather Small ones ripple



To Mother

Not to my Mother, but to this, will I realize the binding I create for her and me:

Mother's touch from her words. Wanting spine to spine that she might embrace me beyond imagination. Must her love practically be? In her deepness, her earnesty, she tries. And is it thought, or this thinking of me, that she herself connects?

I want her to be different, Maybe revel beyond herself, maybe not the harshness of father and sister against my throat, Maybe an "I understand" without eyesight.

Nevertheless, I defend. Because I know her so well, and she knows me so well, and that I, not, in any changing vision, Forget this fact.

But, like a somber light, I fix a careful gaze, a punctious feeling that in our closeness, I barely understand, Like a memory I know exists, but cannot recall, Feel for us.

Yet, No one else would I adopt so fast. No one else I would beg to be revealed to.

Is it wrong, is it awful, to want a different warmness Mother? One that perhaps I would receive and cause me to flutter like a brand new human being?

Please, bring us back to what you had learned.
And face me as the woman you truly are.

Let me promise to hold you as I learn.

When you were a child, would you think about me the way I think about you? Not an itch, not an echo, but life.



Marshmallow

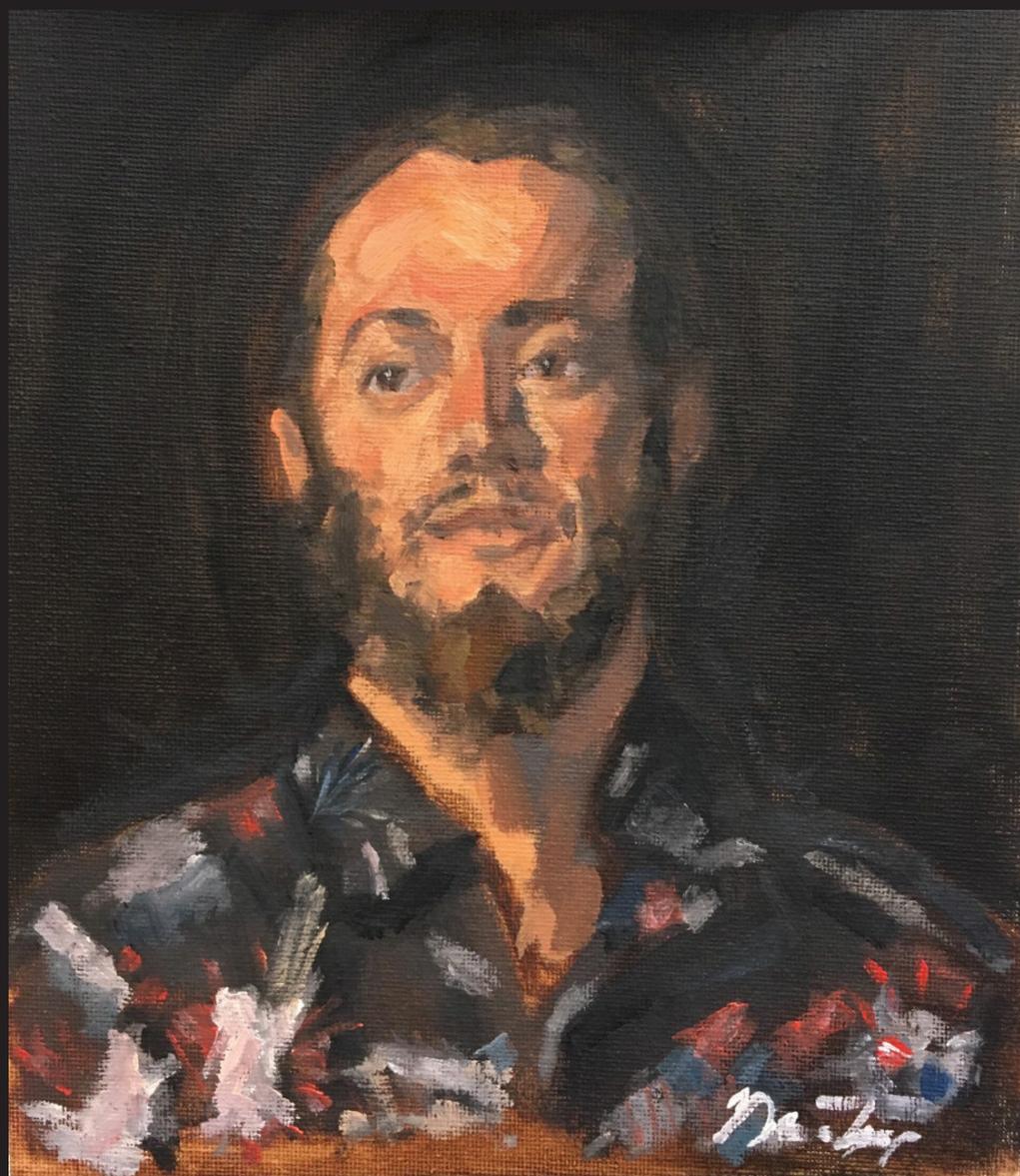
A sticky-soft suspended web,
Two cheeks chub-full of air and sweet
And ev'ry empty calorie.
My childhood, gone as quick as I
Can swallow down, just leaves a taste
To make remembering regret;
Then Dad says doing right takes time
And not too high a heat.

Cinnamon

You must think fragrance, warmth, and
A hint of apple-pie.
Mulled wine and a hug
From someone who you've missed.
It is the pleasure of their presence now,
And the hot pain of them gone again.
Spicy-sweet is our nostalgia,
or very much like Cinnamon.



Jake



The Leibniz Machine

Jack was accustomed to drinking his coffee with cream, but when Emma, the Leibniz technician, handed him his coffee black, he didn't think to question it. The coffee, like all things in John's life had been predetermined by Leibniz, and Jack had never thought to question Leibniz before.

"So, what's the problem then?" Jack asked.

"Oh, there's no problem, sir." Sarah replied.

"No problem? It wants me to go to the Mars colony!"

"Oh, and how lucky you are!"

"I don't want to go to the Mars colony."

"Well, I don't really see what that has to do with it. Leibniz is very sophisticated and knows how to mold us into the best of all possible worlds whether we want it to or not"

Jack sipped his coffee. It was too bitter and hot to drink, so he put it back on the table. "The best of all possible worlds?"

"Yes, that's our job. We've built a machine that can process an inconceivable amount of information and make highly accurate predictions. Why, I can't imagine that Leibniz didn't predict this entire conversation. Now, whether you like it or not, you are going to have to catch the next launch to Mars."

"It's just that the best of all possible worlds isn't one with me in it. I see"

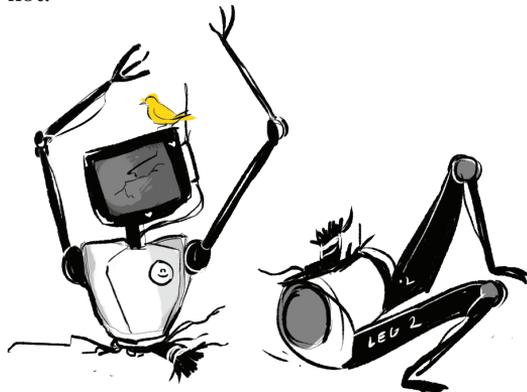
"Now sir, we have been experimenting with giving Leibniz more leniency, allowing it to give what may seem like more drastic commands. You are just one of the lucky few who get to benefit from this as quickly as possible. I understand that you might be upset, but the Mars colony isn't bad and this really is in everyone's best interest"

"You don't know what you are asking. I have a family here; you can't just ask me to leave them behind. You might as well ask me to kill myself."

"Now sir, you really aren't being fair. We-"

He stood up quickly knocking the table, causing his hot coffee to spill onto the Leibniz technician's lab.

Jack laughed. It, the machine, knew what was going to happen; it knew that he was going to be angry, to go to the technician, not drink the coffee and spill it on her, burning her. It knew he was going to be forcibly strapped onto the rocket after being arrested for assault. It knew the schadenfreude he would feel. It knew he would go to Mars whether he liked it or not.







that night in the city

自暴者不可與有言也

With those who do violence to themselves, it is impossible to speak.

-Mencius

She shrieked within herself and imagined that she might return completely torn up and above everyone else with sadness. They would all be forced to feel remorse for hurting her because they wouldn't understand what she had done and because they wouldn't be able to see through her actions. Furious and alone, she marched into a glossy department store. She then turned and went back outside, wondering for a moment if she should stay out and enjoy the cold night. She might walk back to The Bund, but thought to herself that if she did, she might cry forever and be lost until morning when the night would lift and the light of the cityscape would dim. For now, everything felt intense, as though an vivid dream. Come morning, people would hurry to work and the magic of the night would doze beneath the coverlet of a grimy, grey sky. And she would go back to her group of fellow travelers to apologize saying, "I'm sorry, I wasn't myself..." They would be so worried about her that she would be untouchable. They would fear that she might go off and scare them again if they said the wrong thing or upset her. So she would get off without being chastised in the least and without having to answer any questions at all. It was true that she had not been "herself". That night in the city, she had not been the self that her peers had come to know. But in those moments she had spent alone to "clear her head" after a long hectic day, she was more the self she was accustomed to than she had been in a long while. This felt easy. This felt welcoming. The only frightening thing was how unafraid she was to be back.

She savored her discomfort and basked in every second that her skin crawled and that her lungs felt tight, ready to pop. She went back inside the department store decisively. She knew that the wind from the avenue had tossed her hair and flushed her cheeks and that she looked beautiful. A woman cannot not do things alone if she does not look proud and beautiful. She rode the long, mirrored escalator upwards and pouted her lips as she felt people gaze at her, and when she arrived at a café she graced the simple barista with a toothy, genuine smile. She impressed him further by being a foreigner but ordering a tea in Mandarin. Her own arms filled with shopping bags, the barista carried the lady's steaming cup to a table, where she thanked him and gave him another smile. She knew how radiant she was.

She sat down and worked to sort through the rage that pooled within her and it occurred to her that in the midst of travel, she had not taken any medicine for several days. She doubted strongly that this was of any influence on her demeanor and reasoned to take several capsules at once when she got back to her hotel, to account for the doses she had missed. She sipped shyly at her tea, which smelled wonderful, but was still quite hot.

She took a moment and muttered a scattered prayer. Thoughts pulsed fast and poked at her mind, which was dense and murky. She concluded that she had acted immaturely in leaving her friends and that when she returned to them, she would have collected herself and would be ready to apologize to the necessary parties. She fought the urge to tear her hair out, and in the end did not do it because it looked so feathery and windswept that night. Hours before, her eyes had sparkled with excitement and discovery. They sparkled again now, too.

She finished her drink quietly and got up to ask the barista, whom she knew was now her friend, if he had, perchance, any disposable cutlery. Eager to be of service, the young man handed her a little package containing a thin napkin, a fork, a knife and spoon, and even a little straw for mixing coffee. She

asked for the location of the 卫生间, which earned her even greater approval. She thanked him warmly and made her way again through the bright department store that was beginning to empty out as the hour wore on, and then found herself in the bathroom.

She was swift and fluid in her movements. Not a thought was necessary for their execution. She closed herself inside a stall and crouched on the ground, hanging her handbag on a hook. Her mouth opened to let her lips curl into a silent cry. From the stall next door, she heard a woman let out a fart and blow her nose. She felt furious. "LEAVE!" she heard herself bellow, but knew she had said nothing. The other occupant made no other noise; perhaps her command had nevertheless been received. Perhaps the woman had not been there at all. No matter.

She discarded the napkin and spoon and fork and even the little mixing straw. She rocked on her heels, feeling trapped by her thick jacket which she had purchased in recent response to Shanghai's unseasonable chill. She rolled up the sleeves with some difficulty. Sweating now, but her fingers were frozen as they gripped the little plastic knife. She sawed wildly into the flesh of her forearms. Not a tear escaped. Her face screwed up into a wicked sneer. She felt clear and collected and longed for this clarity to persist. So she savagely raked at the skin, succeeding only in making shallow, reddened abrasions. Angered, she attempted to bend the knife in two. She had once read an article about prisoners attacking one another. The most effective way to shank someone was a broken toothbrush to the joint; the plastic would splinter, and movement of the joint would work to aggravate the pain. Pain. She craved the pain and she needed proof that she was alive because it was life that she craved, too.

She had felt happiness before, and although it had petrified her at the time, she had thought she might never let it go. She was starving for more. But this felt good, too. The plastic knife was supple and would not snap. It bent into a soft curve. She settled for stabbing herself repeatedly with the dull point until she grew bored. The knife was then dropped into her handbag. The lady stood up, and left the stall. She made her way to the mirror, where she decided she still looked beautiful. She touched up her eye makeup and went back outside into the crisp night. Things seemed somehow less magical than when she had left, but the lady found that the city was still bustling and alive and well.

She consulted her wristwatch and saw that she had long missed the time of rendezvous with her friends. Alone, she took the tram back to their hostel. She engaged in lively conversation with a plump teacher man who sat adjacent. She was glad that he seemed to understand what she wished to express. They shared similar views on the education system. She quoted Mencius and felt pleased that he was impressed, and even more pleased because she had not been trying to impress him. Across the aisle, two young women kissed and laughed and saw little around them but one another. An elderly man dozed. There were several hours left before daybreak.

A Story Without Using that Obnoxiously Common Fifth Symbol of Our ABC's

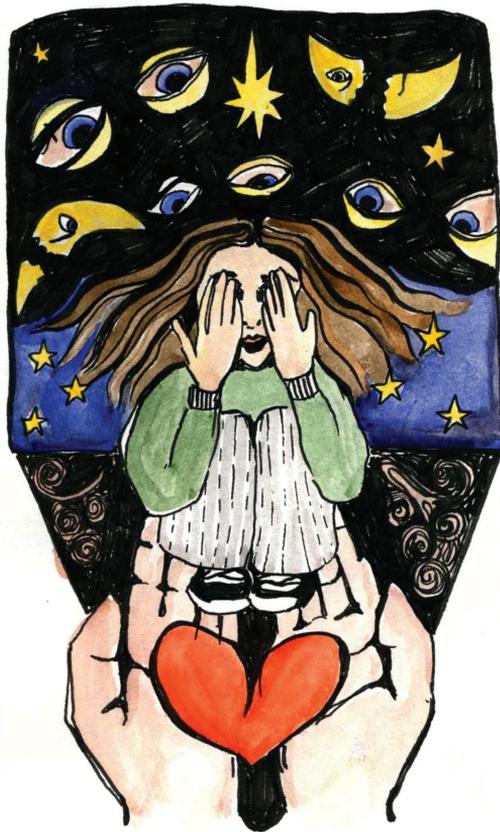
Two boys stood in front of a snarling gray building, its roof turning in as a furrowing brow, and its windows sharp and hungry as if awaiting an opportunity for attack. Facing this monstrous labyrinth, Dallas's firmly shut lips split, displaying his worry against his will and taking in hot sour air clouding up from dirty ground through iron grids. Francis was in too much shock to pay mind to Dallas anyway. His right boot had lost its bottom too many blocks back to count, and his foot was still so hot from its rhythmic, frantic pounding of city roads that it didn't hurt. His hands ran across its burning skin wiping away sand and dirt, surfing its rough composition now donning bumps growing as drops of rain on a window following a storm. His foot was now throbbing. Grimacing, Francis took Dallas's hand. *It hadn't got Dallas. That's all that was important.* Dallas, holding Francis's hand tightly, thought, *Francis is okay. That's all that is important.* Hand in hand, two boys stand in front of a snarling gray building.

9/22/19

in times of wandering and weariness
I find myself by the evergreen forest
the trills of songbirds and thundering steps of the Spirit
alight here, in the soul, in the mind, in the ear
and I cannot help but wonder whether I was always here
I am surrounded by the dawning mist, the winter birth
the pale sun in even paler ocean
and I am struck

my canoe is broken, traveling through crooked waters
my eyes are clouded, my hair is dry, my skin is bruised blue
and yet I have wandered into the lake, not yet, still yet
I am violet before the emerald eyes
I am fractured before the fractured whole

and I am struck
all beautiful things are broken in their beginning
broken in living, in dying, yet not, yet still, in loving



Lines by the Forest Window

in the shadows of the evening trees
I find a holy massacre
of those whose silence could not be silent
of those whose pulse could not push
past the current of their sullied blood
and in the mud of the seeming goddess
I find
skin shivering
soul cold

what cuts deeper than the color blue
on a sunlit reddish morning
in eyes there is no respite
for she who does not love
in he who cannot move

in the thicket the dove has cowered
moaning in a mourning song
he treads the path of needles and moss
entrapped by grieving, weathered wings

I find myself shackled by a swirling mist
the soul in me cannot shake this boundary
or climb above the wall of brick
 between the door in the sky
 and the well in the sea
I am held, it seems
 suspended by the exhale of the earth

sighs weigh more in silver than speech
glances more in gold than stares
and fingertips are more evident of reverence
than tongue on rosened lips

the sun may not slight all alike
but worship captures the soul
as love enlightens the eyes
and in love there is no hope
of assuaging the crimson
or curbing the blue
there is no withstanding the Siren
who invokes the melody of the soul's first resonant hymn

Translation of Petrarch, Sparse rime (Scattered Rhymes)

Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono

Voi ch'ascoltate in rime sparse il suono
di quei sospiri ond'io nudriva 'l core
in sul mio primo giovanile errore
quand'era in parte altr'uom da quell ch'i' sono:

del vario stile in ch'io piango e ragiono
fra le vane speranze e 'l van dolore,
ove sia chi per prova intenda amore
spero trovar pietà, non che perdono.

Ma ben veggio or sì come al popol tutto
favola fui gran tempo, onde sovente
di me medesimo meco mi vergogno;

e del mio vaneggiar vergogna è 'l frutto,
e 'l pentersi, e 'l conoscer chiaramente
che quanto piace al mondo è breve sogno.

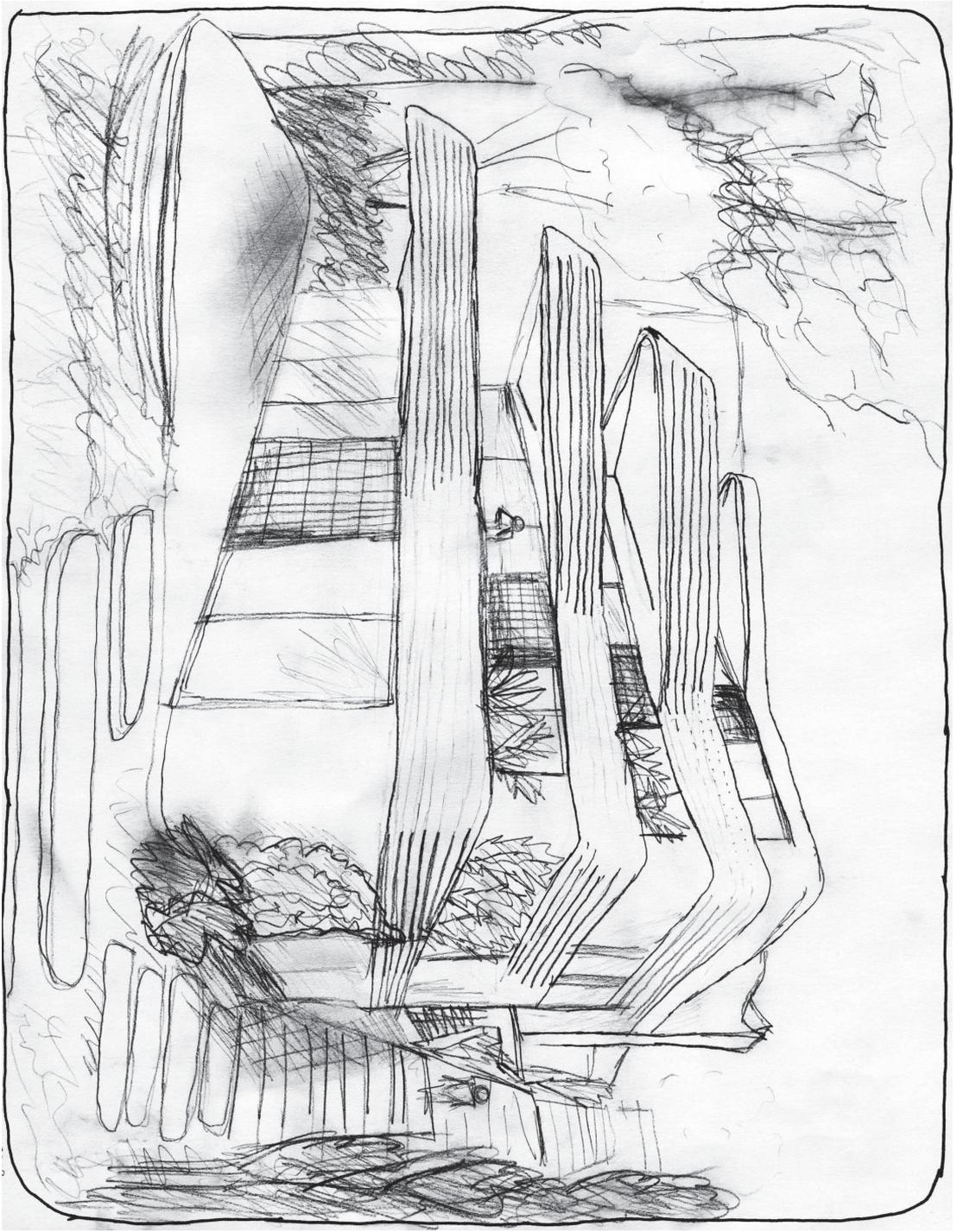
All you who hear, in scattered rhymes, the sound
Of sighs, wherein I once did feed my heart
In youth's first error, when I was in part
Another man from how I am now found:

For all the modes in which I weep and speak
In th'interval between vain hopes and woe,
From those who, having tasted love, love know,
Pity, not only pardon, do I seek.

But now full well I see how stood my suit,
That long was I the talk the crowd held dear,
For which I often shamed within do seem;

And of delusion shame is now the fruit,
Regret as well, and knowledge sharp and clear
That world-got pleasure's but the briefest dream.





Of Course, I Understand

The moment Emily caught her husband kissing another man in their bedroom, she was shocked. She did not know her husband was capable of being so passionate. One side of his lip curled up; moaning, whispering, he eagerly pulled the man against his chest until their bodies became one. Desire, love, and fanatic brightened his eyes, but the passion vaporized when Emily met his gaze. He panicked, trying to pick up the clothes from the floor, murmuring some words. But she did not hear anything, and ran down to the kitchen.

It was a nice kitchen. She designed it herself. A local magazine planned to feature it on the next issue. The editor this morning said on the phone that she would bring the photographer to take some pictures. The news excited her, so she left Sarah's house earlier. She used to enjoy having afternoon tea with Sarah, but today she only wanted to go home and clean the kitchen one more time.

What a lovely kitchen. She said to herself. The women Bible study group came to her house every Friday, and they could not stop marveling at it. The balance among multiple colors, they said, was more than perfect. Her mother-in-law praised the Sherwood green cabinets, insisting that she would love to have the same. Frank's Family liked her. She was educated but not over-educated to the extent that her brain was full of progressive nonsense. As a pastor's wife, she devoted most of her time to the community. When Hill's daughter came out of the closet, people were terrified except her. Bring some cookies to Hill's house, she tried to persuade the young lady not to walk towards the sin. Her effort was futile—the young lady threw angry comments on her—but she thereby became a symbol of kindness in the neighborhood. No one, people asserted, was more caring than Emily was.

Would not this kitchen be the best place in the world? Glaring at the oven, retro style, bright orange color, she wondered. It reminded Emily of her parents' house. Her father rarely talked to her, but she could be sure he was a great man. Her mother spent most of her time in the kitchen. She was a quiet woman. The sadness in her eyes forbade her from uttering. The similarities between Frank and her mother often surprised her. He was taciturn. Certainly, Emily would not doubt his love. She remembered the smile he gave when she made him pan-fried chicken with mashed potatoes. Unlike her mother, Frank could be talkative. Every Sunday, he preached in the church, enlightened his audiences. Without him, the town would not see the sin of homosexuality, the fall of feminine virtues, and the tradition would burn down like an old tree in the flame.

"Em—" a low voice interrupted her thoughts. The voice continued. "It was nothing. I just got confused. Confused, you know. Confused."

The sound waves of his words traveled through the kitchen, leaving footprints all over the wall. Some were hidden under the sinks, but she saw them.

"Em—" It was the voice. The footprints worried her. They could ruin the kitchen. How should she clean it? Would the editor notice anything tomorrow? Would it still be featured in the magazine? Could it? The voice kept going, and she knew she must act. "I—"

"Of course." Before the sentence was completed, she interrupted. "Of course, Frank. Of course, I understand."

EULOGY FOR THE VOYAGER

Who among us can walk with you?
Who has measured the weighted world
and found it more worthy of love since
Atlas himself? Who else can lay claim to
the body of the Midwestern Quotidian Dragon?
And who can raise a red barn to keep guard
against the gray waves of its million ghost-hungry children?

Lighthouse of Man, know that I hunt the
mosaic shores for sea glass beneath your shadow.
Though you are a single needle in the green-stained
cathedrals of the pine forests which dot my
childhood, with you I sew my clothes anew.
Traveling ever forward, you carry a golden pitcher -
With it you water the stars, and even now they still
bloom beneath my feet. Forgive that we might never
repay you, or that we should weakly stumble on this
mountain path you carve; at these heights the
paralyzing venom of desolation falls like snow
onto our tongue.

And for that, this Eulogy is made:
Hero that you are, your mother mourns the flight
of her little swift. Please, dream of her if
you can - hold tightly and let not the songs of your
youth be lost in the valley that marks the divorce
of ground and sky. Verily, forgetting is no small
death, and none can suffer to return your body
home. Hero of Man, you breathe in a skin of iron
but bleed with a heart of aluminum foil.
Do you fear the breath of the wrinkling wind?
Does your memory hold the sails on your
great wandering true? You have claimed all the
horizon as your holy frontier. Yet even now
you shut the door as I prepare a funeral in
my Appalachian mind for the wonder
you gave the world too long ago.



As I Give You to the Changing World

by Flo Palmacci (1927-2007)

Submitted by her grandson, Brandon Wasicsko (AGI'20); dedicated to the memory of his parents, Dolores and Matthew.

How will you survive the sea of discontent
Or the wint'ry winds of worldly ways?
Can you overcome confusion and chaotic days
And fill your life with purpose and intent?
Do you dread the day of knowing disaster and defeat
And fear the force of fantasy and fact?
Will you be strong enough to hold your soul intact,
With strength enough to savor all that's sweet?
Are you equipped to understand the urging of desire
That surges forth, unbidden, unfulfilled?
Will there be a moment when your thoughts are stilled,
When you recall the hopes to which you still aspire?
Will you try to tame the torment of humanity
and conspire to conquer universal ills
By seeking truth, and speaking truth at will,
Suppressing lies, lamenting all profanity?
Can you realize the anguish that's harbored in my breast
As I give you to the changing world that waits?
No more am I the Master of your fate...
You are a man, my son, and I have done my best.



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