

Toward a Pedagogy of the Imagination: A Testimony for What Cannot be (Ascertained)

"This is of course
a kind of pedagogy
that we can only exercise
upon ourselves,
according to methods
invented for the occasion
and with unpredictable results."
—Italo Calvino (1988)

"Words—I often imagine this—
are little houses, each
with its cellar and garret.
Common-sense lives
on the ground floor.
...To mount and descend
in the words themselves—
this is a poet's life.
...Must the philosopher alone
be condemned by his peers
to live on the ground floor?"
—Gaston Bachelard (1964)

if bachelard were in verse II

life begins well.

it begins enclosed.

protected. all warm in the bosom (of the house.

it is body and soul.
it is the human being's

first world.

when being is being- well
in the well being originally associated
with being.

in its countless alveoli space

contains compressed time.

within the being
in the being of within
an enveloping warmth welcomes

(being reigns in a sort of earthly paradise
of matter.
and the poet well knows that

the house holds childhood motionless
in its arms.

here space is everything

for time ceases to quicken memory.

in this remote region
memory and imagination remain associated.

and even when we are in a new house
the memories of other places travel through

our bodies. the house we are born in

is physically inscribed in us. it is

a group of organic habits.

the word habit too worn (a word)
to express

 this passionate liaison of the body

 which does not
forget.

 we are never real historians
but always near poets.

 and our emotion is perhaps
nothing but (an expression

of a poetry that was lost.

Note: As I read Bachelard I was struck by how poetic he is at times. This is a poem where all the lines come from Bachelard (1964, pp. 5-15). All I did was find them and arrange them, and of course intervene stylistically.

...the memory dreams, and reverie remembers.
—Gaston Bachelard (1969)

Old Hill

If you stand right here at the top of Old Hill
you can hear the wind un-winding a myth

it remembers blade by blade leaf by leaf root by root.

Then the storm that follows whirls us
together in the struggling light black feathers
bits of bark

round lyric fruit gathers us around the fire of
a tale: inside its hollow bones the twigs of nests
shards of shells (and broken teeth).

See
the lightning inside their quivering blue
souls. The eyes of children wide with

what rumbles in the blood.

Hear
the thunder in our starved throats. Borrowed
words and bits of tales swirling in our need—

with chants draw maps of buried bones.

Listen
how the years of the old ones (open like flowers)
turn to children let loose
in fields of
wild words

(where most of us meet for the first time).

Do we remember storms or do we imagine them
at the top of Old Hill?

Contemporary poetry, however, has introduced freedom
in the very body of language. As a result, poetry appears
as a phenomenon of freedom.
—Gaston Bachelard (1964)

if bachelard were in verse I

how word phrase image
creates.
(being

hangs on the tenuous thread
of the sentence.
of an expression. the fleeting life

by experiencing living re-living
the life of the poem

the reader is

the writer's ghost in the salutary experience
of emerging not through the pragmatic-
language or language-as-an-instrument
but language-as-reality. the poetic image

a sort of differential of this evolution.

a great verse

influences the soul of a language.
and the language in turn becomes
an expression creating being.

such is the unpredictable nature of poetry

and if we render speech un for see able
is this not an apprenticeship to freedom?

Note: Except for the first two lines, this poem is created entirely from stitching together phrases and sentences from Bachelard. As I read these fragments kept jumping out from the text and demanding more attention.

References:

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