

CHAPTER 3:

POETRY: HOW SPACE FIRST ARISES ON THE SPECTRUM

- > SPACE ENTERS THE SPECTRUM THROUGH THE BACK DOOR WHEN
- >> POETRY STIMULATES IMAGES IN THE IMAGINATION

What would we expect of the art that is still mostly in time but in which space makes a first, subdued appearance? In the introduction we indicated that as time and space are put out of balance, one falls progressively under the control of the other. In music, time controls space to the point that there is no space. At the next position on the spectrum, we might expect that time allows space to come into existence, even stimulates it into existence, but that this existence remains at the whim of time, so that space can as easily go out of existence as into it. A careful examination of our experience of hearing a poem, shows that it conforms to these conditions. In the flow of the poem's time we witness the early history of space, a space whose function is limited to providing a temporary housing to the images that the poem's words trigger in our imagination.

We are often not even aware that these images are coming about. If, however, we do note them, and follow their course sensitively from moment to moment, we witness great volatility. A word occurs, an image appears. A moment later new words enter our consciousness, the image of a moment ago dissolves like foam or alters like Proteus. If the change in the image is contrary enough to what can occur during the same duration of time within the everyday reality, then we can say that the space which housed the nascent image of a moment ago dissolved along with the image. A new space re-forms itself around the new image. Time rules and rips images out of the still fragile fabric of space.

Meanings trigger images, and images require space. This space is limited to being the passive sustainer of the images. Space makes no demands on time. It has no power to hold onto an image. The merest breeze, stirring out of the next word of the poem, is sufficient often to change the image in space beyond recognition. What we have is the same mutability that we experienced in the sounds of music, but while they existed only in time, this mutability it is now forced upon a space that is drafted against its will into existence, an epiphenomenon to the meanings of words that arise through sound. These meanings fly off the flint of time like sparks, and space is the momentary incandescence around the sparks. Space undergoes the full fury of time as the agent of change. If the sounds had had no meaning, there would be no need of space at all. It is the addition of verbal meaning to sound that causes a segue from music to poetry¹.

Poetry, of all the arts, makes the most consistent use of the volatility of our imagination, a volatility that we also know from our dreams. Both the author of our dreams and the author of the poem speak out of the same unconscious. In everyday cause and effect, space *slows down* time. Things take time to do. Poetic images, however, not being made of matter, offer no resistance to change. The changes in the images come too fast to be following the dictates of any sort of restricting causality. The images are loyal only to the changing evolution in the meanings of the words. As new words appear in the developing phrase, the poet can cause the images to mutate in impossible ways, impossible as measured by causality. It is like we were in a pitch-black room filled with lots

of people coming and going, We are in the room but we can't move about. At certain intervals, the room is lit for just a moment. At those instants we see people and note their arrangement in space, but by the time we can see them the next time, everything has changed. In between those instants, space is at best a hypothesis.

While we have been speaking of poetry only in terms of images, images themselves are not central to poetry. They are a secondary effect, an aura around our central experience of the work in time. It is simply that an image cannot exist without space, and so space arises off-handedly, passively, in poetry. Such a subdued appearance is fitting for the first art on the spectrum to involve space.

If we are asked to come up with two images that have no possible relation to each other in the real world, poetry can link the two together through but an instant of modulation through time. Any train of images is possible as long as an evolving thought, led by words, guides its way. The way an image changes to another in poetry is as important, often more important, than the appearance of the image. Time is more important than space. Single images, too, can appear that violate everyday causality. One way such an image can arise is via metaphor: i.e. through a confusion of identities. In poetry, metaphors remain figurative. By photography, in the spatial arts, it becomes literal, in the double exposure.

Poetry is a performed and sonic art, as music is². This fact should not be obscured because starting at some point in history, poems were written down. Musical scores, exist, but are usually used by performers and not listeners. In poetry, often we are the performer as well as the listener. If we have not come to know the poem by heart, we usually rely on a score in the form of a printed book. Printed words serve as the score for several of the temporal arts. Our temporal experience of the poem can be diluted by the spatial characteristics of the printed page³, particularly because what is in space is before us all at once. When simply heard, the future of the poem, as the future in music, remains an unknown. Meanings are stitched and re-stitched together as a poetic line grows to maturity. If we read off the page, all the words are already there. The future is not an unknown. We are led away from the audile, and therefore spontaneous, nature of the poem, that comes from its being mostly in time. Instead of meanings *evolving*, we hold off until we see that we are at the end of a phrase, and only then put together the words into a meaning. Time becomes merely a delayer to an act of understanding. Understanding, though, is at best only a secondary benefit of a poem. The printed page is more like a painting, while the true poem is re-created by us, moment by moment, and the future is unknown to us until we reveal it to ourselves through our own voice. How wonderful to read a poem and allow ourselves to be ignorant of each next word until it is formed magically in our mouth.

If we examine ourselves closely, we find that we often undergo many inner states within a short amount of time. When hearing the poem, a single word is enough to trigger a new feeling, idea, or image. By the end of a phrase, we can have gone through an entire series of reactive states. The final state in this sequence is not any more important, than the first state, or any other state along the path. Moreover, each brief state leaves a lingering impression into the next, changing the character the latter would have had by itself. The person who waits, however, and gathers a phrase before reacting, is less under the spell of the poet, whose artistry lies in the ordering of words as well as the choice of the words. Coming away from a poem with just a clear knowledge of its ideas is to come away from a poem without the poem. We will have removed order and time from our experience.

Meaning remains constant in time, it is outside time's ability to change. Sound, however, lives only now (or in the re-evocation of *now* through rhyme or other imitative sonic devices). Though there must be a first time that an idea enters my mind, some particular date in my history, once there, the idea extends its validity backwards and forwards through all time, not even only my own time. Time no longer has any control over the idea. In poetry, time is the crucial factor, and enables us to be aware of the *process* by which we come to an idea in time, it being less important to then fix that idea in our memory.

> FROM MUSIC TO POETRY

When words are added to music, sounds start to become the messenger and not the message. The meaning of words does not lie within their sound, or within their written appearance. Verbal meaning, though born of sound, leads away from the sound. A word in a language that we do not understand remains in the realm of sound. In a language we know, the moment we find ourselves being aware of the meaning of a word, the sound of the word suddenly loses its usefulness as far as the meaning is concerned: the sound dies into the meaning. Poetry would keep us aware of the sound of a word even after we obtain the meaning. It uses rhyme, assonance, alliteration, cadence, meter, and other sonic devices to keep the sounds resonating in our ear. This does not mean, however, that poetry would have us return entirely to the sound and eclipse the meaning of words. Rather it would have us *linger* at the *boundary* where sound is *about* to be transcended into meaning, so that we can savor the momentary blending of the two, the aesthetic negotiation of the transient and the permanent. Additional possibilities emerge. The permanent can take on an aspect of the transient, the transient can seem as a permanent truth. A detail can become a universal: the motion of one leaf in the wind stirs the whole universe into vibration. We have re-approached the creation of a word historically, when a certain sound was felt to be in ontological identity with a certain meaning.

> UPDATING IMAGES. THE SENSITIVITY OF POETIC EFFECT TO ORDER IN TIME

Technically, we are not aware *first* of a sound, and *then* a meaning, and lastly an image. The transitions occur outside conscious time. It is difficult to stop a sound from generating a meaning or a meaning from generating an image. A single word said in passing can conjure up a host of images in the imagination. If no word follows, the images eventually will subside. When other words do follow, one image is molded into another, an entity in the form of a plastic train of images develops, and the poet molds this entity like the ultimate sculptor, working in the ideal, invisible medium. Moreover, this sculptor has no need to ever arrive at a final form to this entity, the creative time still goes on in within the work, it hasn't already stopped by the time of our experience, as will be the case in the spatial arts. There is a freshness to images in poetry that is the freshness of newly created space. They form and dissolve in the exquisite ways due to the exact sequencing of words.

The "refresh" rate of the images in poetry is very fast, measurable in fractions of a second. Only music can change its content faster, and still have us be aware of what is happening. Often when relating a dream to a friend we say "the next thing I knew I was no longer where I was, and I had on different clothes". In spite of this change in content of space, there is no sense in the dream of an interruption to the continuity of the flow of the time. Time is uninterrupted though space goes out

of whack, space offering no resistance to the change, and without any indication of harm having happened to the content of space. Such is the case for poetry too.

> A BLACK BIRD, OR A BIRD THAT IS BLACK

With time ruling space, with the future an unknown, the specific order of words becomes crucial. A train of many thoughts and feelings can pass through us in a moment or two. What starts as happiness can, through a series of gradual alterations, end up as sadness. If we were not tuned to each link in the chain, as poetry helps us do, we might wonder why our mood changed "out of the blue" so drastically. In a poem, a phrase as simple as "the bird was black" becomes a carefully modulated series of images, as well as feelings in reaction to those images. The imagination is a fine-tuned instrument sensitive to the briefest suggestions. When we hear the word "bird", it may trigger in us a vague or a specific image of a bird. With the next word, "was", the image seems to recede back from us in time. We vaguely sense that someone else, not us, is seeing the bird⁴, although perhaps it is *us* who is remembering seeing a bird. We may have even forgotten about the bird even though we have *never* thought about it *before*. The next word, "black", causes a swift revision in the makeup of the image. Details are added or revised. Within the constantly updating present tense, each state of the image adds a color to the total effect in time. The degree to which we are conscious or unconscious of all this happening, depends in large measure on our tempo of reading: whether there was enough time for each image to emerge out the flux into consciousness.

In an important way, the bird *before* the color is mentioned and the bird *after* it is mentioned are different birds. What happened to the first bird? Has it ceased to exist? Or is there a strange transformation by which one bird evolves into the other, a way that defies the normal process of reality: that by loosening the hold that space has on things through time, the essence of the former somehow appears in the later bird? In between, the image is molten. We can think of it as either consciousness, or the image, blurring for a moment. During that moment poetry's magic with images is wrought for, once there is an in-between, *anything* can happen. At that instant, the tie between time and space can be severed.

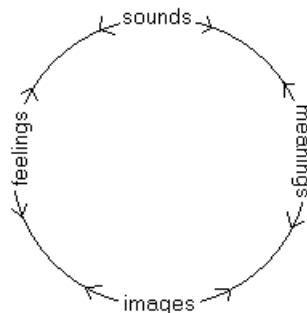
If we change the order of the phrase to "the blackness of the bird", the color would not be in doubt at the very beginning, but for a moment we would not know what is black. It is a precious moment, during which we cope with blackness which only later will subside somewhat into the bird.. With the addition of verbal meaning to sound, poetry cannot say all at once, there must be a harmonic progression of images.

In terms of meaning outside of time, the following phrases are all equivalent. "Annie's cat is on the table", "the cat on the table is Annie's", "on the table is Annie's cat". By the time we reach the end of any one of the phrases we have the following facts: there is a table, there is a cat, there is a cat on the table, cat belongs to Annie. These facts have no logical order of priority among themselves. In the poem, in terms of the melody of images, these phrases would leave different chords resonating in our memory. The *commutative* law of mathematics, $A + B = B + A$, *does not hold* in poetry. The arrangement in space of $3 + 5 = 8$, contains no order in time. All three numbers were there all along. They did not at some particular time come into the relation expressed. Nothing was "discovered". In a poem "blue feather" and "feather blue" lead to different discoveries of the mind.

There is greater richness of forms during the embryo stage of an organism's development than during the sum total of the remainder of its life. At each stage in the embryonic growth of a meaning there is a new form, but one that is already changing into something else. It is a time of great possibility. What species will result? Will the tail persist or disappear? During these early stages of development we are much closer to the original fires of creation. Poetry attempts through a series of astonishments to halt our automatically extracting a concept from flow of time and fixing it where it will eventually atrophy in our mind.

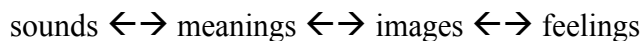
> FEELINGS

We have been stressing images in poetry though they are a secondary effect, in order to show how space enters the spectrum. Poetry is also a strong evoker yet subtle modulator of feelings. A richness in poetry results from the interrelation, in terms of cause and effect, of feelings, sounds, meanings and images. Feelings, for instance, can arise in response to meaning, but they can also arise from the images evoked by meanings. As images fade they can melt back into feelings, which are the darker forms of the images, which then mingle in their own way with other feelings. Feelings can also arise directly from the tonal qualities of the words. An image may fall back into the sound of the word that triggered it and add depth to the effect of the sound. A feeling may fall back into an image giving it more depth, or it can add to the feeling of the sound. The following diagram suggests the endlessly flowing pulsation of the poem, as for instance sounds segue to images, to feelings, to images, and to sounds again. Each term seems the result as well as the cause of the others. The intricacies of the relations among the four terms at any one moment are beyond



analysis, and goes towards explaining the richness of the poetic experience.

We can redraw the circle to look more like a chemical equation, one in which the reaction can occur in either direction through time.



At any given moment there is a state of dynamic equilibrium among the four terms dependent on current conditions. If we try to pin down the substance of the poem in one term or another of the equation, we will in effect have stopped the flow among the terms and time will cease and with it the poem. Poetry is a catalyst that can effect the rate of the reaction. Art in general can be thought of as a catalyst to certain reactions that do not occur as readily or frequently in everyday reality.

> MORE ABOUT TIME IN POETRY

> RETURNING TO THE TIME WHEN WORDS WERE BORN

We have shown that space is in an inchoate stage in poetry. We can add to this that through its fresh and revealing ways of using words, poetry also brings us to a more alive and primeval time, a moment when meaning is first joined to sound to create a word. We usually take for granted that within a word meaning and sound are already joined. Poetry proposes that meaning and sound have never been considered together before, and that we can savor the act of their joining, and can feel that the history of the word lies ahead of us in time and not just behind us. At the crucial moment when sound and the meaning are joined, rather than the choice of which meaning goes which sound seeming arbitrary, the poem provides us with an overwhelming sense of the aptness of that particular union. Instantly an a priori sense of identity erases the profound difference in the modality between the meaning and the sound. The word comes to life before us in order to express a *truth* that only *this* sound can give to *this* meaning. In the greatest poems, even familiar words are seen in a new, morning light.

Meaning and sound join by the summons of the poet. In that alive moment, the sound sounds *like* the meaning, and the meaning can rest comfortably in the sound without having to abstract itself from the sound. Conventional meanings are stripped from the words, even syntax is being invented. The newly created words reach out to each other for the first time in the poem and form relationships. The forces that unite words together in are not fully developed, they are being created. In our greatest moments with poetry, we do not even take for granted the existence of language itself, we hover near the possibility of there being no language at all. Out of the verge of this possibility, language emerges. In poetry in general we see the reproduction of the creation of language as a whole.

> THE EMBRYOS OF THOUGHTS

The poet is sensitive to thoughts that are as yet but embryos, not yet quite verbal, but which *will* be born verbally. Seeking the words to give it birth, new words may be invented and old words re-invented. Words, their traditional usages trapped within them, break under the strain of having to mean newly, and burst with the full power of new thought⁵. Truth lies in waiting, the embryonic state, pulsing beneath the skin of the words. If words only dance with each other, in syntax, they will forget this deeper reality. The mind's ear must hear when an opening is created by the wound of the poetry's use of words, and reach what lies underneath.

> SEPARATING SOMETHING PREVIOUSLY THOUGHT TO BE INDIVISIBLE

In a poem a *blackbird* can become a *black bird*, and as it soars the black bird can be a *black flying bird* and be seen as a *black in the sky bird*. The separation between black and bird is not however permanent. It is a temporary separation, forced apart by the time in the poem. Moments later tradition will draw them back together. For a few precious moments in the flow of poem, we see something about the inner nature of a blackbird that would have otherwise remained invisible.

> DESCRIPTION AND THE TRUTH OF THAT BEING DESCRIBED

In music, the same group of sounds can be sounded either simultaneously or in sequence, in harmony or in melody. A poem's meaning is restricted to melody alone. It would be of no avail to simultaneously pronounce all the words of a phrase together. Melodies must take time, and this raises the issue of the discrepancy between the amount of time during which the poet may have had an experience whose truth s/he would now state in the poem, and the time it will take to express this truth. Expression entails the desire to direct outwards, and into a new time, something that was first experienced in an internal time and whose identity was intimately wrapped up in the makeup of that time. While the initiating experience may have lasted only moments, its expression in words requires a verbal melody with very different time properties than the former. This melody, or description, starts growing and takes on its own weight and inertia. At any point in its development, dissatisfaction can occur regarding its faithfulness to the original experience. Are its words trying to sound good with themselves, or is each still directed towards the original truth. S/he is not sure, because the latter becomes more and more blurred in the poet's mind with the passage of time. Mid-course corrections are made to remain faithful to the goal, which now seems to lie in front of h'er in time rather than behind. Change necessitates more change. At any point, something may be felt still be missing. Something in the description might suggest something in addition to what is intended and has to be tapered. Once caught in the temporal net of description, any dissatisfaction with the description can only lead to using up more time. Parts in the description inevitably take on their own life, lead in their own directions at tangents to the original experience, making demands of their own on the description as a whole. An endless process results unless an arbitrary halt is not called.

Poetry offers an alternative to this dilemma due to close connection with time. We can sense how the content of each moment of a poem not only *uses* time but *expresses* that time itself. In the aliveness of the words we experience the connection of one moment of time to the next in consciousness. We ourselves become part of the poet's process that leads either towards or away from the truth. When the poet stays with the truth in spite of time's leading away, we become alive with the same ongoing desire to remain with the truth. Just as a dancer's gesture in space unites with its duration through time, so the gestures of the poet keep the moments of time closely united in us. The poem can be what it is expressing, as well as being the fact that it is trying to express that. Truth need no longer flee in front of description.

> EXPANDING MEANING THROUGH TIME. OVERLAPPING FIELDS
>> OF CONNOTATIONS

Given *time*, every word will exude connotations. Poetic language sets a different pace to the expression of a thought. Words en route make unexpected demands upon each other. A word impacts on consciousness like a stone thrown into a different part of a pond. Connotations expand from the initial hearing of a word as do ripples from the stone. Connotations from new words overlap with those still in consciousness from older words, creating a rich tapestry of associations. Though the initial moment of contact with the word's sound in consciousness may be brief, if we allow time, the ramifications of that word will reach further and further out into consciousness, passing its borders and entering our unconscious. In the first instant we may be aware only of the most common denotation of a word, but each even a single denotation is itself a meaning that triggers other meanings. Eventually the whole surface of consciousness can be stirred, even if subtly. As time passes, overlapping ripples of different words reinforce or suppress each another as

waves on the sea. Just as the overlapping ripples occur because each word impacts a different part of the pond (consciousness), when reading poetry we should be sensitive to the "spaces" between the words. Poetry's words are like a Polaroid snapshot: the meaning and sound are captured instantly from the word, but it takes a little time for it to develop in our consciousness. Our tempo of reading the poem, together with the poet's language, creates an open weave-work, that allows through a glow of associations, that in turn can kindle in us strong reactions that might have else been stillborn⁶.

> POETIC LANGUAGE AND SOUND

The poem must deal with sound as well as meaning. This puts restrictions on its use of both. The words must do more than *tune* themselves musically to each other, they must also *mean* in concert with the tune. In turn, the words must do more than mean the correct thing, they must do so while doing homage to the rhythmic and tonal demands of the poem's musical aesthetic.

> METAPHOR: IMPRISONING THE ESSENCE OF ONE THING WITHIN ANOTHER

Any two words, merely by being stated one right after the other, partially exchange identities, because the present moment in time actively mediates the past and the future. The word *the* in the phrase "the cat" feels and as well as sounds different than the word *the* in some other context. At any given moment, a surfeit of things surrounds us, a plenitude of events occur about us. There is no way we can experience it all unless everything remains frozen. We see, and react to, a small part of what is there. What part depends largely on where we are located and in what direction we are looking. Thus we may happen to see two people together⁷. What brought one of these people to our location may be totally unrelated to what brought the other⁸, but because our consciousness was at a certain location at a certain moment of time, these two people are now permanently fused in the endless time of memory. I look in a certain direction. A crow. The moon. To another observer at a different time, or at the same time in a different place, they would not lie in the same line of sight. For me, though, they cannot be separated again, even if in the everyday reality they continue to appear apart. From now on the crow will always contain part of the moon, and the moon part of the crow. The crow will always be accompanied in its newest flight by the moon. The moon will always contain an aspect of the crow and will look bare without it. The crow, alone, will always be awaiting the moon, the moon which shall always arrive now or later. The reverse as well. The rock on the mountain is still being pounded by the surf from a million years ago. The surf at the seashore adumbrates the dryness of the mountain. The poet catalyzes such identities, dissolving previously separate essences into the solvent of the sea of consciousness. Things now mean more than before and never can mean less again.

> RHYME: UNDOING OF THE FORWARD MOTION OF TIME

In an era before being written down, the way a poem handled sound was probably designed in part to make the poem easier to memorize. Common devices towards this end are rhyme and alliteration. By being permuted through rhyme, the same basic sound can enter into various different meanings. Distant meanings can be drawn together because of subtle changes in sound. The present becomes the past again; the past made to resonate again. One layer of time can be looped back over another. Rhyme compels meaning to mean more than it does just in the present.

Were it not temporal in nature, rhyme could be likened a spatial mold that receives into it segments of the fluid mass of ongoing words, and stamps each with a certain character.

> THE COLOR OF THE LOCAL SOUNDS IN A POEM

I once read in a book about poetry that a poet could color an entire stanza by simply using a certain vowel sound with increased frequency. What puzzled me was that when I counted the other vowel sounds, they were used even more frequently than the one the author was talking about. I later realized that the effect depends not on the absolute number of times a sound is used, but on its *relative* frequency compared with what the ear has grown accustomed to in everyday speaking. English has a certain "sound", based on a statistical average distribution of occurrences of various vowel and consonant sounds over extended periods of time. Our ear, accustomed to this general tonal distribution, notices any deviation, just as a chord of many notes suddenly undergoes a major change in color quality from major to minor when only one note in it is changed. The same effect is noticeable with Christmas displays of mixed colored lights. If, for instance, the number of blue lights in the mixture is somewhat increased, the entire display can take on a "blue" mood.

> COMPARING THE FIRST TWO ARTS ON THE SPECTRUM: POETRY AND MUSIC

> SONG

We address the mixture of poetry and music into song in chapter fourteen, where we consider the issue of whether two arts can combine so completely that neither one is recognizable in its original form and something new takes their place. We point out that if that were possible, the spectrum of the arts would suddenly become overpopulated with all sorts of combinations of arts. For now, it is sufficient to note the conclusions of that chapter, which is that a careful examination reveals that most song is a species of music. In it poetry has to bend to the music's needs, while the music tends to retain its original form.

> HOW ONE MAY BE DERIVED FROM THE OTHER

A transition from speech to music can be effected simply by talking progressively slower. This occurs naturally when we want to produce greater emphasis, distinctness, strength of emotion, or ease of comprehension. Gradually we become aware that each syllable has qualities that are purely aural, which then begin to separate from the words as wholes. Since syllables have no verbal-meaning our awareness of their sound must occur despite our awareness of the meaning of the words. As we speak slower, the longer the sound of a single syllable is held. We become forced to make a conscious choice regarding the pitch of the vowel held within the syllable. We begin to hear a melody of changing pitches. The elongating vowels become notes, their succession a melody. The consonants which cannot be prolonged start to function as the attacks of these notes.

Sometimes it does not require the slowing of speech to be aware suddenly of the music in the sound of the word. Every now and then we are suddenly *surprised* by the sound of a word we've used a thousand times. "How odd that k-a-t is the sound that stands for my Siamese Fluffy over there on the bed. Why pick that sound when it *sounds* so funny." What has happened is that the ignition of meaning has failed to take place from the sound of the word. The sound remains separated from its

meaning. Depending on what we do next, we go towards poetry, or past poetry to music. It will be poetry, if we turn back and link the sound, which has momentarily been freed from its meaning, and still sounding odd in our ears, back again to its meaning. We re-create the word. If however we forever free the sound from the meaning, no longer requiring that the sound *mean* anything, we have become a composer fascinated with a sound.

> BEYOND MEANING: WHEN UNDERSTANDING LIES JUST REACH

If we are in a certain state of mind, music, at any given moment, sounds *almost* like the human voice saying something⁹. The meaning seems almost *specific*, if we just don't rouse our awareness too far into trying to find an equivalent for the meaning in words. In fact it may strike us as more specific than words usually do. This may explain why music is sometimes referred to as a universal language. This feeling, that music is saying something, goes away after a while because the intrinsic structural concerns of the music eventually lead our awareness in another direction. If we think of it other way around, music always lives beyond the edge of poetry, as a more direct embodiment in sound of either feelings or meanings, or shows perhaps that feelings and meanings are fundamentally the same. It is as if music arises from a yet undifferentiated unconscious, but is poised to individuate in time into consciousness and words. Looking back historically we might say that hovering about the roots of words, just below or beyond their meanings, is a primal language of emotions that were until more recently only sounds. I experienced this at the age of fourteen when I first heard T.S. Elliot's {} "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". Those words seemed to portend so much; something that vanished later when I tried to understand the words¹⁰. In retrospect, that understanding felt like I had translated its primal meaning for me into just English.

Notes

¹ Words in literature also give rise to images in the imagination. While this is indeed a shared trait with poetry, in literature it is less important than other factors that influence the flow of time, and makes literature a more spatial art than poetry. These factors are discussed in the chapter on literature.

² Earlier in its history poetry probably had as many listeners at a performance as music, all being enthralled by the living sound. While music has remained a more social art, poetry has become a more private experience. Sometimes the poem is not even read out loud, the sounds occurring, if at all, in the imagination, like a musician who silently looks at a score and hears the sounds in h'er imagination. Our own voice has died into the fainter voice of our imagination. The reader doesn't even need to hear the words at all, even in the imagination, and may just extract the ideas from the words. The echo of the voice perishes into reason alone. Meaning remains when but the sounds are silenced. In spite of these devolutions, through which the live voice dies into the book, we must remember that the essential experience of a poem is in sounds that arrive outwardly to our ears, even when the source of the sounds is our own voice. In the latter case we are like the musician who plays a sonata for h'erself.

³ The spatial appearance of the words on the page is not a true manifestation of space in poetry. It is no more the poem itself than the musical score is the music.

⁴ The presence of a narrator becomes crucial in literature.

⁵ A poem about making poems: Dylan Thomas's "Especially when the October wind".

"Especially when the October wind
with frosty fingers punishes my hair,

Behind a pot of ferns the wagging clock
Tells me the hour's word, the neural meaning

Caught by the crabbing sun I walk on fire
And cast a shadow crab upon the land,
By the sea's side, hearing the noise of birds,
hearing the raven cough in winter sticks,
My busy heart who shudders as she talks
Sheds the syllabic blood and drains her words.

Flies on the shafted disk, declaims the morning
And tells the windy weather in the cock.
Some let me make you of the meadow's signs;
The signal grass that tells me all I know
Breaks with the wormy winter through the eye.
Some let me tell you of the raven's sins.

Shut, too, in a tower of words, I mark
On the horizon walking like the trees
The wordy shapes of women, and the rows
Of the star-gestured children in the park.
Some let me make you of the vowelled beeches,
Some of the oaken voices, from the roots
Of Many a thorny shire tell you notes,
Some let me make you of the water's speeches.

Especially when the October wind
(Some let me make you of autumnal spells,
The spider-tongued, and the loud hill of Wales)
With fists of turnips punishes the land,
Some let me make you of the heartless words.
The heart is drained that, spelling in the scurry
Of chemic blood, warned of the coming fury.
By the sea's side hear the dark-vowelled birds."

⁶ Just as the expanding ripples from a single pebble thrown in a pond might eventually bring to life the entire surface of a pond, so one word can potentially evoke an entire language. Every word in the dictionary is defined by other words, which in turn are each defined by more words. Meaning is made up of meanings. The process multiplies endlessly. In ever widening circles, the entire language is touched. Ideally, we could say that *any* single word is capable of reconstituting the entire language. Each time a word occurs, a different pattern of connections is created among the myriad cells of the entire living language, just as different thoughts activate different complex networks of neurons in the brain.

⁷ In photography, a chance perspective will cause two objects to be seen in juxtaposition or relation to each other, a relation which would never have developed if seen from other perspectives. Each lends part of its nature to the other. If two words, such as "blue" and "sky", are allowed close to each other (in time) one word does not automatically emerge as a noun and change the other thereby into an adjective. Something can occur in their fusion that is at once different than sky alone, blue alone, and that is not the color sky-blue. The two words will approach in time and partially exchange identities, in a way akin to how chromosomes divide and then pair to create new forms out of old forms. Poetry, through juxtaposition, through the confusion of identity that arises through metaphor, imprisons the essence of one thing in another and creates an unexpected offspring.

⁸ "Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why
This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then Beauty is its own excuse for being

Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
I never thought to ask, I never knew:
But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
The self-same Power that brought me there brought you."

The conclusion of Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The Rhodora: On Being Asked Whence is the Flower":

⁹ In my experience, the closest poetry has gotten to music, but remained poetry, is the intense, stylized narration of the Japanese Bunraku play, which features wide variation in pitch, rhythm, timbre, tempo and exaggerated inflection. The words by their sounds *create*, rather than portray, the states of the characters. It is the point where music has not lost its purity but yet verbal-meaning is starting to condense around sound. When listening to a poem in a foreign language, which we do not comprehend, we are not totally bereft of understanding. The poem still whispers and cries, laments and exalts. Our imagination can fill in the details if we yearn for details.

¹⁰ This portentousness is sometimes grasped when we hear a poem in a language that is not our own yet not entirely foreign to us.