

Volute

'widening gyre'

W. B. Yeats

Whorl in stone and hay,
those Ionic capitals I carry
around as comparative – youth aesthetic thing
I've left behind only in theory.

Or invective out of control,
lapses in propriety: shadows
collected in Christmas sack,
played out in later relationships.

I search only for imperfect spiral
which are fewer than you might think
I do laps around the house and a mouse
follows me for a segment – a few metres
each time around – lap on lap.

I prefer Bob Dylan's *Modern Times*
to almost all that came before
because it spirals to sources, roots.

Desiderata Spiralis is the lesson Tim
had first up this morning, and Tracy – more upbeat –
caught nouns in her palms and made verbs without flourish.

I am not moving towards enlightenment
I do not want to grow towards perfection

I note the spirits but leave them be
No number for me is perfect though I celebrate all.

There are words I'd bring into play
but can't out of respect to their reforming ways,
the tongue-in-cheek trying them back – not reclaiming
as the claim never went, but repeating and gathering
and passing on and on.

So to reach truth,
to represent what I see in the acts of 'flora & fauna'
I am hobbled by 'settler' heritage, coil I don't want
yet have to acknowledge but not respect. My respect
goes to original words, sentences and affixing
of meanings I overhear and gather
and reconstitute to my own spiral of *here*:
but speech adapts to say sharp flight,
slicing of lower sky, the between-trees
of a late arriving kookaburra – they frame our day
and I can't identify but also must acknowledge.
And this I do with *self*.

And so, growing up
watching how much water you use, watching
water wind down the plughole, keeping
tremors of emotion under wraps
until you start to shake
and they burst out in a grotesque
sci-fi unseemly fashion, parodies of the figurative.
And such is poetry. Serious artform. The sugar
ant at the back door, crows falling away
down hill, scorpion spider that has only eyes

for you, day & night.

And so I draw others
into the self-centre by way of vicinity,
but it's more than physical,
it's what blocks out memory & response,
how I see and hear birds
some poets would prefer you did not speak of: they fear
too many poems of and on birds, this, my writing of their flitting,
this temporal and temporary and present then absent
signifier. *So cold*. But for me, birds are *real*,
even if I only note they are hereabouts, were there,
might come & go.

And returning, in the plain's curve — a road
west but the sun set outside the gentle rise and wandoos
and York gums burning silhouettes and inward motion
compels this direction we have fixed in our mind, the home
which is found though speed varies compensating for pitch
 $r(t) = at$

which tells you the place you'll arrive at, maybe
a prepositional solution, a grammar of formula(e).

These branches and points we recollect
on the journey of hope — it's not *across*
but a *heading out* to come back equidistant,
an anxiety of never reaching takes us closer
to an essence of home;

reflect
your spirograph moment of truth

in the garden alongside Wheatlands house
before the extension for Nanna and Grandpa was added,
out on the grass watered red-brown from the house dam, by
the grapefruit tree which Uncle Gerry would visit with you to
take a pair of fruits which would be halved and sliced within and
coated in sugar to sit in the fridge low-humming on a sparse 32 volts,
yellow-pink fruit that you would eat with him at crack of dawn, spiralling
segments out and relishing the bitter-sweet, in that garden you pinned
a spirograph to butcher's paper and made the spirals that would later
define a different path a different ethics but nonetheless centre
and remained pinned to that point — as Mum says, 'I have my memories...'

It's worth noting that the deadly crossing where Irishtown Road meets
Toodyay-Goomalling Road has been healed, and the orange cones
have gone and one can cross rumble strips like a declaration of approach.
We stop and dogleg across, part of the new slowing down, and pass
the nature reserve on the left where a flock of wood ducks emerge
and make a line for the paddock opposite but turn back to look
and then twist around in a strangely loxodromic action;
and the ram's
horns of neighbours' husbandry don't pass as ecology
in the haven of sheep.

We don't really constitute an urban heat island
in our small family single home-and-sheds cluster — no blip weakening
as it increases in distance from the city. Bathed in fog on the hillside
we shiver and clutch but hold no desire for the short-wave radiation
slumbering down in Perth, and its ever-diminishing patches
of vegetation.

Mistletoe birds whisk the geranium in brusque touch & go,
fantails take what spirals airborne in their wake while berry-eaters

resplendent leave colours dazzling gnats taken out by fantails
how glamorous do we see this? How hip the language of destruction,
for in measure it's there;

As the mistletoe curls on the jam tree
and berries are *frieze*-dried fruits
the picked eyes of capitals
a volute intermediary, a winding towards end & beginning
as if as if as if inviolate immutable rules in the mutable
sadness this taking joy in shift and change.

John Kinsella