

The One Traveling

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i

the one traveling neither
left
nor will arrive.

some changes never reach
the other side.

you set forth; you never
come back.

ii

unlike the cramped airplane seat 14 hours over the Pacific,
the two weeks shipboard;
six weeks in Europe or six years away
at college –

this journey makes no crossing.

iii

you enter on a sea of time,
sea so vast there is no other side.
a child, you once imagined
old age a graceful sail into harbor:

that no one you know will be there to greet you
doesn't matter. the smiling traveler disembarking

won't be you.

iv

this sea unfolds before you as you sail.
to embark is to leave
all you are, your life

you remake them as you go.

v

they do not remain behind
like family waiting for your return
or ahead for your promise to be accomplished.

who receives you when you arrive is of no
consequence –

the shore itself was digested and remade
into something else
just after you left.

vi

you do not pass through change,
change passes through you.

it leaves you transformed, unrecognizable –
not to your mother
but to your self

you can never come back – who is it
that would?
you have been replaced
the only way possible,
by the one you have become.

there is no finality in what you become
– only in what you leave.

vii

all that lies before you on this sea
has not yet been created –
the journey itself will create it;

you eternally push the horizon of this sea
out before you by sailing on it.

viii

the act of trying to cross
makes itself impossible.

time is made by passing through it,

xv

on the sea of time all benchmarks
 (the one who
 judges)
keep melting back into the sea itself –

the judgment we sought to fulfill
in our accomplishments
itself fundamentally reshaped
by the journeying, its meaning
changed – and to be changed
again –

xvi

there is no still point in the journey
from which to pass judgment on it – or on
oneself.

death provides that

xvii

no, the self you feared to lose at death
is already gone,
 gone long before,

and what remains, remains
in hands of smoke,
hands of those as helpless as you were
to grasp whatever of you
may have crystallized
 in time.

xviii

the self who so desperately wanted
to know –
to have –
the fruit of judgment, the
satisfaction of achievement

is no longer
there to receive it
when it ripens.

the one who set sail, who set the course
does not know
how – if – what – was
accomplished,
having been changed from the one
who set forth
to
the one
who arrives.

What is Time That it Should Leave Us?

what is time that it should leave us
so inexorably behind?
unable to stay the course,
a race we cannot finish
and yet do finish
and all things pass with us and are finished,
dead and buried and released
to dance in their elements –
the dogs on their walk with me
this afternoon,
the little boy who came into my life
when I was already in my 40's,
and for whom my passing
will be a part of his finished story,
a story I cannot close and hold
thoughtfully and at last put down.

Time's Arrow

The only question, the only real issue
is whether time passes (and if it does,
the direction of the arrow?)

Does it run forward, panting from the past,
a foot briefly printing the present point,
rushing headlong into future?

Or does it radiate from a thousand centers
each moving relative to all other points
unique in each piece of matter
so that time flies off into neither past or future?

Or does it perhaps circle one
central point, circling it eternally,
but never touching it?

Galileo, Kant, and Time

Galileo inaugurated modern timekeeping,
observing that the sweep of a pendulum
is independent of its amplitude
by measuring the swaying of a cathedral lamp
against the pulse of his own wrist,
benchmarking time
by the organic pulse of his body.

Is “will experience” any different
than “have experienced”?
Both are experiences and so Kant
found them incapable of grounding
reason. As I age I find my own
memory of the future
at least as good as that of the past.

Time Cuts a Path Through the Fleeting Instant

Twenty Verses

1.

Time cuts a path through the fleeting instant –
circumstance and motion,
bodies in space –
these are known only locally,
by their places and their changes.

All of time is contained in the present moment –
past and future
exist nowhere else –
and the present itself,
gone before it could be grasped.

2.

Empty space does not await matter to fill it;
empty time does not await events.
As such, neither have being.

Matter, the crystallization of time and space,
is neither created nor destroyed; it also
“does not exist”
as such.

And since matter, uncreated,
indestructible,
passes through its ephemeral configurations
of impermanence only through the offices
of that which it creates itself as it goes –
time and space –
it neither exists as such, nor
in its manifestations, which is only to say,
that since we know there is no such thing
as “matter”,
we may speak of it.

3.

No universe needed to expand
in a Big Bang at astronomical speed
instantly arriving into its furthest reaches,
nor did all matter need to be condensed
into an infinitesimal space –

these concepts shimmer on the illusory surface
of empty time, empty space, waiting to be filled.

All of space, all of time are created
wherever matter is
(matter did not need to travel to them,
through vast reaches of space
all at once in an instant of time).
These properties of matter suggest that
all time and all space
exist simultaneously.

4.

Archaic humankind were time,
with the rest of matter;
with consciousness, we no longer are time,
but have time –
it has become one of our tools,
rather than what we are.

“Time” is known only to conscious beings,
time is experience –
the more we’ve experienced, the more our time
must be divided up to go around,
the shorter it seems.

The Eternal is timeless,
time itself relative.

5.

Time is a path, a sequence –
wherever change is random, wherever
there is true chaos, there can be no time
and no meaning.

Time can be known only within the meaningful;
only that which knows some order or pattern
can tell time and have meaning.

That we can know and sense time
tells us we live in a world of meaning
and that here is some order and pattern of meaning
– or else we could not know time.

It is the same with space – wherever bodies
are governed by nothing
but random chance, we know nothing

and cannot define space.

This tells us that the tale of a random universe,
undirected and manifesting only the outcomes of chance,
is itself a fiction – in such a universe
meaning could not have emerged.

6.

Meaning has always already been here.

If pattern and order
came dancing out of pure random chance,
no meaning could have followed them here.
The only larger fiction is that these things
exist as such.

Time is only a way of saying that the sequence of change is meaningful,
and yet that sequence is itself
entirely self-referential.
It makes sense only the way language does,
referring each of its parts to another,
creating an intimation of the whole.

This is the way of human knowing –
a self-referential system, and yet
the system itself, as a whole,
is known beyond knowing.

7.

There is nothing that is not defined in terms of itself
and the Nothing that is.
This is why there is no getting out of the universe
even in the mind.

What lies beyond, what lies outside the universe? What was before it began?
What lies beyond the end of time?

All these questions point only
to the self-enclosed nature
of this self-referential system which has, quite literally,
no “outside”
(or none that does not lie at its center, which is everywhere).

Thus, we define ourselves from our beliefs,
as the organism does from its DNA.
And from this, some come to the ardent conclusion
that only the random could be true.

Just as time and space are found in the fields
of matter, so we find meaning in time and space.
We create the regularity of time and space
by measuring it, by living it –
we infuse it with meaning. We create
meaning in the universe,
the meaningful pattern in knowing, by finding it.

Thus though time and space are created by matter
the mind by meaning finds matter –
and whatever we find that is meaningful
was put there and made by our finding the meaning in it –
we make meaning; the time and space of matter.

8.

Just as nothing completely random
can have meaning,
so anything that is completely Whole,
that is ALL – the Ground of Being,
by whatever Name we call it by –
can have no meaning – not to us.

It cannot,

because it includes
all meaning, everything
there is to know, leaving no way to distinguish –
“we know up only because we know down.”

There is either <up/down> or
there is the distinguishing
between up and down.

This would be why
God creates – it is only in time, space,
in individuals such as ourselves
(who are so incomplete)
that meaning can be found. Without the individual
living creature whose living creates space and time
there would be no meaning, only
the unknowable Ground of Being within which
Nothing can be distinguished.

Meaning does not exist in God –
we go from wrong to wrong when we look to Spirit for meaning.

The only way God could have meaning
was to create it,
in us.

9.

Yet there is no meaning at all in the individual
not as such – that is,
no absolute meaning,
no such thing absolute,
isolated and unrelated.

Each has meaning only in relation to others –
all classes of others, any “other”
with which it is related – family, loved ones,
thought, music, art, science, work, sport.

The meaning of each individual emerging
from the Ground of Being
is found in its activity or involvement
not merely with but for others.
And so meaning in All is redeemed.

Yet it is through the unique individual that meaning is created;
there is none in the “average” or universal
individual, which anyhow nowhere can be found.

10.

All things exist by and for one another.
Each is individual, yet finds its existence
and meaning only in relation
to others. (In fact, arise only together.)

Perhaps because we are given so much of the stuff
we undervalue it.

If I gave the same attention to the uniquely
individual moments of my life
as I do to writing a poem,
my entire life would take on meaning.

My life has no meaning in and of itself,
there is none to be found as such –
the meaning of life is in the living of it.
It is not in any one of the things that occupy it.
My life takes on meaning
only as it is lived, in relation, as time and space
take shape in matter.

So those who cultivate themselves
and their possessions – even intangible
ones – fall prey to meaninglessness.

11.

If I am neither lost in nor compelled by
the things to which I turn my attention,
this is bare attention.

This attention is better for my work, my wife, my children –
all with whom I come in contact.
This is service to others.

All things which we consider a loss of virtue
are things which compel us,
in which we lose ourselves.
This is why there can be no bare attention,
no enlightenment
without first undertaking to live virtuously –
virtue, not because it feels good
but because all access to Spirit is blocked without it.

Needless to say, virtue, access, and meaning
Are one and the same.

If one has become lost in the thing to which attention turns,
if one is drowning,
one can only swim to the surface
and take a deep breath.

Alive in all of time,
alive in all of space.

12.

There may be “memories” of past lives –
but they aren’t yours. One
has been dipping into the common pool.

There is only the individual or the ALL –
Nothing in between.

Time exists only in the individual life –
there is no sequence of lives through which time runs
as we individuals travel –
there are lives, but if they exist at all,
they exist in parallel.
There is no aggregate of souls from a series of lives.

The individual is truly single, irreplaceable,
and gone forever – because it creates
the time in which it exists, and hauls it up
after itself when it goes.

Our lives have “meaning” only within their own boundaries. There is no “larger” meaning – where would it reside? There is none because then we enter the ALL in which “meaning” (as we know it – and it is the substance of knowing itself) does not exist (or has no distinguishable meaning).

You may experience other lives, but they are not “your” unique path through time – you may be your own mother and experience the moment of your conception if you like.

13.

What is death but the sharp sense of time’s finitude along our individual path?

Yet space does not go away somewhere when we’re not in it; why should time? Why should I? Yet as all time exists in the present moment, what has been etched in time is uneraseable.

Yes, we have past lives
Yes, all of time is here in the present moment
Yes, what is past is here in our lives now – but it is not your past life; it is not mine.
Past lives belong to us all, they are us all.
Now, in the present moment, we may smile to who we have been.

14.

What is time but a device by which matter orients – not so much finding the direction of flow as inventing the stream.

It takes time to make what time will sweep away

15.

Time is not in the moment.
There is no moment in time –
the moment is eternal
and outside time.
There is a flow – the contingent.
The eternal is in the contingent
and the contingent at every point appears
sub species aeternus

16.

Space does not exist, except
as created by motion.
Time is only motion's gesture;
space-time is curved
because all motion turns eventually.

17.

Time is always a function of something –
the vibrations of a cesium atom,
the mechanical works of a clock,
the rhythms of life or the universe:
time does not exist apart from these –
matter and energy make it so.

Time and space come into being
with the play of matter and energy
and have their meaning only in relation to them.
Where is the edge of the universe?
When is the beginning or end of time?
Now the impossibility of these questions
comes clear. There is only the play
of energy, condensing sometimes into matter.
Wherever that is, is the universe –
in a field of timespace created out of that play,
that dance, self-attracting and endowed
undeniably with mind – which also exists
just in their play, as inalienable as is
timespace – all one finally, unfathomably.

18.

Time dances with the dance of energy –
what can be said to start or stop
whose absence is simply nothing?
Time fails to exist, space fails to exist –
they are not there, empty,

but here, empty in a more profound way.

Timespace does not go on, boundlessly empty – they simply are not.

And we have the insight to understand all of matter and energy, in all their manifestations because mind is fundamentally of them. At what level will we live? Raising to consciousness the dance of matter and energy.

19.

The relative occurs in time,
therefore the timeless is not relative.

Therefore the timeless values,
what is good and therefore what is right,
are not subject to the corrosive critique
of relativity. No true morality is relative
because it is timeless.

20.