

## BEYOND THE SPHERE: A DIALOGIC COMMENTARY ON THE ULTIMATE SONETTO OF DANTE'S *VITA NUOVA*

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*Revolutions:* The turning movement through the images of this sonetto involves several eddying, (micro)cosmic motions. We begin already beyond the widest sphere, then penetrate it from this side via love's weeping in a motion that is virtually re-initiated from the heart in a kind of syntactic time-warp. Then comes the thought-sigh's arrival before the lady and its getting lost in the epicycles of honor and splendor and gazing. Then his subtle retelling of the gaze caused by a secondary motion of the heart that first moved it. Then the mystical understanding of the *pensero's* unintelligible speech through the apophatic anamnesis of the beloved's name. Finally, a gracious love-boast gently expanding towards those who have understanding of love.

Con-sider our commentary a love-driven constellation, a double star (binary or optical?) gravitationally caught within these motions, like the subtle turnings of an ungraspable celestial tress.

THE HAND that begins to write is in a messy and tactile landscape where only poems can reach *oltre mer*/beyond the sea.<sup>1</sup> There, lives my beloved. Here, I die of grief. Dante and Nicola decree a transcendent, astrolabe-like, cosmic landscape: the page holds us holding the sphere, both inside and outside the farthest trajectory, both on earth and in heaven. Spheres are made of quintessence (fifth element), with stars (in seventh sphere/firmament), planets, and moon (in spheres below) embedded as gems. If our hands caress this *spera*, *primum mobile*, ‘first-moved,’ the farthest sphere, ninth, crystal heaven, then we are *Oltre*/beyond, in *empireum*, the abode of God. We’re immovable, the mover: we are calling it a hand maybe for the last time, all distinctions slowly dissipating but not lost: these pages keep them. We have distinctions merely to multiply and expand experience, *che più larga gira*. As one side calls the sphere/*spera* ‘the one that spins farthest,’ *oltre*/the other *la spera*/wishes/hopes ‘that it spins farthest.’ One steps *oltre*/beyond *l’aspera*/troubles—better than *per aspera ad astra* (through rough paths, wilderness, troubles, bitterness, to the stars), *oltre*/another *l’aspira*/breathes in, blows, aspires, hopes. We have split our brains and exchanged the halves: Dante and Nicola share an analytical brain able to name, divide, pass beyond/*oltre*, draw, predict the movement of the spheres. They prefer punctuation, ‘situation and figure or form’: Dante in *Quaestio de aqua et terra*, treating of the nature of the two Elements, Water and Earth, declaring in favor of Earth in a dispute ‘whether the Water in its own sphere, that is in its natural circumference, might be in any part higher than the Earth, which emerges out of the waters.’<sup>2</sup> ‘Spherical ambivalence: which sphere is within which?’ (N) Touching the outermost from the outside in a world of musical, gyrating spheres, we resolve the anguish of the impossible sea crossings, *oltre mer*: no longer confined in and on surfaces, we follow ways through them. [A]

Oltre la spera  
che più larga  
gira

EMPYREAN CONSPIRACY, intimate relation to the ultimate exterior. The line speaks (us) as already present past a boundary we could never count to, at the open end of an unimaginable sum, on the other side of *più*. Medievally knowing it as the ninth in no way diminishes the supreme distance of its perfect superlative, the wonder of reaching by comparison comparison’s death, its passing away. The sphere we are beyond, ‘che tutto quanto rape / l’altro universo seco, corrisponde / al cerchio che più ama e che più sape’ (*Paradiso* 28.70-2) [which sweeps along with it all the rest of the universe, corresponds to the circle which loves most and knows most].<sup>3</sup> The logic of *più*, of more, of n+1 handlessly draws the geometry of desire, operates as the unceasing engine introducing into all things an incalculable, incommensurable angle, their invisible eternal individuating spin. It gives, *is* the most in every more. ‘You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil’ (Genesis 3:4-5). There is no arrival here, no landing on this shore, no seizing what owns every seizure, what ravishes (*rape*) every possession. ‘La bufera infernal, che mai non resta, / mena li spiriti con la sua rapina’ (*Inferno* 5.31-2) [The hellish hurricane, never resting, sweeps along the spirits with its rapine]. We see beyond only from desire’s most secret, largest within. ‘Infinity is not the “object” of a cognition . . . but is the desirable, that which arouses Desire, that is, that which is approachable by a thought that at each instant *thinks more than it thinks*.’<sup>4</sup> Saying what we can never not say. Speaking in the imperishable sweetness of our most spontaneous passivity. It is not that we know. We hear, celestially, self-forgetfully, the here. ‘For me—how could there be something outside me? There is no outside! But we forget this with all sounds; how lovely it is that we forget! . . . In every Instant being begins; round every Here rolls the ball. There. The middle is everywhere. Crooked is the path of eternity.’<sup>5</sup> [N]

*CORAM TE COR MEUM et recordatio mea* [open to you are my heart and my memory].<sup>6</sup> *Coram*, an adverb of manner (openly) or place (before) is of the heart. *Recordatio* (memory) seems an aspect, the temporal flow of the body/heart/*core*. This, assuming *core* is a verb: and if so, which verb is it?—To L/love: to learn by heart, to (re)member in the body: the body always knows love better, sooner, stronger, louder, it is not easily swayed, and slow if ever able to forget, rebellious in a near-silent and obvious acknowledgment of its truth. Avicenna's translators use *recordatio* for *dh-k-r* (admonishing), a specifically human ability: animals possess memory, but only man can recall principles once known and now forgotten.<sup>7</sup> The proximity between admonishing and sighing is cruelly remembered: dying for a month of wounds received in a duel he provoked, the king's beloved Quélus scandalously forgets God and all saints and remembers 'my king': *Il passa de ce monde en l'autre, aiant toujours en la bouche ces mots, mesme entre ses derniers souspirs qu'il jettoit avec grande force et grand regret: 'Ah! Mon roy, mon roy!' sans parler autrement de Dieu ne de sa Mere* [he passed from this world into the other, having always in his mouth these words, even among his last sighs, which he threw with great force and great regret: 'Oh! My king, my king!' without speaking otherwise of God or his Mother].<sup>8</sup> The words *among* the sighs: are words and sighs distinct? How does a sigh issue from my heart? 'A sigh knows how to leave the body and travel on its own, it doesn't need provisions or a map' (N). Dante and Nicola's *sospiro* seem part of the original world that Augustine does not leave in departing from it, a world where *recordatio* is of the heart, not of the admonition. *Molto mio, tutto mio*: in *De vulgari eloquentia*, Dante uses *mio* as *caro*, and so does Petrarch: *o dolce mia guerrera* [o my sweet foe].<sup>9</sup> My all, my king, my foe: if in Levinas we know only in relation to the other, in Dante we love as if our own, *mio* the episteme of *caro*. [A]

*Passa 'l  
sospiro ch'esce  
del mio core:*

EXITING THROUGH THE SINGULAR. This sigh, my sigh, the simple word-breath of the flesh possessed, spoken for but not to someone, said to none and heard (therefore) by everything, issues in the limbo of love, and having no place, finds space beyond it. 'And there is a third nature, which is space [*chōra*] and is eternal . . . and is apprehended when all sense is absent, by a kind of spurious reason [*logismō tini nothō*]' (*Tīmaeus* 52b).<sup>10</sup> Such extreme apprehension, such touching of innermost and outermost, which happens *from* the heart (my me, possessed possessor, given giver), *through* the breath (medium of body and soul), and *towards* nowhere (utopia, placeless place), indicates the way, forms the shape of being's return to itself. Some, thinking soul as in the body, say sigh is exhalation. More properly, sigh is your being breathed in, the in-spiration of individuated life by the supersoma, the big body, the corpus-cosmos that also is mine, ALL MINE!!!<sup>11</sup> The sigh's knowing where it's going, its seminal passive surpassing, is the hither side of this inbreathing, beauty's effect everywhere being, whether from above or below, incubus or angel, to *take your breath away*. So also the sigh (actuality of Plato's bastard logos, the chora-seeking sound Socrates's body really makes) is illegitimate, both as monstrous, non-made word and as lost, misspent spirit. And it is exactly *this* should-not-have-been, the pure negativity pertaining to the specificity of my single sigh's being, that holds it, perfectly homeless, in supreme relation to what is beyond place. Many sighs is infernal: 'Quivi sospiri, pianti et alti guai / risonavan per l'aere senza stele' (*Inferno* 3.22-3, cf. Argento's *Suspiria*). No sigh is ideal: 'those who sigh loudly and weep and wail have yet to experience love. Love sets on fire the one who finds it. At the same time it seals his lips so that no smoke comes out.'<sup>12</sup> But a singular human sigh, momentarily opening and airing the event of oneself, is *perfect*: 'Beyond the sphere passeth the arrow of our sigh. Hafiz! Silence' (*Divan*, 10.9). [N]

AMOR *che ne la mente mi ragiona*: in *Convivio*, Love reasons from within my mind. What s/he says (*dice*, 18) moves things in me (*move cose. . . meco*), deviates my intellect (*'ntelletto . . . disvia*, 4), my *debole intelletto* (16).<sup>13</sup> Empyrean *ogni intelletto* (23), *intelligenza* that Dante associates with (sun)light does not necessarily presuppose—is not limited to—mental or rational exchange, or use of language. If Amor is an angel or a demon, s/he does not need to use language (*loqua*), a trait s/he shares with God and ‘inferior animals,’ as opposed to humans (*De vulgari*, 1.ii.2).<sup>14</sup> Angels communicate (*pando*, spread out, unfold, unwind, akin to Pandarus and to *pandus*, crooked, wound) without time (promptly, from *promo*, to bring forth emotions) and space (ineffably, from *effero*, to bring forth news): they impart intelligence without words. In the tripartite hierarchy of cognition (reasoning, intelligence, contemplation), intelligence links the lowest to the highest term. Derived from *intus legere*, reading within (oneself), or less frequently, from *inter legere*, reading between, intelligence exceeds speculation, leads to loving contemplation, mystical union, unimpeded by differences between God and humans. Both angels and demons have intellect, an inalienable though corruptible part of their nature.<sup>15</sup> Dante sometimes describes how wordless communication works: either intelligence, like ether, makes angels ‘totally known to one another by itself’ (*alter alteri totaliter inotescit per se*), or they apprehend each other because they are all reflected in the ‘resplendent mirror’ (*De vulgari*, 1.ii.3). Non-rational animals of the same species communicate wordlessly; non-individuated, they’re guided by instinct and identical acts and passions (1.ii.5). Similarly, languages at the building site of Babel are split between the different ‘species’ (occupations; those who carried stones by sea *vs.* by land, etc.: 1.vii.7). Human language: reason imparted by touch: *de una ratione in aliam nichil deferri possit nisi per medium sensuale* (1.iii.2).<sup>16</sup>

[A]

*intelligenza  
nova, che  
l'Amore*

EVAPORATION OF THE EARTHLY. Intelligence, new, rises from the earth, from all that stays in self-touching. Long before it becomes rising, before it finds verb, intelligence is there, new before its own newness, with Love behind it, leading the way. Earth, *tellus*, is immanent (*in-manere*) to *intelligenza*, bearing it from within: ‘thinking takes place in the relationship of territory and earth’ (D & G).<sup>17</sup> Ergo the gravity between scholars and rocks (e.g. *suiseki*, lit. ‘water rock,’ an idea-vaporizing machine), between stone (Caillouis’s *l’orée du songe*) and con-templation, our self-ordering (*ratio*) geo-metry and love’s taking place (*para-deisos*, *locus amoenus*). *Pace* the Aristotelian substance/accident structure of the language (‘alcuna cagione del mio essere,’ *Convivio* 1.13.4) that Dante emerges from/into, newness is not a property of intelligence but its essential natality, its always being *born*, which means, as with our own births (life, I can’t believe it’s really happening), being always at once *ex nihilo* and from somewhere, an *avvenimento* (event-as-eventing) whose curse is necessarily *ad omnes*: ‘Bestemmiavano Dio e lor parenti / l’umana spezie e ’l loco e ’l tempo e ’l seme / di lor semenza e di lor nascimenti’ (*Inferno* 3.103-5) [They cursed God and their parents, the human race and the place and the time and the seed of their origin and of their birth].<sup>18</sup> Here we hear, via the echoing etymological bestial voice that Big Mouth’s commentary encompasses (‘Fa qui l’autore imitare a quelle anime il bestiale costume di molti uomini che . . .’), the infinite sublimity, via terror, of intelligence’s newness, the eternal ground of rationality’s blaspheming of the animal: ‘. . . until in the animal-form this instinct is fully manifested as one of the finite aspects of the finite mental form of the soul. Gradually this instinct is further and completely transformed into intellect, this being the highest finite aspect of the manifestation of the mental form in the human-form of the gross-conscious human soul experiencing the gross world.’<sup>19</sup> [N]

LITTLE WRETCH (*misella*), drunk, the luckiest lover is s/he who is the most open: only tears bring on kisses: *et dulcis pueri ebrios ocellos/ illo purpureo ore suaviata* (Catullus 45.11-12: ‘the dear drunken eyes of the sweet boy, caressed with that purple mouth’).<sup>20</sup> In Catullus’s little poem, the lovers who could not be happier (*beatiores*, 25), devoted (*unquam*, 21, *uno*, 23, only), exchange vows sealed by Amor’s sneezes, ‘in entwined passion, loving, loved’ *mutuis animis amant amantur* (20). *Quand en pleurant ma Maîtresse s’ennuye,/ Voyant s’amy avoir mille douleurs,/ L’enfant Amour se baigne dans ses pleurs,/ Et dans ses yeux ses larmes il essuye*: when my beloved, weeping, torments herself, seeing his darling have a thousand pains, the child Love comes to bathe in her laments, and from her eyes wipes away all the tears (Ronsard, II, 429).<sup>21</sup> Like rain, tears flow freely and, like the farthest sphere, they are beyond count: ‘The quality of mercy is not strain’d, / It droppeth as the gentle raine from heaven’ (*The Merchant of Venice*, 2095-6). Desire, love, rain, *calculus* (sand), stars, tears all participate in the immeasurable beyond, as in Guillaume de Machaut’s *True Story* (*Voir Dit*), *ballade 33* (ca. 1362): *Nes que on porroit les estoilles nombrer, / Quant on les voit luire plus clerement, / Et les gouttes de pluie et de la mer, / Et la greve seur quoy elle s’estent, / Et compasser le tour dou firmament, / Ne porroit on penser ne concevoir / Le grant desir que j’ay de vous veoir* (Just as no one can count stars, although they seem to shine more brightly, or drops of rain or sea, or gravel on which she extends, or encompass the curve of the firmament—so, no one can think or conceive my great desire to see you).<sup>22</sup> It is also s/he who implores: *Ploures, dames, ploures votre servant . . . Vestes vous de noir pour mi* (*Ballade 32*: Ladies, weep for your servant. . . wear black for me), for only they can save the lover: *en vous de bien a tant/ que dou peril . . . me geterez* (there’s so much good in you that you will thrust me far from peril).<sup>23</sup> [A]

*piangendo  
mette in lui,  
pur su lo tira.*

‘ONLY LOVE / Can bring the rain / That makes you yearn to the sky. / Only love / Can bring the rain / That falls like tears from on high. / Love reign o’er me’ (The Who).<sup>24</sup> Drawn upward by what beats down, driven onward by what remains behind. From *plangere*, noisy beating, thus the self-striking of lamentation, ergo weeping as self-affliction, hence tears = anti-gravitational soul-goading. Warning: reading the personification allegory unidirectionally (i.e. backwards) kills its phenomenology. Love’s weeping putting into one’s sphere-passing sigh a new intelligence drawing it ever upward is more *real* than whatever it means. It (poetry), like the tear a cosmos-reflecting almost-nothing, here finds the echoing repetitional *space* (stanza) of weeping itself, the cavernous place where it happens (vide, audi Ural, ‘Ural,’ *Sounds of Pain*). Now comes the homology between love’s tear and the ‘li miroers perilleus / Ou Narcisus li orgueilleus / Mira sa face e ses iaus vairs’ [perilous mirror where proud Narcissus gazed at his face and his brilliant eyes].<sup>25</sup> Tear and mirror are twins, such that in weeping, one is on the *inside* of the reflection, or becomes reflection itself, the principle of in-sight.<sup>26</sup> So only in love’s weeping is there real self-love, the irreplaceable worriessness of *being* in love (thank God I am weeping, thank me for loving). Only the blinding tear reopens and lights the world, re-se(e)izes it as mirror or poiesis-zone where love keeps *turning* into new intelligence. Only letting the tears pour in, praying for rain, is there chance of seeing *through*, of finding what Narcissus dies to see, how much the image loves him, how truly your reflection, mistaken for another, really loves you. One never weeps, is never crying’s secret agent. Weeping is the weather, the atmospheric condition, of love’s working, its limitless secluded labor. ‘Thus we are nothing, neither you nor I, beside burning words which could pass from me to you, imprinted on a page: for I would only have lived in order to write them, and, if it is true that . . .’<sup>27</sup> [N]

LUX MEA *qua viva vivere dulce mihi est* (Cat. 68. 160): my light whose burning makes it sweet to live. Jacques Roubaud, the ‘composer of mathematics and poetry,’ glossator of the Occitan tradition from which Dante emerges, speaks of the suicide of his brother and the death of his wife as the two shores/edges/bords: the first brought him into *speaking in his manner, that is poetry*, the second into silence the more complete since poetry preceded it.<sup>28</sup> It is as if silence was the most extreme poetry, and poetry balanced on the edge of silence, in a loving, unintelligible sigh.<sup>29</sup> The interstice between poetry and silence, death and silence, is immeasurably small, just as the lover’s desire to see, to be where s/he desires, to be joined/*giunto/coniunx* is immeasurable. In this equation, death finds substitutes: love, desire, even beauty can so completely still us.<sup>30</sup> Lost love, separation and death bring physical pain that is only relieved by tears or by nearness, touching or speaking. At the death of Eurydice, the dryad choirs fill the highest peaks with their cry, immeasurably vast lands mourn, *flerunt Rhodopeaie arces . . . et Actias Orithyia* (Virgil, *Georgics*, IV, 460-63). The cosmic mourning collapses into the hollow of Orpheus’s lyre that soothes the bitterness of love, *cava solans aegrum testudine amorem* (464), a song to you, sweet *coniunx*, you and him alone (*solo*, 465), but You cosmically expanded into day and night, time immeasurable, *te ueniente die, te decedente canebat* (466), and unto hell. Hearts that do not soften at human prayer, weak shadows and lightless ghosts, monsters and larvae are stilled, and the souls like a flight of a thousand frightened birds are flushed upwards by Orpheus’s singing. The ink-stained waters yield Eurydice, he retraces his steps, but coming to the upper world (*superas . . . ad auras*, 485), the careless lover is seized with madness, easy to overlook if ghosts knew how to forgive. Having emerged into the light, forgetful, exhausted, he stops and looks back at Eurydice.<sup>31</sup> [A]

Quand’elli è  
giunto là dove  
disira,

NO ARRIVAL (but this one), NO LOVE (but this one). The *when* of the sigh’s arriving is the place of desire’s Dasein, the *there* of its being at issue for itself. Who arrives where desire goes? Who follows it *là?* Only you, the one who never *had* and who *is* desire, only the flowing thing that is barely you. Whence the story of the musk deer finally finding what it wants only when arriving at itself as its source.<sup>32</sup> There is the real fragrance, the sweet self-presence of the perfectly dying, the *odor sanctitatis* of the ultimate philoputrefaction or consummate nuptial complicity with anonymous materials.<sup>33</sup> The place where desire wants to be is the *there* where love already is: ‘Ego tanquam centrum circuli . . . tu autem non sic.’<sup>34</sup> But this *there* is the very *here* of desire, where it takes place, i.e. in the unity of the double meaning of *dove disira*. This *giunto*, the becoming endless of the identity between desire’s *to* and desire’s *from*, is love.

*Ergo* love’s intelligibility only as eccentricity, as the heart’s being where *you* are not: ‘Where your treasure is, there is your heart also’ (Matt 6:21). Here the lover lives, in the utopia of the infinite sphere (see Empedocles et al.), forever translating (*opus suspirii*) the no-where of the circumference into the center’s now-here.<sup>35</sup> Love’s irresistible gravity, drawing things towards each other via invisible curvatures, is the always-arriving flow of this eccentricity: ‘l’amor che move il sole e l’altre stele’ (*Paradiso* 33.145). Nota Bene: in the non-finality of their innumerable multiplicity, the *other* stars have the final word. Being-in-love is belonging to what flows beyond, possessing one’s possession by the unpossessable: ‘there is indeed a belonging to the rivers . . . It is precisely that which tears onward more surely in the rivers’ own path that tears human beings out of the habitual midst of their lives, so that they may be in a center outside of themselves, that is, be excentric. The prelude to inhering in the excentric midst of human existence, this “centric” and “central” abode in the excentric, is love.’<sup>36</sup> Cf. Joy Division’s ‘Love Will Tear Us Apart.’ [N]

*NULLA* potest mulier tantum se dicere amatam / uere (Cat. 87.1-2): no woman can say she is loved as much, truly, as . . .<sup>37</sup> Dante's *riceve onore* echoes the lines on the first night of love in the 13th c. romance of *Flamenca*, imprisoned in a tower by a jealous husband, freed by Guillaume de Nevers, who falls in love before he sees her.<sup>38</sup> We surprise her receiving honor: *vede* before *riceve*. If, as *Flamenca* and I want, to give and receive honor is to share caresses and kisses, it is a very sensuous scene: 'looks for nothing, asks nothing, / but that which his lady, *si dons*, offered him, / who was not slow to give pleasure, / but did him much honor and good, *ains li fes mas honors e bens*' (5962-5): *uere*, Arnaut Daniel's 'double joy in Paradise for his soul / if ever man entered it for loving well,' *q'en paradis n'aura doble ioi m'arma, / si ja nulls hom per ben amar lai intra* (*Sestina*, 35-6). *Il miglior fabbro*, Arnaut greets Dante in Occitan in *Purg.* 26. His *Canso* anticipates Dante's sonnet: Love that rains/weeps in my heart, *l'amors q'inz el cor mi plou* (13), instantly perfects (*plan*, to smooth out, perfect) and inspires (*d'aura*, fills with breath) my song that moves from him or her (*de lei mou*) who keeps and governs worth: *Amors marves plan'e daura / mon chantar, que de lei mou / qui pretz manten e governa* (5-8). But Dante's *onore* is for the dead, from the undead: *mai, se non dopo la morte*: sung so the war would not remain enclosed within the miserable one who feels it, *e acciò che questa battaglia che io avea meco non rimanesse saputa pur dal misero che la sentia* (*VN* 37:3); Arnaut, but also *VN* 35-8, an attempt to love someone else, precede it: '*Voi non dovreste mai, se non per morte, / la vostra donna, ch'è morta, obliare.*' / *Così dice l'meo core, e poi sospira* (37:8): my eyes, you must never forget your lady that is dead, except by dying. So said my heart, and sighed. Constant heart and inconstant eyes (37), soul/reason and heart/passion (38): 'my desire turns all towards [the new lady], *lo mio desiderio si volge tutto verso lei*. . . the soul/reason says to heart/appetite . . . he responds.'<sup>39</sup> [A]

vede una  
donna, che  
riceve onore,

TRANSCRIBING SECRETS, the present tense of *vede* produces the presence of what it sees. So the sonnet insists throughout on its present, on the being-without-beginning-and-without-end of its when (*quando*). Nothing happens—everything is happening: the sigh's circling beyond and back from the sphere to the heart it exits, the lady's shining upon and receiving from those who see her splendor, the sorrowing heart's hearing whom it causes to speak . . . Every event traces a flowing beyond and a returning back. All things circulate themselves, producing time from a somewhere beyond the sphere. 'If . . . the Soul withdrew, sinking itself again into its primal unity, Time would disappear: the origin of Time . . . is to be traced to the first stir of the Soul's tendency towards the production of the sensible Universe' (Plotinus, *Enneads*, 3.7.12). The sigh's seeing a lady turns the heart that shares its light to the movement of this first stir, to the scene of the first look of love. Here we record the *ocular* origin point of cosmos (*janua coeli, oculus mundi*), the fact that it is happening, not in a static place, but in an ecstatic erotic stir that remains visible in our looking, in the spontaneous giving-receiving of seeing which miraculously exceeds by staying within itself: 'the very cause of the universe . . . is also carried outside of himself . . . He is . . . beguiled by goodness, by love, and by yearning and is enticed away from his transcendent dwelling place and comes to abide within all things, and he does so by virtue of his supernatural and ecstatic capacity to remain, nevertheless, within himself' (Pseudo-Dionysius, *Divine Names*, 4.13).<sup>40</sup> Love at first sight is only the reseeing of original vision. 'The process of perception runs parallel to the process of creation, and the reversing of the process of perception without obliterating consciousness amounts to realising the nothingness of the universe as a separate entity' (*Discourses* II.98). As if love is a seeing that receives itself in surplus from the seen. As if the widest sphere is the eye. [N]

QUE *n'est tout mon corps en pensers transformé?* O, let my body be all thought . . . At parting, the lover's eyes send a mist into the mind; seized with it, reason lets herself slip into dream, a constant vision of the beloved, tormenting heart and soul with the desire to see the absent lover. Sometimes, the mind returns, only to fetch the heart and go see the lover together; the soul runs after the heart to fetch it back, but instead, she herself is taken in by that pleasant place, and forgets to return (Ronsard, *Elegy II*).<sup>41</sup> Dante's sigh, lover's dream, travels freely, seeing, speaking, hearing, breathing the lines in and out, like a body, like a lovers' kiss. This line, like love, is in flight: it takes off and lands nowhere, it changes everything, it begins everywhere: *lucelriceve, splendore/onore, suo/mio*, like Diotima's Love, *metaxy*/between gods and mortals, of one and the other: *suo* of the lover and splendor, and of me who adores/*mira; mio* of me and the body, and of the lover/*caro*. *Pur su/per lo suo*: logic, condition, and direction confounded. Like tears, they have no agent: light is the weather of loving, loving is the condition of rising, tears are the opening of loving. A sigh that senses light: a sigh/t, at first sight, endlessly there in my love's eyes. What takes the breath away is the fullness of the loved one, beauty, goodness and brilliance; but what captures the heart, and makes me want to make love to him is, like her light, without agent, beyond his control. Both are love, both moved by him, but the second is desire: like sacrifice, in excess, irrational. That, but first, what makes me love is his incandescence at the sight of me. Love at first sight is circular, without origin (who looked first?) The always cosmic event where the soul, beguiled by goodness, creates body/universe/all things to love in infinitely more ways. So, in flowing-circulation, the sigh that leaves the body is being embodied again in seeing. Love speaks light: *guardi le stelle che tremano d'amore . . . il mio mistero è chiuso in me: sulla tua bocca lo dirò, quando la luce splenderà.*<sup>42</sup> [A]

*e luce sì, che  
per lo suo  
splendore*

SPECTACULAR INTIMACY, or, the brightness of light becoming itself. Splendor is not a quality, but the condition of the overcoming of quality. It is not something seen, but the visible approach of the place where seeing becomes the seen.<sup>43</sup> 'In this state of absorbed contemplation there is no longer question of holding an object: the vision is continuous so that seeing and seen are one thing; object and act of vision have become identical; of all that until then filled the eye no memory remains. . . . the vision floods the eyes with light, but it is not a light showing some other object, the light is itself the vision.'<sup>44</sup> Syntactically, the line temporalizes splendor, traces the becoming substantial of the relation between seeing and seen as a time delay within their distinction. Suspended in this light-filled air, can I say what splendor is? Luckily Dante, being one who breathes love back into philology (the exhale of his taking note when love inspires), is here to help.<sup>45</sup> Commenting on the descent of divine power as sight (*In lei discende la virtù divina / sì come face in angelo, che 'l vede*), he explains splendor via Avicenna as not only reflected light, but the visible/visual becoming of a thing toward the virtue shining on it.<sup>46</sup> Seeing is not simply splendor's external measuring tool, but the very efficiency of its cause. To see someone's splendor, to experience how she shines, is to witness her becoming like what she sees and thus belong by parallel process to her being. Splendor is the ideal form of seeing as participation, the term of beauty's neither-subjective-nor-objective being in the eye of the beholder, the self-forgetful love-seeing or ocular 'erotic anamnesis . . . that transports the object not toward another thing or another place, but toward its own taking place—toward the Idea.'<sup>47</sup> So the sigh returns in the lady's splendor to its own very cause.<sup>48</sup> So is splendor what speaks the being of love: 'Non per aver a sé di bene acquisto, / ch'esser no può, ma perché suo splendore / potesse, risplendendo, dir "Subsisto," . . . / s'aperse in nuovi amor l'eterno amore' (*Paradiso* 29.13-8).<sup>49</sup> [N]



*EX ALTA providentiae specula*: Boethius's *Consolation* and Dante's sigh/t coincide where the pilgrim spirit arrives.<sup>50</sup> Whether distanced from philosophy/theology or safely wrapped in it, like a mantle, this line, in recognizing weariness (*peregrino*) and concrete happiness of the lover's presence within the sight of the beloved (*la mira*), speaks my quiet becoming-joy, unlike the abstract *giunto* and *desira* of the line whose rhyme/mirror this is (*mira/desira*). Or rather, the indeterminate *quando* and *la dove* in that earlier line where love was still only a promise, made me tremble: *Ch è questa che vèn, ch'ogn'om la mira, / che fa tremar di chiaritate l'are* (Guido Cavalcanti, *Rime* 4: who is she that comes, that every man looks at, that makes air tremble with brightness). Our line, its whispering, purring sounds carried by the vowel 'i,' is in love/light where all is calm and joy/*lieto*: *del suo lume fa 'l ciel sempre quieto* (*Paradiso* 1.122): *Veggio negli occhi de la donna mia / un lume pieno di spiriti d'amore / che porta uno piacer novo nel core / sì che vi desta d'allegrezza vita* (Cavalcanti, 26: I saw in the eyes of my lady a light filled with love's spirits that carries a new pleasure into the heart, so that a life of joy lives there).<sup>51</sup> But is love only a way to see? Happiness, only a position of extreme distance? Being, a seeing of the present as the smile of the future/eternal (Boethius)? For those who feel alone (who hasn't?), *peregrino* both reveals and withholds a better question: reveals/what gives the steps of pilgrimage meaning is their direction, refracted in each, but streaming in from the beloved/outside: a person/place that signifies by difference: 'how is this day different from any other day?' In loneliness, that very distance makes us sad. But, (not)filling the emptiness, (in)different fictions smile to console us: 'In Pavia they preserve supposedly Roland's lance, which is none other than the mast of a large barge, armed with a metal tip.'<sup>52</sup> Perhaps all pleasure intersects with feeling that seeing is being: 'I see the unicorn.'<sup>53</sup> [A]

lo peregrino  
spirito la  
mira.

MY EYES AND I have a bargain: they say what I cannot speak and I tell them what they cannot see.<sup>54</sup> Being in wonder keeps us busy. So the pilgrim spirit's looking through her splendor is an identical inner relation, an intimate respirating exchange between seeing-as-speaking and speaking-as-seeing that produces silence for profit, the plenitude of sense and medium of all real transaction.<sup>55</sup> 'The soundless gathering call, by which Saying moves the world-relation on its way, we call the ringing of stillness. It is: the language of being.'<sup>56</sup> *La mira* comes here, to the unstopping completion, the quiet saturation from which poetry, or the re-saying of silence, initiates anew 'la gioia che mai non fina.'<sup>57</sup> Gazing on her, *lo peregrino spirito* enters the circumambulation (*tawaf*, *pradakshina*) that is the beginningless beginning and endless end of its wandering desire, 'the pneumatic circle within which the poetic sign, as it arises from the spirit of the heart, can immediately adhere both to the dictation of that 'spiritual motion' that is love, and to its object.'<sup>58</sup> The amorous circulatory system of the sonetto, participating in the trinitarian processions of being it evokes, is inscribed in its subtle self-reflexive numerology, founded on four fives (4+5=9=Beatrice): 'cinque parti,' 5 rhymes, 14 lines (1+4=5), 4 stanzas + 1 poem = 5.<sup>59</sup> So the line groupings (2, 2, 4, 3, 3) place Beatrice (9=2+4+3) at the center. What is the point? In keeping with the conjecture that 'counting was born in the elaboration of a ritual procession re-enacting the Creation,'<sup>60</sup> the sonetto processes its own creation in the breath that speaks it, counting in a circle charted by the two persons (lover and beloved) and their personified relation (*sospirò/penserò/spirito*) so as to arrive, return, and mystically re-arrive at Beatrice. That is easy. A truer question is *where* is the point? That is the place of this line, the place of the gaze to which love ever returns by always never being able to leave. [N]

ANGEL! If there was a Square that we didn't know, and there, / on an unspeakable carpet, lovers displayed . . . their towers of pleasure, their / ladders, long since standing where there was no ground, only / leaning on each other, trembling. . . before the soundless dead: / Would these, then, throw down their final, forever saved-up, / forever hidden, unknown to us, eternally valid / coins of happiness (Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Duino Elegies*, 'The Fifth')?<sup>61</sup> *Silens*, the dead/silents, giving over their passage fare to the lovers. Happiness as our passage fare out of *this* world: the ghosts who haunt us. . . Trans-substantiation of light in sound: *li fols enfes qui crie / por la bele estoile avoir, / qu'il voit halt el ciel soir* (Chastelain de Couci: the foolish child that cries to have the beautiful star he sees sitting high in the sky); *Et li dolz son del ruissel sor gravele / que je voi resclaircir / me font resovenir* (CdC: and the sweet sounds of the brook on the sand that I see sparkle, reminds me).<sup>62</sup> Thence, the fountain: a musical instrument that cures madness; a lyric form; a watering can; or, any number of similar things: *chantepleur*, sing-weep, *irrigium*, la *chantepleur gallice vocatum*, *graece clepsydra*.<sup>63</sup> As the iconic instrument of remembrance,<sup>64</sup> it brings us to time that, like the sigh/t at the same time suspended in splendor and contemplating it, signifies in passing, not as a measure. As the instrument that measures time, *chantepleur/clepsydra* hastens the tellurian union. Measured time's powers of seduction also consist in the insistence of its courtship, its constant repetition-reminder/*mi ridice*; ungrateful, disdainful at first, we misunderstand its splendor as the *locus amoenus* that opens us up so we make love to others, also opened by its splendor. There comes a time, there comes one repetition when we finally understand, and our resistance dissolves, and we fold ourselves into its embrace: 'Earth, my dearest, I will. Oh believe me, you no longer / need your springtimes to win me over—one of them, / ah, even one is already too much' (Rilke, *DE* 9).<sup>65</sup> [A]

*Vedela tal,  
che quando 'l  
mi ridice,*

TINIEST DIVINITY: difference & repetition = all I confess I cannot say when I speak *and*. There is what this line says, which is straightforward, and there is what this line is, something that keeps saying it. It keeps saying in a universal sense: 'Man speaks only as he responds to language. Language speaks. Its speaking speaks for us in what has been spoken.'<sup>66</sup> In a general sense: 'Poetry is news that STAYS news.'<sup>67</sup> And in an absolutely *specific* sense which, close as your own breath, is infinitely more important than either. This is not an other or extra or allegorical sense, not a deeper saying hidden underneath the obvious, not something structural or mythic or symbolic. It is a sense living so secretly and openly, so publicly and intimately, that it passes through us visibly unnoticed, incognito. Being seen neither with nor without comprehension, being something apparent but altogether beyond and before surface as such, this sense is exactly what makes all its senses possible, the subtle medium of their presence. Like a face *itself*, an impossible and inevitable silent projection preceding all expression, this can be called the *apophantic* sense, so as to indicate a properly phenomenological meaning-perception of something as it shows itself.<sup>68</sup> Or it can be called the *special* sense, to mean a perception of something's special being, its essential appearance.<sup>69</sup> The A/S sense is tasted by reading two-dimensionally, too close to the page, aperspectivally, floating.<sup>70</sup> The beauty of this sense, its God-proving detail (*whatever* that is), is that it ain't at all abstract, that it is always a *this*. It is, simply, wonderfully, as it appears to be.<sup>71</sup> How does it appear? By being (the sense that appears as) wholly at home with the fact *that* it appears.<sup>72</sup> What does it appear as? As itself, in this case, the rich, ready-to-be-endlessly-glossed idea that the *what* of seeing, its suchness (*Vedela tal*), IS the *when* of its resaying (*quando 'l mi ridice*). That is: 'Habit is the originary synthesis of time, which constitutes the life of the passing present.'<sup>73</sup> [N]

CONSUECUDINES, moral habits: 'it is for them that *representatio* is primarily used [because] . . . man does not delight in seeing the mere forms of things existing in nature, but delights in their representations and formation by paints and colors.'<sup>74</sup> Love's crying puts intelligence in the sigh, the sigh reaches its desire (*intentionem*) but pilgrimage between contraries (*spesso/sottile*) continues, circular (*parla al cor che lo fa parlare*). *Sonetto*: music is 'poetry's major part to impress the soul' (*tonus. . . est maior partium ad imprimendum anime et operandum in ipsa*).<sup>75</sup> Averroes/Allemanus deciphering Aristotle call *circulation* and *meaning/significatio* what in Aristotle is reversal/*peripateia* and discovery/*anagnoresis*.<sup>76</sup> Breath *circulates* between the heart and beyond the farthest sphere, a peregrination/*peripateia* between contraries. When the sigh is joined with what it desires (*permutant ad suam intentionem*), it falls/becomes sensuous, *cadens in sensum*. For me, Dante's poem is very unlike the Averroesian tradition that separates poetry from *sha'aria*, divine law.<sup>77</sup> Instead, in Dante as in Aristotle, there is a circular, poetic *cadentia in sensum* unfolded as the circulatory embodiment of the sigh (sigh/t, etc.): sensing/desensing, falling/rising, feeling/not being able to feel. Heart breathes a sigh/t and (not)hears (*no lo intendo. . . 'ntendo ben*), but that does not *end* in recognition. The sonnet (never)ends even as *significatio* proceeds by anagnoresis, in all of the five canonical ways at once: the sigh/t of splendor returns the sigh to the heart (*recordatio*); in that circulation a memory is awakened (*dh-k-r*), a thing forgotten is recalled (*quando l mi ridice*); a mark is recognized (mark=the name? *ricorda Beatrice*); a knowledge leads to logical understanding. Intelligence, intention, know[ing] (*so*) only relaunches/releases the *sospiro* and the *sonetto*'s infinitely complex movement: *e però dico che questo dubbio io lo intendo solvere e dichiarare in questo libello ancora in parte più dubbiosa* (VN 12:17).<sup>78</sup> [A]

io no lo  
intendo, sì  
parla sottile

SUBTLE SPEAKING, language thinner than air, narrower than every whisper. What does a word not pass through? Dante's thought-sigh does a cosmic circuit and comes back talking a language he does not intend. When was it not *logos*? Never other than spoken/speaking, from *sospiro* to *spirito*, it always was and will be *verbum*, the sonic incarnation of inner shining: 'the word which sounds without is a sign of the word that shines within . . . For that which is produced by the mouth of the flesh is the sound of the word, and is itself also called 'word,' because that inner word assumed it in order that it might appear outwardly.'<sup>79</sup> So the poet's 'pensero, nominandolo per lo nome d'alcuno suo effetto' (VN 41:3-4), reversely named for its effect, stays word only by ever becoming word, by ceaselessly passing, staying prepositional (*oltre, del, su, per, al, di*). Word transpires, is something breathed and breathing, like a vibrational, lyric touching of the invisible *locutio rerum*, a thing's original, extra-topological in-tention.<sup>80</sup> 'Spiritus ubi vult spirat et vocem eius audis sed non scis unde veniat et quo vadat' (John 3:8).<sup>81</sup> Listening to the sonetto as logogenetic allegory, bending attention into (in-tendere) its story of becoming-word, this line now talks about the vestigial body of verbal being, the way words travel as traces. Being always windily *between*, essentially whenceless and whitherless, word is known by unknowing its place: 'io non possa intendere là ove lo pensiero mi trae' (VN 41:8). That is how speaking passes, by being subtle: 'Subtlety takes its name from the power to penetrate.'<sup>82</sup> How verse happens: 'True singing is a different breath, about / nothing. A gust inside the god. A wind.'<sup>83</sup> How love hears: 'Suppose someone hears an unknown sign, like the sound of some word which he does not know the meaning of; he wants to know what it is . . . [this] is not love for the thing he does not know but for something he knows, on account of which he wants to know what he does not know.'<sup>84</sup> [N]

*THE CONSTELLATION / of his future love has long / been moving among the stars* (Rilke, 'Duration of Childhood').<sup>85</sup> The adequacy of *parla* to *fa parlare*: question to answer, desire to fulfillment. The circulation of tears, sigh/t, and rhyme, 'goddess of secret and ancient coincidences': 'she is very capricious; she comes as happiness comes, hands filled with an achievement that is already in flower' (Rilke).<sup>86</sup> Softly pressing against the margins of burning desire, not refined by the anguish to say everything, filling head and heart with pleasurable things: 'his senses are precipitating out of the clear solution of his soul' (Rilke).<sup>87</sup> The dispersion and recollection choreographed in life continues without it. The self seems less permanent and more intermittent, a retreating wave on the shore of becoming. Self as a wave, a beating heart: not constantly on; rather, constantly on-off. I am a promise of return, *recordatio*, not a presence. What are the limits of identity? To fall in love: as we fall, we trace a signature and a narrative as recognizable as gait, silhouette, voice, its originary events always *present*. How much more alive are we when we are in love. In love, we come to ourselves only by the circular motion of the sigh that offers me to myself having passed through you, the lover offering the beloved to herself. I suppose when one of the lovers dies the sigh, not finding its twin heart near, may well wander far, beyond the largest sphere, and become lost. Or, besotted by the sigh/t, the sigh loses some hearing: the light/splendor dims sound: all my senses are engaged so deeply that I become deaf: I see sound and cannot hear it.<sup>88</sup> I imagine that which the lover hears here as the voices arising when we fall asleep, unmistakable: it's my beloved, my parents, my children. The characteristic fall of a phrase, the color of the content: a story, a quarrel or worry, love, specific words undistinguishable except phatic words or quirks, particular silence-fillers. Writing conserves words, but only magical means conserve sound: jars, crystals, ice, heart. [A]

*al cor dolente,  
che lo fa  
parlare.*

HEART is whom speaking is for. You know this. It does not require commentary. 'I turned away [*detourné*] from philosophy when it became impossible to discover in Kant any human weakness, any authentic accent of melancholy [*tristesse*].'<sup>89</sup> The sigh's sound is the sign of the heart's *turning*. The sorrowing heart's hearing of this sound *is* the sigh's speaking. I.e., heart turns by attending to its sigh and makes (*fa*) sigh talk by hearing it as saying, by letting it be heard as the heart's own voice, at once most intimately for itself and totally exposed.<sup>90</sup> This close but not closed circuit, whereby the *from* (*del*) revolves perfectly into the *to* (*Al*), returns language to breath/spirit by releasing love from the body—a self-restorative movement also called *listening to your heart*, the neither audible nor inaudible exercise of remembering, *recording* one's ancient, deeper will. 'Not of to-day, is my love for Thy musky tress; / Long time 'tis, since that with this cup, like the new moon, intoxicated I was.'<sup>91</sup> Such a sighing one is a whispering tetragrammaton, something on the way to becoming YHWH (I am who I am): 'That's what I am, after all, at bottom and from the start . . . [one] who not for nothing once told himself: "Become what you are!"'<sup>92</sup> Precisely what Beatrice makes Dante do in Eden after her eyes overcome him: 'Men che dramma / di sangue m'è rimasto che non tremi: / conosco i segni de l'antica fiamma.'<sup>93</sup> Which shows something of the subtle intersection between sighing, confession, and sorrow: how love is a painful secret opening in oneself from and towards another, a word wounding from within that allows you really to speak, to tell all, as if for the first time, even before and beyond there being anything to say: 'And taking him aside from the multitude privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he *sighed*, and said to him, "Eph'phatha," that is, "Be opened." And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly' (Mark 7:33-5). [N]

FOR the sake of a single poem, you must . . . know the gesture that small flowers make when they open in the morning (Rilke).<sup>94</sup> As we are nearing the last revolutions of the sonnet, I see this line as an offering, an equivalent of the *envoi*/address in a ballad or a ghazal: ‘O Prince!’ A devotional gesture, *envoi* as an offering to the Muses recalls the sonnet that opens the first volume of Ronsard’s poems: ‘with his right hand at your altar he hangs / the humble gift of his immortal book / and at your feet puts his heart, with the other.’<sup>95</sup> In another poem, so well beloved of everyone, Ronsard pleads: ‘for obsequies receive my weeping and my tears, / this vase here full of milk, this basket full of flowers / so that, alive or dead, you’ll be nothing but roses.’<sup>96</sup> A flower beloved of all: all, become nothing but flowers for the beloved: what is love if not a dedication of all to one aim? And in that dedication, love and poetry resemble each other—an ontological structure that helps me understand the perfection of their fit, their Moebius-like relation: is poetry born of love, or love, of poetry? Nicola’s meditations on creation as love resonate with the *nouveau baroque oeuvre* of the Polish Ukrainian poet Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki: ‘on a Sunday afternoon, three half-naked soldiers / worked. God did not hide his distraction in their bodies and anew / he created the cosmos the beginning and the end while they / blinded by the sun, rested supine / The Lord burrowed in their bodies surprised by the intimacy of sweat / returned to his sources and became / a drop of dirt without which we would not be ourselves,<sup>97</sup> a dirty droplet whose twin is a purifying drop of Prince of Denmark’s Elixir, from another poem by Dycki: ‘Truth too hard to choke out with that lump in your throat? / One drop of the Elixir will cleanse your windpipe.’<sup>98</sup> Language/crutch, a lump of clay ‘tormented by inspiration’<sup>99</sup>—or the name that Love puts in the poet’s heart, and that takes him, ‘astonished, out of himself,’ mute, incoherent, like the Delphi oracle.<sup>100</sup> [A]

So io che  
parla di  
quella gentile,

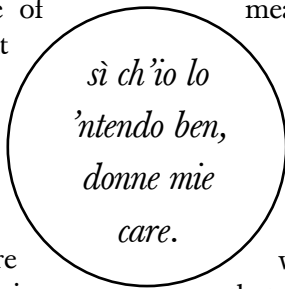
THAT (*che*), extraordinary magic of whatever happens (see n.74). ‘Now I am tempted to say that the right expression in language for the miracle of the existence of the world, though it is not any proposition *in* language, is the existence of language itself.’<sup>101</sup> Whence I, tress-bound—‘Fortes tresses, soyez la houle qui m’enlève’ [Strong tresses, be the swell that lifts me away]<sup>102</sup>—am further tempted to say that *quella gentile* IS language’s *that* as the world’s miracle, that Dante’s ‘nuovo miracolo e gentile’<sup>103</sup> is the miracle of language, its witnessed (*So*) aura, not in the shallow sense of a special supplementary happening inside or outside world, but in the only sensible sense of the inexplicable happening of world itself. Knowing *that* the sigh speaks of that blessed one is the word-index of the world as miracle. *Beatrice* = halo of the wor(l)d. I mean this, not (only) in an auto-reductive intellectual way, but in a post-abysmal A.K.-inspired way that knows how to have it both ways, namely, that a Wittgensteinian reading of the poet’s beloved only belongs to her being an all-the-more real, live woman. Cf. R. Benigni’s gloss on Mary as a maiden God cannot resist being *made* by. ‘Quel ch’ella par quando un poco sorride, / non si pò dicer né tenere a mente’ [What she seems when she but smiles cannot be said or held in mind].<sup>104</sup> But *that* she appears, this is inevitable: ‘the strongest magic of life: it is covered by a veil of beautiful possibilities, woven with threads of gold—promising, resisting, bashful, mocking, compassionate, and seductive. Yes, life is a woman!’<sup>105</sup> *That* is the lovely net we are entangled in, the turning maze which is the way of real guiding: ‘Within the curl of Thy tress, went Hāfiz / In the dark night; and God is the guide.’<sup>106</sup> *So io che* . . . curves (*volte*) with the silent power of a sweet conviction, a pure secret surmise that ‘between Nirvana and the world there is not the slightest difference,’ that in Paradise—the good thief’s *today* (Luke 23:43)—‘everything will be as it is now, just a little different.’<sup>107</sup> [N]

WHAT MOVES US? *Even today a god / could secretly enter this form and not be diminished:* in this passage of 'The Spanish Trilogy,' Rilke is enraptured with a shepherd who 'moves about. . . fixes the hem of his flock where it has grown ragged.'<sup>108</sup> That pastoral vision seems only related to Dante's spheres by Plato's ladder: one body to two, two to all, all to occupations, beautiful occupations to sciences, sciences to one science whose sole object is beauty, and finally beauty in and of itself (*Symposium* 211c). From ladder to gyrating spheres: 'the divine Desire is in itself without end and principle, like a perpetual circle that, thanks to Good, from Good, in the bosom of Good, and with Good in view, traverses a perfect orbit, identical to itself . . . never ceasing to progress and remain stable and return to its first state' (Dionysis, *De nomine*, chap. 4: 13-14).<sup>109</sup> In Augustine, what is worthy of love derives from God, and corresponds to the most lovable part of one's beloved: the part that communes with God:<sup>110</sup> 'the souls of men . . . love rest . . . as, according to its special gravity, a body descends or rises until it reaches a place where it can rest,—oil, for example . . . rising if poured onto water . . . for the feeding and fanning of that ardent love, by which, under a law like that of gravitation, we are borne upwards or inwards to rest, the presentation of truth by emblems has great power: for, thus presented, things move and kindle our affection much more than if they were set forth in bald statements, not clothed with sacramental symbols. Why this should be, it is hard to say . . . I believe that the emotions are less easily kindled while the soul is wholly involved in earthly things; but if it be brought to those corporeal things which are emblems of spiritual things, and then taken from these to the spiritual realities which they represent, it gathers strength by the mere act of passing from one to another, and, like a flame of a lighted torch, is made to burn more brightly, and is carried away to rest by a more intensely glowing love.'<sup>111</sup> [A]

*però che spesso  
ricorda  
Beatrice,*

PAST REASON, FUTURE MEMORY. The sigh's often re-cording of Beatrice is why the *I* knows what its thought is talking about. Where, when is this *why*? The belated explanation of knowing, the memorial giving of its reason, starts to unravel an endless epistemic time-loop—'any point of knowledge can be so multiplied that its instances, far from being few, turn out to extend to infinity'<sup>112</sup>—as if in knowing's moment (*So io*) an infinite series of future statements is already summed (I know that I know that know . . .). Reason (*però che*) re-gives this moment as its past: cause. Memory (*ricorda*) pre-gives this moment as its future: effect. Preparing the way and accelerating the hard-to-recognize arrival of love—'vidi venir da lunghi Amore / allegro sì, che appena il conoscia'<sup>113</sup>—this line properly places reason syntactically after knowledge (*So io . . . però che*) so as to locate memory before it (*ricorda Beatrice*). Thus the explanation intentionally moves, like a trap catching you by setting it, into its own undoing, to the hardly foreseeable point where the end of explanation (*Beatrice*) precludes all reason for it, and more literally, where Dante's thought speaks of Beatrice because he was already remembering her, where knowing is a catching up to memory's future. Knowledge's reason, which makes it seem an effect of something prior, turns out to be a mirror image showing a more real inverse reality wherein knowing precedes its object, where memory is a *forward* projection, where one never hears a name for the first time.<sup>114</sup> This is the space where *spesso* means something incredible: neither past, nor present, nor future. Not instant, not duration. Perhaps a kind of multidimensional repetition, without recurrence. Living here, in the often, a lover is one whose heart always runs ahead, anamnestic map in hand, clearing paths in trackless wilds and voids for trains of thought to run. *Credo ut intelligam*.<sup>115</sup> 'One in love tastes the glories of life to the full'<sup>116</sup> and always knows what he is (and is not) talking about. [N]

IMPOSSIBLE sea crossing were the beginning of this commentary, and they are now on my mind as we reach the destination of our *peregrinatio/peripateia*: the experience of sailors, who, when at sea, behold the mountains below them (Dante, *Quaestio*).<sup>117</sup> If the poem at first seemed self-involved and, in its infinite circular cosmography, self-contained between Love and Lover, now its optic suddenly shifts, allowing for distance, tempting us to see the spheres as a small model astrolabe that a hand can hold, its movement imagined so fully that it ‘can be made clear even to women’ (*Quaestio*).<sup>118</sup> Perhaps it is this change of optic that invites us, in turn, to descend the ladder and, god-like, secretly enter the form of the shepherd or another form that inspired *this* poem. We will claim and inhabit ‘that pure space into which flowers endlessly open’ anticipated by Rilke’s ‘Eighth Elegy.’ Rilke thinks elegiacally that the presence of another makes that always-opening space at the same time present and inaccessible, but I feel, instead, that this is an accessible space where lovers take turns moving. Rilke imagines that lovers are close to the always-blooming space/*chora*, that they are almost there: ‘if the beloved were not there blocking the view.’ He sees the lovers in a continual impasse such that ‘neither can move past each other.’ I think more happily: that in writing past each other we have been passing behind each other, walking into precisely that space which ‘as if by some mistake. . . opens for [the lovers] / behind each other.’<sup>119</sup> ‘O shooting star / that fell into my eyes and through my body—: / Not to forget you. Stay!’<sup>120</sup> As in Rilke’s ‘Archaic Torso of Apollo,’ some objects are headless/beheaded but ‘still suffused with brilliance from inside,’ capable ‘from all the borders of itself, / [to] burst like a star,’ like Barthes’s last unfinished (novel?) project interrupted by his death, like the beginning of a *Vita Nuova*: ‘You must change your life.’<sup>121</sup> [A]


  
*sì ch'io lo*  
*'ntendo ben,*  
*donne mie*  
*care.*

YES. ‘Hectic search for exhilarating experiences should not be mistaken for love. They are the forerunners of grim, relentless penalties and intense suffering. Love from its lowest to its highest expression has its ups and downs. Love suffers the pangs of separation, the stings of jealousy, and all the little pricks that a lover has to endure are the different helpmates in disguise. They stir you up and bring forward to life the most important parts of your nature. Then they no longer maintain their individual life, but merge in one common longing for the Beloved.’<sup>122</sup> *Si. Sì che . . . io sp[h]ero di dicer di lei quello che mai non fue ditto d’alcuma (VN 42:2)* [So that . . . I hope to say of her what was never said of any other woman]. Not running hither and thither to no end. Here. Intent. At play, work. Being beyond the sphere, living and breathing there—understand well my good meaning dear ones—is not somewhere outside of life. Life goes on, more (and more)—‘Live more and more in the Present which is ever beautiful and stretches away beyond the limits of the past and the future’<sup>123</sup>—than ever: ‘Without life, alive I am. This, esteem no great wonder.’<sup>124</sup> This is being where one *must* be: ‘Sāki! come. That wine, that is the soul-cherisher, / Like life, is fit for the shattered heart, / Give, that out from the world, my tent I may pitch; / Above the sphere, my pavilion, may pitch.’<sup>125</sup> Life is a space, a place beyond place, where we breathe in the space that space is within. Getting it, understanding well, drinking deep and tasting the lovely mouth-truth is not turning away. It is entering, being entered into the openness that already infects you: ‘The dead god is not a tired, abolished or doomed god but a god with its ultimate weapon of catastrophic devastation. . . . In the process of descending, the dead god rediscovers its . . . corpus as a pestilential but love-saturated communion with the sacred.’<sup>126</sup> Turning (now, forever) to his dear ladies, the poet’s sigh spreads the pest.<sup>127</sup> No one can tell me we do not have a fever. *This world or the next, heaven* . . . .<sup>128</sup> [N]

The text of the sonetto, cited within the circles, is taken from Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nuova*, ed. and trans. Dino S. Cervigni and Edward Vasta (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 142-4. Other references to the *Vita Nuova* (*VN*) use the chapter and division enumeration of this edition.

<sup>1</sup> The vast poetic *corpus* that describes lovers tragically separated by sea includes Theseus's return to Aegeus and the tragic mistake of the black sails, reprised in *Tristan and Isolde*; the *Odyssey*; Ovid's *Heroides* (ex., 'Phyllis to Demophoon'); lyric poetry (ex. Jaufré Rudel's *amor de lonh*, faraway love).

<sup>2</sup> La 'Quaestio de aqua et terra' di Dante Alighieri: Edizione principe del 1508 riprodotta in facsimile . . . ed. G. Boffitto, intro. O. Zanotti-Bianco, trans. G. Boffitto, Prompt, S. P. Thompson and A. Müller (Florence: Olschki, 1905): 60.

<sup>3</sup> Dante Alighieri, *The Divine Comedy*, ed. Charles S. Singleton, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973).

<sup>4</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 62.

<sup>5</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 'The Convalescent,' 175.

<sup>6</sup> Augustine, *Confessions* 5.6.11.

<sup>7</sup> Avicenna (d. 1037), *Avicenna Latinus. Liber De Anima seu Sextus de naturalibus*, ed. Simone Van Riet, (Leiden: Brill, 1972), IV, 3, p. 25, quote from Johannes de Rupella (Jean de La Rochelle, d. 1254), *Tractatus de divisione multiplici potentiarum anima*, ed. Pierre Michaud-Quantin (Paris: Vrin, 1964), 77. 'The root of *tadhkir* is *dh-k-r*, a root that means to remember and is regularly used in mystical language. *Dhikr* (from the same root) refers to remembrance of God, a form of praising and celebrating the nature of God, and remembrance of the *Qur'an*, or reciting the *Qur'an*. The sufi is supposed to spend all his life in *dhikr*. There are more mundane meanings, but this is the obvious one in the context of medieval philosophy' (Karla Mallette, letter of October 21, 2008). The words *dhkir* and *Qur'an* (recitation, reading) are sometimes used interchangeably, because the *Qur'an* serves as a reminder. No doubt, *recordatio* was used because *dh-k-r* and heart are intimately connected: 'of the *Qur'an*'s sixteen instances [of the phrase *ulu 'albab*, 'those endowed with hearts,' i.e. understanding], nine are connected with [the root *dh-k-r*]' (Andrew Rippin, *The Blackwell Companion to the Qur'an* [London: Blackwell, 2006] 287). I thank Karla Mallette for her generous help with all things Arabic.

<sup>8</sup> *Mémoires-journaux de Pierre de l'Estoile*, ed. Madeleine Lazard and Gilbert Schenck (Geneva: Droz, 1996), vol. 2, 188-9, entry for April, 1578.

<sup>9</sup> The famous translator and editor of Aristotle's *Poetics*, Lodovico Castelvetro, was also responsible for the commentary on Petrarca's *Rime*, published in 1582. His annotation of *mia* as *cara* in the sonnet 21 (in his edition, sonnet 19), *Mille fiate o dolce mia guerrera*, has inspired my comment. Another contemporary commentator confirms the importance of Castelvetro's remark: Jacobo Corbinelli, the editor of the Latin original of Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia*. The authorship of *De vulgari*, only circulated in its vernacular version, was suspect—until Corbinelli's edition of the Latin text appeared. Corbinelli left an annotated volume of Castelvetro's Petrarca with a dedication from Giacomo Castelvetro, and in this instance he added two examples from Dante (*molto mio*, *tutto mio*) to echo and amplify Castelvetro's comment. Castelvetro's Petrarca volume is now part of the collection of Houghton Library, Harvard University: Francesco Petrarca, *Le Rime de Petrarca brevemente sposite per Lodovico Castelvetro* (Basel: Pietro de Sedabonis, 1582), 38.

<sup>10</sup> *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 1178-9.



<sup>11</sup> ‘Consider our universe. There is none before it and therefore it is not, itself, in a universe or in any place—what place was there before the universe came to be?—its linked members form and occupy the whole. But Soul is not in the universe, on the contrary the universe is in the Soul; bodily substance is not a place to the Soul; Soul is contained in Intellectual-Principle and is the container of body. The Intellectual-Principle in turn is contained in something else; but that prior principle has nothing in which to be: the First is therefore in nothing, and therefore, nowhere’ (Plotinus, *The Enneads*, tr. Stephen MacKenna [Burdett, NY: Larson, 1992], 5.5.9). ‘And than our Lord opened my gostly eye and shewid me my soule in middis of my herte. I saw the soule so large as it were an endles world’ (Julian of Norwich, *Shewings*, ed. Georgia Ronan Crampton [Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, 1993], ch.47). ‘The synthesis that results [from ‘identifying the interior image of Aristotelian phantasmology with the warm breath (the vehicle of the soul and of life) of Stoic-Neoplatonic pneumatology’] is so characteristic that European culture in this period [11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries] might justly be defined as a pneumophantasmology, within whose compass—which circumscribes at once a cosmology, a physiology, a psychology, and a soteriology—the breath that animates the universe, circulates in the arteries, and fertilizes the sperm is the same one that, in the brain and in the heart, receives and forms the phantasms of the things we see, imagine, dream, and love’ (Giorgio Agamben, *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture*, tr. Ronald L. Martinez [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993], 94). ‘The very vibrations of the projection of the divine sub-consciousness of God, through the creation point in the original absolute vacuum, bestirred the divine sound sleep state of God and made manifest the original breath of God, or the original Word—the divine *nad*—together with space, time and the cosmic universe, with all of its paraphernalia of the limited and finite ego, mind, energy and the individual and multiple forms’ (Meher Baba, *God Speaks: The Theme of Creation and its Purpose*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. [New York: Dodd, Mead & Co, 1973], 103).

<sup>12</sup> Meher Baba, *Listen, Humanity*, narrated and ed. D.E. Stevens (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 19. Cf. ‘Do not, so that, from my breast, the sigh liver-consuming / May ascend like smoke by way of the window’ (Hafiz of Shiraz, *The Divan*, tr. H. Wilberforce Clarke [London: Octagon Press, 1974], 449.5).

<sup>13</sup> As in this opening of Dante’s second *canzone* from the *Convivio*.

<sup>14</sup> Dante, *De vulgari*.

<sup>15</sup> In demons, some kinds of intellect (speculative, practical, active, to name a few) are more corruptible than others. The ‘practical’ intellect affected by free will is corruptible because of the demons’ fleshly concupiscence, while their speculative intellect may remain intact, according to Saint Bonaventure, *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi* (Florence: Quaracchi, 1885), vol. 2, p. 191, *Articulus 1. De cognitione daemonum*. Available online at <<http://www.franciscan-archive.org/bonaventura/opera/bon02189.html>>, accessed on 12/17/2008.

<sup>16</sup> Nothing can be conveyed from one rational mind to another except through a sensible medium.

<sup>17</sup> Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 85.

<sup>18</sup> ‘To be born is both to be born of the world and to be born into the world’ (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith [London: Routledge, 1962], 527).

<sup>19</sup> Giovanni Boccaccio, *Esposizioni sopra la Comedia di Dante*, ed. Giorgio Padoan, vol. 6 of *Tutte le opere di Giovanni Boccaccio*, ed. Vittore Branca (Milano: Mondadori, 1965) <<http://dante.dartmouth.edu>>; Meher Baba, *God Speaks*, 35.

<sup>20</sup> Much could be said about Catullus 45, an amoebean song (i.e., a dialogue, like ours), widely read since the rediscovery of a Catullus manuscript in Verona in 1314, postdating *Vita Nuova* (1295). Catullus 45 first imposed itself thematically to me because of references to tears, without my knowing at the time that it was relevant in other ways, as a precursor of post-Dante sonnets. The asyndeton *amant amantur* calls forth the too-clever formula *amore, more, ore, re* (love is loving, being a certain way, speaking, and things we do, or give: *verus amicus amore more ore re (re)cognoscitur*), variously attributed (possibly, Vulgar Latin or seventeenth century).

<sup>21</sup> Pierre de Ronsard, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Jean Céard, Daniel Ménager and Michel Simonin (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), vol. 2, p. 429, ‘The Sonnet on My Lover’s Tears,’ first published in the 1565 edition.

<sup>22</sup> Guillaume de Machaut, *Poésies lyriques*, 2 vols., ed. V. Chichmaref (Paris: Champion, 1909), 209.

<sup>23</sup> Guillaume de Machaut, *Poésies lyriques*, 2 vols., ed. V. Chichmaref (Paris: Champion, 1909), 206.

<sup>24</sup> The Who, ‘Love Reign O’er Me,’ *Quadrophenia* (Track Records, 1973).

<sup>25</sup> Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *Le Roman de la Rose*, ed. Ernest Langlois (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1914-24), lines 1571-3.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Truly, even though he had attained purity of heart and body, and in some manner was approaching the height of sanctification, he did not cease to cleanse the eyes of his soul with a continuous flood of tears. He longed for the sheer brilliance of the heavenly light and disregarded the loss of his bodily eyes’ (Bonaventure, *The Minor Legend of Saint Francis*, 3.3, *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, eds. Regis J. Armstrong, J.A. Wayne Hellmann, and William J. Short, 3 vols. [New York: New City Press, 2000], 3.695). Cf. ‘Than had sche so meche swetnes and devocyon that sche myth not beryn it, but cryid, wept, and sobbyd ful boitowsly. Sche had many an holy thowt of owr Lordys passyon and behld hym in hir gostly syght as verily as he had ben aforn hir in hir bodily syght’ (*The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Lynn Stanley [Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1996], ch.78). ‘Now if tears *come to the eyes*, if they *well up in them*, and if they can also veil sight, perhaps they reveal, in the very course of this experience, in the coursing of water, an essence of the eye, of man’s eye, in any case, the eye understood in the anthro-po-theological space of the sacred allegory. Deep down, deep down inside, the eye would be destined to weep. For at the very moment they veil sight, tears would unveil what is proper to the eye’ (Jacques Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993], 126).

<sup>27</sup> ‘. . . they are addressed to you, you will live from having had the strength to hear them. (In the same way, what do the two lovers, Tristan and Isolde, signify, if considered without their love, in a solitude which leaves them to some commonplace pursuit? Two pale beings, deprived of the marvelous; nothing counts but the love which tears them both apart)’ (Georges Bataille, *Inner Experience*, trans. Leslie Anne Boldt [Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988], 94).

<sup>28</sup> Jacques Roubaud, *Quelque chose noir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1986), 131-2: ‘Devant ta mort je suis resté complètement silencieux. / . . . / Je ne pouvais plus parler selon ma manière de dire qui est la poésie. / J’avais commencé à parler, en poésie, vingt-deux ans avant./ C’était après une autre mort./ Avant cette autre mort je ne savais comment dire. j’étais comme silencieux. Ainsi, pris entre deux ‘bords’ de mort.’ ‘Facing your death I remained completely silent / . . . / I could no longer speak in my way which is poetry. / I have started to talk, in poetry, twenty-two years before. / It was after another death. / Before that other death I didn’t know how to say. I was as silent. Thus, caught between two “shores” of death.’

<sup>29</sup> ‘Everyone knows . . . different names of the point of cessation, which could be then also called the point of poetry: for one it’s death, for another the obscene, for yet another pure meaning, reached by wrenching words

from the sphere of ordinary reference: hermeticism. For others, Mallarmé or Saussure, the point . . . is sound: the sound that must be stripped of all that serves for communication, of all that is distinctive: this is no more a search for the purity of meaning, but for multiple facets of homophony. Astonishingly, the failure is not absolute . . . Sometimes, in ‘lalangue’ that s/he works upon, one subject leaves its mark and opens the path where the impossible-to-write is written’ (Jean-Claude Milner, *L’Amour de la langue* [Paris: Seuil, 1978], 38-39. Lalangue is a Lacanian label for an amalgam between language and desire (technically, between libido and signifiers). I have stripped Milner’s quote of all the references to Lacan except this one, because my own use of Lacan is eclectic and unfaithful. I use many of his insights, but only as insights, not as binding rules of the only possible economy, including his major concepts (lack, mirror stage). Since essential aspects of Milner’s reasoning on extreme poetry echo my own, I think the scission (or my omission) is justified because Lacanian framework was a preconceived notion in Milner’s thought, and therefore less interesting for me as I think along with Milner; and, this scission does not seem to make Milner’s thought disintegrate. The reason for my interest in Milner’s approach is that he looks at poetry from the side of the text, while I am looking at it here from the side of what brings the texts into being within us, and it seems that the two optics result in identical statements, which confirms both what I am trying to say and what Milner says about the way language works, or (to remain closer to his formulation) what the poet works out when s/he works the ‘language’ understood as a combination of libido and signifiers, *travaille lalangue*. Of course, Milner’s Lacanian framework naturally brings his linguistic approach near to, into a compatibility with, an approach like mine. His idea of the ‘point of cessation’ is particularly interesting to me, because as we have seen with Roubaud or with Dante’s sigh, or even his theory of intelligence, this *point of cessation* is limned by similar markers (ex., death, the obscene, hermeticism, sound) whether it is the point of cessation of meaning towards all poetry tends but infinitesimally misses it (‘I have started to talk, in poetry, after another death . . . before . . . I was as silent’) or cessation of the ability to write (‘In the face of your death, I remained completely silent’). Specifically, Milner helped me put into words the intuition that the point of cessation, which is also the ‘point of poetry,’ is moreover the point where the difference between language and love (or death) becomes negligible. The point of poetry is the point of non-representation (as in: the distance that the word ‘representation’ implies is infinitesimally small), the point infinitesimally close to pure unmediated meaning (Dante’s intelligence).

<sup>30</sup> Love always preserves the presence of those who die or part, and the desire that loss brings out in us to speak of the beloved is as strong as when we first loved. The comical, obsessive desire that turns everything into another story about our lover, and the great pleasure that we take in hearing of him/her, possess us as strongly. The intervals between hearing and speaking of the lover are painful. In this sense, *quand’elli è giunto là dove disira* is the very definition of love.

<sup>31</sup> ‘At chorus aequalis Dryadum clamore supremos implerunt montis; flerunt Rhodopeiae arces altaque Pangaea et Rhesi Mauortia tellus atque Getae atque Hebrus et Actias Orithyia. ipse caua solans aegrum testudne amorem te, dulcis coniunx, te solo in litore secum, te ueniente die, te decedente canebat. Taenarias etiam fauces, alta ostia Ditis, et caligantem nigra formidine lucum ingressus, manisque adiit regemque tremendum nesciaque humanis precibus mansuescere corda. at cantu commotae Erebi de sedibus imis umbrae ibant tenues simulacraque luce carentum, quam multa in foliis auium se milia condunt, uesper ubi aut hibernus agit de montibus imber, matres atque uiri defunctaque corpora uita magnanimum heroum, pueri innuptaque puellae, impositque rogis iuuenes ante ora parentum, quos circum limus niger et deformis harundo Cocyti tardaue palus inamabilis unda alligat et nouies Styx interfusa coerces. quin ipsae stupuere domus atque intima

Leti Tartara caeruleosque implexae crinibus anguis Eumenides, tenuitque inhians tria Cerberus ora, atque Ixionii uento rota constitit orbis. imaque pedem referens casus euaserat omnis, redditaque Eurydice superas ueniebat ad auras pone sequens; namque hanc dederat Proserpina legem, cum subita incautum dementia cepit amantem, ignoscenda quidem, scirent si ignoscere manes: restitit, Eurydicemque suam iam luce sub ipsa immemor heu! uictisque animi respexit. ibi omnis effusus labor atque immitis rupta tyrannus foedera, terque fragor stagnis auditus Auerni. illa, 'quis et me,' inquit, 'miseram et te perdidit, Orpheu, quis tantus furor?' en iterum crudelia retro fata uocant conditque natantia lumina somnus. iamque uale: feror ingenti circumdate nocte inualidasque tibi tendens, heu non tua, palmas.' dixit et ex oculis subito, ceu fumus in auras commixtus tenuis, fugit diuersa, neque illum prensantem nequiquam umbras et multa uolentem dicere praetera uidit; nec portitor Orci amplius obiectam passus transile paludem. quid faceret? quo se rapta bis coniuge ferret? quo fletu manis, quae numina uoce moueret? illa quidem Stygia nabat iam frigida cumba. septem illum totos perhibent ex ordine mensis rupe sub aerea deserti ad Strymonis undam flesse sibi, et gelidis haec euoluisse sub astris, mulcentem tigris et agentem carmine quercus' (Virgil, *Georgics*, Book IV, 453-510).

<sup>32</sup> 'Once, while roaming about and frolicking among hills and dales, the Kasturi-mriga [deer whose navel yields musk] was suddenly aware of an exquisitely beautiful scent, the like of which it had never known. The scent stirred the inner depths of its soul so profoundly that it determined to find its source. So keen was its longing that notwithstanding the severity of cold or the intensity of scorching heat, by day as well as by night, it carried on its desperate search for the source of the sweet scent. It knew no fear or hesitation but undaunted went on its elusive search until, at last, happening to lose its foothold on a cliff, it had a precipitous fall resulting in a fatal injury. While breathing its last the deer found that the scent which had ravished its heart and inspired all these efforts came from its own navel. This last moment of the deer's life was its happiest, and there was on its face inexpressible peace' (Meher Baba, *Discourses*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed., 3 vols. [San Francisco: Sufism Reoriented, 1967], 2.193).

<sup>33</sup> The 'unfolding of the cosmic time's pure contingency through life and by life is expressed by decay as a dysteleologic process. In this sense, life is the medium for the incommensurable tensions between the contingencies of the cosmic time. And decay is the expression of these incommensurable tensions or contingencies along the infinite involutions of space—a complicity between time's subtractive enmity to belonging and the enthusiasm of the space for dissolution of any ground for individuation, a participation between the cosmic time's pure contingency and the infinite involutions of space from whose traps nothing can escape' ('Memento Tabere: Reflections on Time and Putrefaction,' <[http://blog.urbanomic.com/cyclon/archives/2009/03/memento\\_tabi\\_re.html](http://blog.urbanomic.com/cyclon/archives/2009/03/memento_tabi_re.html)>). Note that this commentary participatifies in this process: 'It is no accident that hidden writings are associated with collective authors . . . One of the initial symptoms of inauthenticity that Hidden Writing produces is positive disintegration . . . Inauthenticity operates as complicity with anonymous materials' (Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* [Melbourne: re.press, 2008], 62).

<sup>34</sup> Dante Alighieri, *Vita Nuova*, 12:3-4: 'I am like the center of circle, to which all points of the circumference bear the same relation; you, however, are not.'

<sup>35</sup> 'Utopia does not split off from infinite movement: etymologically it stands for absolute deterritorialization but always at the critical point at which it is connected with the present relative milieu, and especially with the forces stifled by this milieu. *Erewhon*, the word used by Samuel Butler, refers not only to no-where but also to

now-here' (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell [New York: Columbia University Press, 1994], 99–100).

<sup>36</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlin's Hymn 'The Ister'*, trans. William McNeill and Julia Davis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 28.

<sup>37</sup> 'Nulla potest mulier tantum se dicere amatam/ uere, quantum a me Lesbia amata mea est./ Nulla fides ullo fuit umquam foedere tanta,/ quanta in amore tuo ex parte reperta mea est' (Cat. 87): No woman can say she is loved, truly, as much as my Lesbia is loved by me. No faith there ever was in any bond as great as the one that's discovered in loving you, by me.

<sup>38</sup> Disguised as a cleric, Guillaume whispers love to Flamenca each Sunday as he gives her the Psalter to kiss; she whispers back. Through a secret tunnel, he joins her in a bathhouse, and they look at each other all night. In Adrian Clarke's *Supplementary Blues*, the poem that takes our line of Dante's sonnet for its pretext/title, is sensuous (both 'incarnated' and 'ethereal'): 'sidereal drifter / extra / cosmic suspirations,' etc.

<sup>39</sup> 'Questo sonetto ha tre parti: ne la prima comincio a dire a questa donna come lo mio desiderio si volge tutto verso lei; ne la seconda dico come l'anima, cioè la ragione, dice al cuore, cioè a lo appetito; ne la terza dico com'e' le risponde' (38:7).

<sup>40</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 82.

<sup>41</sup> Ronsard, 'Elegie II,' *Oeuvres complètes* 2, 302, ll. 37-70, quote l. 61. Late Ronsard, the distracted, facile Ronsard, and yet revelatory.

<sup>42</sup> Giacomo Puccini, *Turandot*, 'Nessun dorma.'

<sup>43</sup> Cf. 'The sensual thing itself has a unified and basically ineffable effect on us, one that cannot be reduced to any list of traits. But if such a listing of traits does not sever a thing from its quality, there may be another way for this to happen. . . . The separation between a sensual object and its quality can be termed 'allure.' This term pinpoints the bewitching emotional effect that often accompanies this event for humans, and also suggests the related term 'allusion,' since allure merely alludes to the object without making it its inner life directly present' (Graham Harman, 'On Vicarious Causation,' *Collapse* 2 [2007]: 198-9).

<sup>44</sup> Plotinus, *Enneads*, 6.7.35-6.

<sup>45</sup> 'I' mi son un che, quando / Amor mi spira, noto, e a quell modo / ch'e' ditta dentro vo significando' (*Purgatorio* 24.52-4) [I am one who, when Love inspires me, takes note, and goes setting it forth after the fashion which he dictates within me]. Signification itself is a work of love, semiosis an amorous occasionalism. 'Philosophers have long wondered about the nature of causality. Are there true causes at work in the world, and, if so, what makes them the causes they are? How do causes bring things about, and what kind of connection does a cause have to its effect? These questions took on another level of complexity when various religious and theological considerations were brought to bear on these issues. For instance, philosophers came to question how divine causal activity is to be understood, particularly, in relation to the natural causality of creatures. It is from this context, in which questions about the nature of causation intermixed with questions about the relation between divine and natural causality, that occasionalism emerged. Occasionalism attempts to address these questions by presenting as its core thesis the claim that God is the one and only true cause. In the words of the most famous occasionalist of the Western philosophical tradition, Nicolas Malebranche, 'there is only one true cause because there is only one true God; . . . the nature or power of each thing is nothing but the will of God; . . . all natural causes are not *true* causes but only *occasional* causes' [*OCM* II, 312 / *Search* 448]'

(‘Occasionalism,’ *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/occasionalism/>>). I.e. love is the will, the gravity, that lets things happen, creates the contact of cause and effect.

<sup>46</sup> ‘Ove è da sapere che discender la virtude d’una cosa in altra non è altro che ridurre quella in sua similitudine; sì come ne li agenti naturali vedemo manifestamente che, discendendo la loro virtù ne le pazienti cose, recano quelle a loro similitudine tanto quanto possibili sono a venire. Onde vedemo lo sole che, discendendo lo raggio suo qua giù, reduce le cose a sua similitudine di lume, quanto esse per loro disposizione possono da la [sua] virtude lume ricevere. Così dico che Dio questo amore a sua similitudine reduce, quanto esso è possibile a lui assomigliarsi. E ponsi la qualitate de la riduzione, dicendo: Sì come face in angelo che ‘l vede. Ove ancora è da sapere che lo primo agente, cioè Dio, pinge la sua virtù in cose per modo di diritto raggio, e in cose per modo di splendore reverberato; onde ne le Intelligenze raggia la divina luce senza mezzo, ne l’altre si ripercuote da queste Intelligenze prima illuminate. Ma però che qui è fatta menzione di luce e di splendore, a perfetto intendimento mostrerò differenza di questi vocabuli, secondo che Avicenna sente. Dico che l’usanza de’ filosofi è di chiamare ‘luce’ lo lume, in quanto esso è nel suo fontale principio; di chiamare ‘raggio’, in quanto esso è per lo mezzo, dal principio al primo corpo dove si termina; di chiamare ‘splendore’, in quanto esso è in altra parte alluminata ripercosso. Dico adunque che la divina virtù senza mezzo questo amore tragge a sua similitudine’ (*Convivio* 3.14, <<http://www.greatdante.net/texts/convivio/convivio.html>> [Here we must observe that the descent of virtue from one thing into another is nothing but the causing of the latter to take on the likeness of the former; just as in natural agents we clearly see that when their virtue descends into things that are receptive, they cause those things to take on their likeness to the extent that they are capable of attaining to it. Thus we see that the Sun, as its rays descend here below, causes things to take on the likeness of its light to the extent that by their disposition they are capable of receiving light from its virtue. So I say that God causes this love to take on his own likeness to the extent that it is possible for it to resemble him. And the nature of that causation is indicated by saying *As it does into an angel that sees him*. Here we must further know that the first agent, namely God, instills his power into things by means of direct radiance or by means of reflected light. Thus the divine light rays forth into the Intelligences without mediation, and is reflected into the other things by these Intelligences which are first illuminated. But since light and reflected light have been mentioned here, I will, in order to be perfectly clear, clarify the difference between these terms according to the opinion of Avicenna. I say that it is customary for philosophers to call luminosity *light* as it exists in its original source, to call it *radiance* as it exists in the medium between its source and the first body which it strikes, and to call it *reflected light* as it is reflected into another place that becomes illuminated (trans. Richard Lansing, <http://dante.ilt.columbia.edu/new/books/convivi/index.html>>)].

<sup>47</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 2.

<sup>48</sup> ‘ché ’n sue bellezze son cose vedute / che li occhi li color dov’ella luce / ne Mandan messi al cor pien di desiri, / che prendon aire e diventan sospiri’ (*Convivio* 3) [Her pure soul, which receives from him this salvation, For in her beauties are things seen that the eyes of those in whom she shines send messages to the heart full of desires that take air and become sighs].

<sup>49</sup> ‘Not for gain of good unto Himself, which cannot be, but that His splendor might, in resplendence, say, ‘*Subsisto*’ . . . the Eternal Love opened into new loves.’

<sup>50</sup> ‘Uti est ad intellectum ratiocinatio, ad id quod est id quod gignitur, ad aeternitatem tempus, ad punctum medium circulus: ita est fati series mobilis ad providentiae stabilem securitatem’ (Boethius, *De consolazione*

*Philosophiae* IV.6): as reasoning is to intellect, as that which is coming into being, is to that which is, time to eternity, circle to the median point: so is the moving series of events to the immovable safety of providence—a passage chosen by William P. Ker whose commentary seems worth citing: ‘if [Boethius] does not solve Fate and Free-will, he at any rate gives help for the reading of Dante, and his description of the relations between Providence and Fate is a fine example of solemn meditation. It is an expansion of the old passage from the *Timaeus*, about the Divine and the Necessary; Fate is Providence looked at from below. Just as the understanding of man, creeping from point to point, breaks into a long analytical series the unity of Divine reason, so the timeless Providence when it is translated into Time becomes the succession of events that seem to be bound together by the necessity of Fate’ (Ker, *The Dark Ages* [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1904], 113-14). But it seems to me that Boethius with his image of the immutably single center point of the innumerable and infinitely mutable *series mobilis*, points of the circle, and Dante with his passing beyond the farthest sphere proffer multiple, not identical consolations (Ker implies the opposite).

<sup>51</sup> Cavalcanti, 22: *quando vide uscire / degli occhi vostri un lume di merzede / che porse dentr’ al cor nova dolcezza*: when I saw a light of mercy leave your eyes that carries new sweetness into the heart; see also 25, which echoes Dante’s rime *splendor/onore*; and the two sonnets addressed to Dante, 39 and 40. Agamben comments in the *Stanzas*: ‘there are not “two loves” . . . but a single “amorous experience” . . . Dante too conceived of love in this way’ (Giorgio Agamben, *Stanzas*, 105-07, at 107).

<sup>52</sup> Jean-Louis Bourdillon, *Supplément au poème de Roncevaux. . . Souvenirs de Roland* (Paris: Tiliard, 1847), 36, citing *Itinéraire d’Italie* (no author, no publisher, Milan, 1810), 147. I thought this was a nice ending because it is the object of a pilgrimage, be it a touristy one; and enchantingly, replaces the fictional weapon with its *cortège* of pain, wounding, war, with a peaceful and very promising barge mast, which at the same time is dollhouse-like out of scale. If we are to dream and not be, why not dream something really nice?

<sup>53</sup> Gilles Deleuze, lecture of March 26, 1973, on ‘desire, pleasure, *jouissance*:’ Cartesian extraction of the subject from the statement is analogous to the recoiling of pleasure from desire in some theories of love that Deleuze dislikes. ‘I think I see the unicorn’ is always true, as opposed to ‘I see the unicorn’; therefore, for Descartes, ‘I think that I see the unicorn’ is preferable. The function of ‘I think’ (and lack) is to preempt shame, to prevent us from ‘being wrong’ or deceiving ourselves and similarly, in love, bearing the pain of being undeceived, and the shame of having been such idiots. However, once we accept ‘I see the unicorn’ as a shameless possibility, we don’t need to worry about lack. With lack, we’ll never be idiots: we’ll always already be in pain, we’ll have been pre-hurt; the more perfectly we perform that mystification, the more completely we eliminate the probability of shame. So pleasure and shame inhabit different directories; *vide* the *Romance of the Rose* that lists shame as one of the categories inimical to Love, alongside pride, malice/brutality (*vilainie*), despair, and new-thought.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. ‘to speak is in God to see by thought, forasmuch as the Word is conceived by the gaze of the divine thought’ (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province [New York: Bezinger Brothers, 1947], 1.34.1).

<sup>55</sup>

In one moment (the only moment) of silence  
Are dying all of my ideas about silence.

As sound beyond sound, beyond hearing, and beyond

Beyond is the densest openness of silence.

There is an endless loveliness in your eyes while  
I am trying to say something about silence.

See the past, present, and future of all language  
Created, preserved, and destroyed inside silence.

Speak your heart to me, dear one, whoever you are,  
In these uncertain moments enclosed by silence.

Word-truth, our rarely achieved alchemy of sense,  
Is a sound transmuting silence into silence.

Keep quiet Nicola, failure of what you know,  
While we keep listening for answers in silence.

‘And Nature, asked why it brings forth works, might answer if it cared to listen and to speak: ‘It would have been more becoming to put no question but to learn in silence just as I myself am silent and make no habit of talking. And what is your lesson? This; that whatsoever comes into my being is my vision, seen in my silence, the vision that belongs to my character who, sprung from vision, am vision-loving and create vision by the vision-seeing faculty within me’ (Plotinus, *Enneads*, 3.8.4). ‘Si cui sileat tumultus carnis, sileant phantasiae terrae et aquarum et aeris, sileant et poli et ipsa sibi anima sileat . . . none hoc est: Intra in gaudium domini tui?’ (Augustine, *Confessions*, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1951], 9.10) [If to anyone the tumult of the flesh became silent, silent the images of earth and sea and air, and the heavenly poles and the very soul to itself became silent . . . would this not be: *Enter into the joy of the Lord?*] ‘Silence is nothing merely negative; it is not the mere absence of speech. It is a positive, a complete world in itself. Silence has greatness simply because it is. It *is*, and that is its greatness, its pure existence. There is no beginning to silence and no end . . . When silence is present, it is as though nothing but silence had ever existed’ (Max Picard, *The World of Silence*, trans. Stanley Godman [Chicago: Regner, 1952], 1. ‘He who never says anything cannot keep silent at any given moment. Keeping silent authentically is possible only in genuine discoursing. To be able to keep silent, Dasein must have something to say—that is, it must have at its disposal an authentic and rich disclosedness of itself’ (Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson [San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1962], 165). ‘All prayers ultimately initiate the soul into an ever deepening silence of sweet adoration. . . . That which seeks to reach towards the immeasurable, itself becomes incapable of being measured by any set standards’ (Meher Baba, *Beams* [Harper & Row, 1958], 75). ‘Things that are real are given and received in silence’ (Meher Baba).

<sup>56</sup> Martin Heidegger, ‘The Nature of Language,’ in *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 108.

<sup>57</sup> Guido delle Colonne, ‘Gioiosamente canto,’ *I poeti della scuola Siciliana: Poeti siculo-toscani*, ed. Rosario Coluccia (Milano: Mondadori, 2008), 67. The opening of Guido’s song beautifully gives joy’s unendingness in



the form of generative, non-reductive tautology: ‘Gioiosamente canto / e vivo in allegrezza, / ca per la vostri’ amanza, / madonna, gran gioio sento.’

<sup>58</sup> Giorgio Agamben, *Stanzas*, 128.

<sup>59</sup> ‘The sonnet could be divided more subtly, and more subtly clarified; but it may pass with this division, and therefore I do not concern myself to divide it any further’ (*VN* 41:9). I proceed through some trinitarian passages. ‘The same appetite with which one longs open-mouthed to know a thing becomes love of the thing known when it holds and embraces the acceptable offspring, that is knowledge, and joins it to its begetter. And so you have a certain image of the trinity, the mind itself and its knowledge, which is its offspring and its words about itself, and love as the third element, *and these three are one* (1 Jn 5:8) and are one substance’ (Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. Edmund Hill [Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1991], 9.3). ‘[T]he Son proceeds by way of the intellect as Word, and the Holy Ghost by way of the will as Love. Now love must proceed from a word. For we do not love anything unless we apprehend it by a mental conception. Hence also in this way it is manifest that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the son. . . . Therefore in rational creatures, possessing intellect and will, there is found the representation of the Trinity by way of image, inasmuch as there is found in them the word conceived, and the love proceeding’ (Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1.36.2, 1.45.7). ‘The ecstatic unity of temporality—that is, the unity of the ‘outside-of-itself’ in the raptures of the future, of what has been, and of the Present—is the condition for the possibility that there can be an entity which exists as its ‘there’ (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 350). ‘The fact is, that when the latent infinite trio-nature of God is gradually manifested out of the gradual projection of the finite Nothing, and when it simultaneously protrudes the projection of the finite Nothing as Nothingness manifested *ad infinitum*, this very same infinite trio-nature of God, at this stage of manifestation, becomes enmeshed in the apparent and false infinity of the Nothingness and thus gets itself expressed as the finite triple nature of man with capabilities demonstrated *ad infinitum*. How (1) the mind, (2) the energy and (3) the body, as the triple nature of man, demonstrate their capabilities *ad infinitum* in Illusion is clearly experienced (1) through the inventive mind of a scientist, who finds no end to discoveries and inventions; (2) through the release of nuclear energy in Illusion, which has reached a stage where it threatens with its own force of illusion to destroy the very Nothingness out of which it emerged and evolved into such a terrific force; (3) through the body (typifying happiness) which, now keeping pace with the advanced progress of the evolution of the Nothing, is infinitely urged to seek greater and greater happiness to such an extent that happiness actually becomes the very basis of the life of illusion. The only reason for such infinite demonstration in the field of Nothingness (which is Illusion) is because the basic finite triple nature of man—energy, mind and happiness of Nothingness—is upheld and stretched out *ad infinitum* by the basic infinite trio-nature of God—infinite power, infinite knowledge and infinite bliss of Everything’ (Meher Baba, *God Speaks*, 90-1).

<sup>60</sup> T. Koetsier and L. Bergmans, ‘Introduction,’ *Mathematics and the Divine: An Historical Study* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2008), 13.

<sup>61</sup> ‘Engell: Es wäre ein Patz, den wir nicht wissen, und dorten, / auf unsäglichem Teppich, zeigten die Liebenden, die’s hier. . . ihre kühnen/ hohen Figuren des Herzschwungs, / ihre Türme aus Lust, ihre / längst, wo Boden nie war, nur an einander / lehrenden Leitern, bebend,-und *kömtens*, / vor den Zuschauern rings, unzähligen lautlosen Toten: / Würfeln die dann ihre letzten, immer ersparten, / immer verborgenen, die wir nicht kennen, ewig / gültigen Müntzen des Glücks vor das endlich / wahrhaft lächelnde Paar auf gestilltem /

Teppich?': Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Selected Poetry*, ed. and trans. Stephen Mitchell, New York: Vintage International, 1989: 178-181, *Duino Elegies* 5, translation modified.

<sup>62</sup> Chastelain de Couci, *Chansons attribuées au Chastelain de Couci, fin du XIIIe-début du XIIIe siècle*, ed. Alain Lerond (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964).

<sup>63</sup> 'Watering can [*irrigium*], called *chantepleure* in French, clepsydra in Greek.' I thank Jean-Marie Fritz for introducing me to *chantepleure*, the lyric object of his research. The citation is from the title of Jean Coignet's *Penitential irrigium, La Chantepleure gallice vocatum, graece Claepsydra*. . . Paris: Maheu, 1537. Thus, *chantepleure* has here a purgatorial function—perhaps opening the possibility of a pleasant purgatory that we discussed elsewhere: 'But this purgatory would not be purgative, would be the moment of ease' (Dan Remein).

<sup>64</sup> Valentina Visconti adopted a *chantepleure* with the *devise* '*plus ne m'est riens*' (nothing is anything for me anymore / there's nothing more for me) after the assassination of her husband Louis d'Orléans by Jean-Sans-Peur, duke of Burgundy (1407).

<sup>65</sup> 'Erde, du liebe, ich will. Oh glaub, es bedürfte / nicht deiner Frühlinge mehr, mich dir zu gewinnen—, einer, / ach, ein einziger ist schon dem Blute zu viel.' Rilke, *Selected Poetry*, 202-203, *Duino Elegies*, 5.

<sup>66</sup> Martin Heidegger, 'Language,' *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 210.

<sup>67</sup> Ezra Pound, *The ABC of Reading* (New York: New Directions, 1960), 29.

<sup>68</sup> 'Thus 'phenomenology' means . . . [*apophainesthai ta phainomena*]—to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself Heidegger' (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 34).

<sup>69</sup> 'The image is a being whose essence is to be a *species*, a visibility or an appearance. A being is special if its essence coincides with its being given to be seen, with its aspect. Special being is absolutely insubstantial. It does not have a proper place, but occurs in a subject and is in this sense like a *habitus* or a mode of being, like the image in a mirror' (Giorgio Agamben, *Profanations*, trans. Jeff Fort [New York: Zone, 2007], 57).

<sup>70</sup> 'If one form of thinking, rational and horizontal, clamps man to the earth, another, which we may tentatively call meditative, or 'vertical' thinking after Parmenides, may literally raise man into the air. . . Horizontal thinking, we may say as Max Frisch said of technology, is a way of organizing the universe so that man won't have to experience it. Vertical thinking is a way of transcending the horizontal thinking to rejoin the universe. Thus we may say with Heraclitus "The way up and the way down are the same." We might remain satisfied, with the scholars, not to take Parmenides seriously in his vertical description of seeing (flying). This is the same attitude of patronization which art scholars still indulge toward 'flat' Byzantine and Medieval painting and toward the Eastern 'mandala'. These scholars insist that painters lacked the technique for painting in three dimensions; on the contrary, it is we who have lost the capacity to see in two dimensions. . . . Many are the men who have drifted, in dreams, out the door, through the garden, and out into the street. . . . When I was a child my eyes 'flattened' space' (August Plinth, *Principles of Levitation*, 38-42).

<sup>71</sup> Cf. 'He who knows everything displaces nothing. To each one I appear to be what he thinks I am' (Meher Baba, *Life at its Best* [San Francisco: Sufism Reoriented, 1957], 3).

<sup>72</sup> 'Not *how* the world is, is the mystical, but *that it is*' (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, tr. C.K. Ogden [Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1998], 6.44). 'God or the good or the place does not take place, but is the taking-place of the entities, their innermost exteriority. The being-worm of the worm, the being-stone of the stone, is divine. That the world is, that something can appear and have a face . . . this is the good' Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, 14).

<sup>73</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia, 1994), 80.

<sup>74</sup> ‘Et partes sermonis fabularis secundum quod est representativus due sunt. Omnis enim representatio aut imperat sibi locum per representationem sui contrarii, et post permutatur as suam intentionem (et est modus qui dicitur apud eos circulatio), aut rem ipsam non faciens mentionem aliquam sui contrarii (et hoc est quod ipsi vocabant significationem). . . et pars secunda sunt consuetudines, et est illud in quo primitus usitata est representatio, scilicet est illud quod representatur (et est quidem representatio seu imitatio [in the Arabic text of Averroes’s middle commentary, the word used here is ‘narrative’--a term used by Averroes for the first time in that part of the treatise, which explains Hermanus’s glossing it by two terms in Latin, *representatio seu imitatio*] sustenamentum et fundamentum in hac arte; propterea quod non fit delectatio ex rememoratione rei cuius intenditur rememoratio absque sui representatione) . . . ideoque multotiens non delectatur homo ex aspectu forme ipsius rei existentis in natura et delectatur in eius representatione et formatione per picturas et colores’ *Aristoteles latinus* 48-9: ‘There are two kinds of mimetic/*representativus* fictional utterance/*sermonis fabularis*: [one,] either mimesis/*representatio* commands a place for herself by representing a contrary and then moves/*permutatur* to intent/*intentionem* (this was called by [the Greeks] *circulation* [*peripateia*]), or the thing itself without any mention of its contrary (what they called signification/*anagnoresis*) . . . two, [moral] habits/*consuetudines*, and it is for them that *reprehenatio* is primarily used, that is that which is represented, and *representatio* or *imitatio* is the pillar and foundation of that art . . . man does not delight in the seeing of the mere forms of things existing in nature, but delights in their representations and formation by paints and colors.’ This and following citations from *Aristoteles latinus: De arte poetica, translatio Guillelmi de Moerbeka . . . accedunt Expositio Media averrois sive ‘Poetria’ Hermanno Alemanno interprete et specimena translationis Petri Leonii*, ed. Laurent Minio-Paluello (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968). The portion cited here is not Aristotle proper, but Hermanus Allemanus’s translation/commentary (ca.1256) of Averroes’s (1126-1198) ‘middle commentary’ to Aristotle’s Poetics (middle in length--as opposed to the long and the short one). This particular part in Hermanus Allemanus is practically identical with Averroes’s Arabic text with which we compared it: Steve Nimis, Greek and medieval Latin, Karla Mallette, medieval Latin and Arabic, and Elizabeth Bergman, medieval and modern Arabic, with Latinists Evan Hayes, Emily Schubeler, and Alex Robbins.

<sup>75</sup> *Aristoteles latinus*, 49: ‘and the fifth part [of ‘tragedy’ or, as Averroes and Hermanus misunderstand it, ‘laudatory poetry’, poems of praise] . . . is music/*tonus*; and it is the most important part to impress (press on, against) the soul and work in it.’

<sup>76</sup> Plots are divided into complex, with either a *peripateia* or an *anagnoresis*, and simple, without them. Anagnoresis is realized in one of five ways: signs/tokens/marks on the body; arbitrary (*directio*, direct discovery invented by the author); reawakened memory/recall of something forgotten; logic/reasoning; discovery from incidents (probability).

<sup>77</sup> Averroes insists that *cadentia in sensum* is not the essence of tragedy/poetry, but rather ‘beauty of the character, praiseworthy actions, and blessed beliefs,’ to which Allemanus adds: ‘this is not found in the poetry of the Arabs, but in praise poetry concerned with divine law’: ‘Et partes maiores carminis laudativi sunt consuetudines et credulitates [moral habits and beliefs]. Tragedia etenim non est ars representativa ipsorummet hominum prout sunt individua *cadentia in sensum*, sed est representativa consuetudinum eorum honestarum et actionem laudabilium et credulitatum beatificantium. Et consuetudines comprehendunt actiones et mores. Ideoque ponitur consuetudo una sex partium, et per eius positionem excusatur [supercedes] position actionum et morum in illa divisione. . . Itud vero totum non reperitur in poematibus Arabum, sed reperitur quidem in

sermonibus legalibus [i.e. *sha'aria*] (*Aristoteles latinus*, 48). One might say that for Averroes, poetry and *sha'aria* were two discrete genres, and Dante makes them back into one ring, as they were among the Greeks (in tragedy, for instance). So, in tracing the readings of Aristotle in the West through Arabic and Latin sources and into the Renaissance, we are looking at the ebb and flow of genres (poetry, philosophy) reconstituting themselves, sometimes discrete, sometimes intertwined. I keep in mind that Dante names his poem 'comedy,' not tragedy: as if he aimed not to praise. Cf. the distinction between praise and vituperative poetry (corresponding to Aristotelian distinction between tragedy and comedy) in Averroes and Allemanus.

<sup>78</sup> 'And that's why I say that I intend to solve and declare/remove this doubt in this little book in an even more doubtful part.'

<sup>79</sup> Augustine, *On the Trinity*, trans. Stephen McKenna (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1970), 15.11.20. '[V]erbum quod foris sonat, signum est verbi quod intus lucet, cui magis verbi competit nomen. Nam illud quod profertur carnis ore, vox verbi est: verbumque et ipsum dicitur, propter illud a quo ut foris appareret assumptum est' (PL 42:1071). 'I can remember when I was a little boy, my grandmother and I could hold conversations entirely without ever opening our mouths. She called it shining' (*The Shining*, directed by Stanley Kubrick [Warner Bros., 1980], Halloran speaking to Danny).

<sup>80</sup> '[A]lthough it is clear that the beings that were created were nothing before their creation . . . yet they were not nothing, so far as the creator's thought is concerned, through which, and according to which, they were created. This thought is a kind of expression of the objects created (*locutio rerum*), like the expression which an artisan forms in his mind for what he intends to make [*sicut faber dicit prius apud se quod factururus est*]' (Anselm, *Monologium*, trans. Sidney Norton Deane [Chicago: Open Court, 1903], chapters 9-10). Anselm goes on to compare and identify this thought with the universal *verba mentis*: 'all other words owe their invention to these, where these are, no other word is necessary for the recognition of an object, and where they cannot be, no other word is of any use for the description of an object. . . . This . . . then, should be called the especially proper and primary *word*, corresponding to the thing. Hence, if no expression of any object whatsoever so nearly approaches the object as that expression which consists of this sort of *words*, nor can there be in the thought of any other word so like the object, whether destined to be, or already existing, not without reason it may be thought that such an expression of objects existed with (*apud*) the supreme Substance before the creation, that they might be created; and exists, now that they have been created, that they might be known through it' (ch.10).

<sup>81</sup> 'Spirit blows where it wants and you hear its voice but know not whence it comes or where it goes.'

<sup>82</sup> *Summa theologica*, Supplement.83.1.

<sup>83</sup> 'In Wahrheit singen, ist ein andrer Hauch. / Ein Hauch um nichts. Ein When im Gott. Ein Wind' (Rainer Maria Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, 1.3, in *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*, ed. and trans. Stephen Mitchell [New York: Vintage, 1989], 231).

<sup>84</sup> Augustine, *The Trinity*, trans. J. E. Rotelle (New York: New City Press, 1997), 10.1.2-3.

<sup>85</sup> 'Und das Gestirn seiner künftigen Liebe/ geht doch schon längst unter Sternen,/ gültig.' Rilke, *Selected Poetry*, 264-5.

<sup>86</sup> Rilke, *Selected Poetry*, 297.

<sup>87</sup> From *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*: 'Und schon schlagen sich seine Sinne nieder aus der hellen Lösung seiner Selle.' Rilke, *Selected Poetry*, 104-5.

<sup>88</sup> Rilke's description of 'primal sound,' a sound that would be generated if the coronal suture (the line between skull bones that, separate at birth, fuse later) was read by a phonograph's needle, devolves to his description of Arabic poetry that uses all five senses (as opposed to the Western poetry centered on sight): 'a lady, to whom this was mentioned in conversation, exclaimed that this wonderful and simultaneous capacity and achievement of all the senses was surely nothing but the presence of mind and grace of love—incidentally she thereby bore her own witness to the sublime reality of the poem. But the lover is in such splendid danger just because he must depend upon the co-ordination of his senses, for he knows that they must meet in that unique and risky centre, in which, renouncing all extension, they come together and have no permanence. As I write this, I have before me the diagram that I have always used as a ready help whenever ideas of this kind have demanded attention. If the world's whole field of experience, including those spheres which are beyond our knowledge, be represented by a complete circle, it will be immediately evident that, when the black sectors, denoting that which we are incapable of experiencing, are measured against the lesser, light sections, corresponding to what is illuminated by the senses, the former are very much greater. Now the position of the lover is this, that he feels himself unexpectedly placed in the centre of the circle, that is to say, at the point where the known and the incomprehensible, coming forcibly together at one single point, become complete and simply a possession, losing thereby, it is true, all individual character. This position would not serve the poet, for individual variety must be constantly present for him, he is compelled to use the sense sectors to their full extent, as it must also be his aim to extend each of them as far as possible, so that his lively delight, girt for the attempt, may be able to pass through the five gardens in one leap. As the lover's danger consists in the non-spatial character of his standpoint, so the poet's lies in his awareness of the abysses which divide the one order of sense experience from the other: in truth they are sufficiently wide and engulfing to sweep away from before us the greater part of the world—who knows how many worlds?' (Soglio, Assumption of the Virgin, 1919).

<sup>89</sup> E. M. Cioran, *A Short History of Decay*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Arcade, 1949), 47. Dante's likewise turns/is turned away weeping from the *itinerarium mentis* of 'il diletto monte' (*Inferno* 1.77) [the delectable mountain], corresponding to the unfinishable philosophical project of the *Convivio*: "A te convien tenere altro viaggio," / rispuose, poi che lagrimar mi vide, / "se vuo' camper d'esto loco selvaggio" (*Inferno* 1.91-3).

<sup>90</sup> For a footnote, imagine here a long posthumous essay by a philosopher on the subject of the sigh beginning *I sigh. For whom is a sigh?* with this as epigraph: 'And surely I am not giving myself a report. It may be a sigh; but it need not' (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe [New York: Macmillan, 1958], I.585).

<sup>91</sup> Hāfiz, *Divan*, 397.2.

<sup>92</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 'The Honey Sacrifice,' 192.

<sup>93</sup> *Purgatorio*, 30.48 [Not a drop of blood is left in me that does not tremble: I know the tokens of the ancient flame].

<sup>94</sup> From *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*: 'Um eines Verses willen muss man. . . die Gebärde wissen, mit welcher die kleinen Blumen sich auftun am Morgen.' Rilke, *Selected Poetry*, 90-1.

<sup>95</sup> Ronsard, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol.1, p. 18: de la main dextre apand a vostre autel / l'humble present de son livre immortel / son coeur de l'autre aux pieds de cette image.

<sup>96</sup> Ronsard, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 1, p. 254-5, *Le Second Livre des Amours*, 2, sonnet 4: Comme on voit sur la branche au mois de May la rose / En sa belle jeunesse, en sa première fleur . . . Pour obsèques reçoÿ mes

larmes et mes pleurs, / Ce vase plein de lait, ce panier plein de fleurs, / Afin que vif et mort ton corps ne soit que roses.

<sup>97</sup> *Nenia*, XXXI. The most recent bilingual (Polish-English) edition of Tkaczyszyn-Dycki is *Periegrinary*, transl. Bill Johnston (Brookline, MA: Zephyr Press, 2008). Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, *Nenia i inne wiersze* [Nenia and Other Poems] (Lublin: Lublin: Związek Literatów Polskich, 1990), cited by Przemysław Pilarski, 'Obsesje Dyckiego. Homoseksualność na tle pozostałych problemów tożsamościowych bohatera wierszy autora *Przewodnika dla bezdomnych*. . .,' in Tomasz Basiuk, Dominika Ferens, and Tomasz Sikora, *Parametry Pozadania: kultura odmienców wobec homofobii* (Kraków: TAIWPN Universitas, 2006), 251-61, at 260.

<sup>98</sup> Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, 'Piosenka o kroplach króla dąskiego (Bulat Okudzhawa) [The Song of the Danish King's Elixir (Bulat Okudzhava)], author's recording online at [http://www.biuroliterackie.pl/przystan/content/media/m\\_010/Dycki\\_Piosenka\\_o\\_kroplach\\_krola\\_dunskiego.mp3](http://www.biuroliterackie.pl/przystan/content/media/m_010/Dycki_Piosenka_o_kroplach_krola_dunskiego.mp3), accessed on August 16, 2009. Bulat Okudzhava is a famous Russian singer-songwriter of Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani descent. Perhaps the reference is to his reciting Boris Pasternak's poem 'Hamlet,' with guitar accompaniment. Pasternak Translated Hamlet in 1940; the poem (1946) was often set to music; it describes Hamlet as poised at the threshold of the stage, his destiny before him; the last line reads, 'to live through a life is no walk through a field.'

<sup>99</sup> 'With language, you have to be firm / it is what it is a piece / of wood we use as a prop / and an aid on the way / but not always luckily / it is what it is and there is / not a shadow of a doubt that it's clay / tormented by inspiration/ of the Lord and each one / of us, when we're breathless' (Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, 'X.,' *Piosenka o zależnościach i uzależnieniach* [The Song of Relations and Dependences] [Wrocław: Biuro Literackie, 2008],

<[http://biuroliterackie.pl/przystan/czytaj.php?site=100&co=txt\\_1959](http://biuroliterackie.pl/przystan/czytaj.php?site=100&co=txt_1959)>, accessed August 16, 2009).

<sup>100</sup> 'Car son beau nom qui l'esprit me martyre / Hors de moy-même étonné me retire / . . . Je suis semblable à la Prestresse folle, / Qui bégue perd la voix et la parole, / Dessous le Dieu qui lui brouille le saine': for this beautiful name that torments my wit draws me, astonished, out of myself. . . I am like the mad Priestess who, lisping, loses voice and speech under the God who muddles her heart: Ronsard, *Oeuvres complètes* 1:38, *Le premier livre des Amours*, sonnet XXVII.

<sup>101</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, 'A Lecture on Ethics,' *Philosophical Review* 74 (1965), 11.

<sup>102</sup> Charles Baudelaire, *The Flowers of Evil* (New York: Oxford, 1993), 'La Chevelure,' line 13.

<sup>103</sup> *Vita Nuova*, 21:4.

<sup>104</sup> *Vita Nuova*, 21:4.

<sup>105</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 4.339.

<sup>106</sup> Hafiz, *Divan*, 572.8.

<sup>107</sup> Agamben, *The Coming Community*, 52, citing Nagarjuna and Ernst Bloch (citing Walter Benjamin citing Gershom Scholem citing a well-known Hasidic parable), respectively. In other words, the indifferent difference between the world and paradise is identical with the space of the *that*.

<sup>108</sup> 'seine Herde besäumt, wo sie sich ausfranst. / . . . Noch immer dürfte ein Gott / heimlich in diese Gestalt und würde nicht minder' (Rilke, *The Selected Poetry* 120-121, 'The Spanish Trilogy,' *Uncollected Poems*).

<sup>109</sup> Passage cited in Ruedi Imbach and Iñigo Atucha, *Amours plurielles: Doctrines médiévales du rapport amoureux de Bernard de Clairvaux à Boccaccio* (Paris: Seuil, 2006), 267.

<sup>110</sup> Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine* I, chap. XXVII, 28, passage cited in Imbach and Atucha, *Amours plurielles*, 264: 'we should thus love others more than our body, because we must love all in relation to God and that the beloved is called upon to enjoy with us the proximity of this sovereign Being: a privilege that does not belong to the body, since it is only alive through our soul, that alone makes us enjoy God.'

<sup>111</sup> Augustine, Letter to Januarius 55 chapter 10:18 and chapter 11:21. *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Saint Augustine of Hippo, Saint John Chrysostom (New York: Christian Literature co., 1886, repr. Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eedermans, 1956), vol. 1: The Confessions and Letters of Saint Augustine, 309-10.

<sup>112</sup> The passage continues, '. . . thus the man who says 'I know I am alive' says he knows one thing; but if he says 'I know that I know I am alive,' there are two things. The fact that he knows these two things makes a third knowing; and in this way he can add a fourth and a fifth and a countless number more, if he has the time. But because he cannot either comprehend an innumerable number by adding up single ones or give it innumerable expression, what he certainly does comprehend is both that this is true, and that it is so innumerable that he cannot comprehend or express the infinite number of its word' (Augustine, *The Trinity*, 15.4).

<sup>113</sup> [I saw, approaching from afar, Love / so joyous that I hardly recognized him] (*VN*24:7).

<sup>114</sup>

Memory, my peephole to eternity, wanders  
Forward in recognition, finds you in wonder.

So busy falling into being, there is no time  
Not to see you in the corridors we wander.

A little child running ahead of me, playing.  
Who is following or leading whom, I wonder?

I am talking about something never, always  
Known: a friend returning where I do not wander.

A new name so familiar it cannot be heard  
Slipping within the secret chambers of wonder.

Happening does not happen the way other things  
Happen, stumbling along a path that wanders.

Event's always-forgotten event of itself.  
Why, how this goes for granted, Nicola wonders.

<sup>115</sup> 'The intellect of most persons is harnessed by innumerable wants. From the spiritual point of view, such a life is the lowest type of human existence. The highest type of human existence is free from all wants and is characterised by sufficiency or contentment. . . . complete non-wanting is unattainable as long as life is mind-

ridden. It is possible only in supra-mental existence. One has to go beyond the mind to experience the spiritual bliss of desirelessness. Between the two extremes of a life harassed by wants and a life which is completely free from wants, it is possible to arrive at a mode of practical life in which there is harmony between the mind and the heart. When there is such harmony the mind does not dictate the ends of life, but only helps to realise those ends which are given by the heart. It does not lay down any conditions to be fulfilled before any utterance of the heart is adopted for translation into practical life. In other words it *surrenders its role of judge*, which it is accustomed to play in its intellectual queries concerning the nature of the universe, and accepts unquestioningly the dictates of the heart. . . . It is futile to try to glean knowledge of true values by exercise of the mind alone. Mind cannot tell you which things are worth having, it can only tell you how to achieve the ends accepted from non-intellectual sources. In most persons the mind accepts ends from the promptings of wants, but this means denial of the life of the spirit. Only when the mind accepts its ends and values from the deepest promptings of the heart does it contribute to the life of the spirit. . . . Spiritual understanding is born of harmony between mind and heart. This harmony of mind and heart does not require the mixing up of their functions. *It does not imply cross-functioning, but co-operative functioning.* Their functions are neither identical nor co-ordinate. Mind and heart must of course be balanced but this balance cannot be secured by pitching the mind against the heart or by pitching the heart against the mind. It can be attained *not through mechanical tension, but through intelligent adjustment* (*Discourses*, I.139-41).

<sup>116</sup> Meher Baba, cited from Kitty Davy, *Love Alone Prevails* (North Myrtle Beach, SC: Sheriar Press, 1981), 165.

<sup>117</sup> Dante 1905: 62.

<sup>118</sup> Dante 1905: 77.

<sup>119</sup> ‘Liebende, wäre nicht der andre, der / sie Sicht verstellt, sind nah daran und staunen . . . / Wie aus Versehn ist ihnen aufgetan / hinter dem andern. . . Aber über ihm / kommt keiner fort, und wieder wird ihm Welt’ (Rilke, ‘The Eighth Elegy,’ *Duino Elegies, The Selected Poetry*, 192-3).

<sup>120</sup> ‘O Sternenfall, / von einer Brücke einmal eingesehn–: / Dich nicht vergessen. Stehn!’ (Rilke, ‘Death,’ *Uncollected Poems, The Selected Poetry*, 144-5).

<sup>121</sup> ‘Aber / sein Torso glüht noch wie ein Kandelaber, / in dem sein Schauen, nur zurückgeschraubt, / sich hält und glänzt. . . . und bräche nicht aus allen seinen Rändern / aus wie ein Stern: denn da ist keine Stelle, / die dich nicht sieht. Du musst dein Leben ändern.’ Rilke, ‘Archaic Torso of Apollo,’ *New Poems, The Selected Poetry*, 60-1.

<sup>122</sup> *Love Alone Prevails*, 165.

<sup>123</sup> Meher Baba, *The Everything and the Nothing* [Beacon Hill, Australia: Meher House Publication, 1963], no. 37.

<sup>124</sup> Hafiz, *Divan*, 288.4.

<sup>125</sup> Hafiz, *Divan*, 686.23-4

<sup>126</sup> Reza Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia*, 204-5.

<sup>127</sup> In fulfillment of the causal chain set in motion by the *virtù*—‘mi salute molto virtuosamente’ (*VN* 3:1)—of Beatrice’s saluation: sweet greeting (*dolcissimo salutare*)→intoxication (*come inebriate*)→solitude (*solingo luogo*)→thinking (*pensare*)→sweet sleep (*soave sonno*)→marvelous vision (*maravigliosa vision*)→anguish (*angoscia*)→waking (*disvegliato*)→thinking (*pensare*)→sonnet (*sonetto*)→friendship (*amista*)→frailty and weakness (*faile e debole condizione*) . . . (*VN* 3:2-4:1). In other words, love is dis-locating (Cf. Anna Kłosowska and Nicola



Masciandaro, 'Between Angela and Actaeon: Dislocation,' forthcoming in *L'Esprit Créateur*). So Averroes's commentary on the immobility of Aristotelian place (place as unmovable vessel) suggests an originary relation to desire: 'place is that towards which something moves or in which something rests. If something were to move toward a term which is itself in movement, the thing would be moving in vain' (Averrois Cordubensis, *Commentaria magna in octo libro Aristotelis de physico auditu*, lib. IV, summa prima: De loco, cap. VIII, comm.41, cited from Pierre Duhem, *Medieval Cosmology: Theories of Infinity, Place, Time, Void, and the Plurality of Worlds*, trans. Roger Ariew [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985], 142.) Never possessing it, never lacking it, we desire place as an inevitable impossibility, whether negatively as what is beyond body (nowhere, void, utopia,) or positively as what incorporates all bodies, their infinite sum (self, body, world, cosmos, everything). Either way the desire for place moves *from* the body, the boundary between self and cosmos which is the place of place, towards what would give or return place to the self. Eros, love that demands the presence and possession of the loved, is the vain movement of Averroes (fr. *habere ereos!*) towards something that is itself in movement, a desire for another boundary, another body, a place for our place. That two bodies cannot occupy the same place is the eros's sorrow, sigh.

<sup>128</sup> ' . . . or hell, we no longer bother about; / . . . What has value and importance for us now is to live in the active present. / . . . Let despair and disappointment ravage and destroy the garden (of your life); / Beautify it once again by the seedlings of contentment and self-sufficiency. / Even if your heart is cut to bits, let a smile be on your lips. / For us . . . it is only hopelessness and helplessness. / How else should I tell you what our New Life is?' (Dr. Abdul Ghani Munsiff, 'Song of the New Life,' *The Awakener* 6 (1959): 16-8).

