

# Three Poems

by [Justin Wong](#) (May 2020)



*Four Trees*, Egon Schiele, 1917

## Matter and Emotion

The words we use are not the thing,  
But the phonic voice associated with the object,  
The word a symbolic representation,

The thing an abstraction for an idea.

Do I know of my Country's Arcadian landscape?

Have I experienced its splendour in the fertile spring?

Or its overlapping fields flourish into wondrous being

Without the social construct of my tongue?

A language of meaning piled on top of meaning,

Hearkening back centuries, built out of the archaic,

As the temple reformed out of the ruins the Babylonians left,

Expressed in our entropic, vernacular of the deadening day.

If the concrete is an abstraction of an abstraction,

Then what remains of the subjective,

Of *storge*, *philia*, *eros*, and *agape*?

Syllabic representations of a timeless eternity.

Pure thought is nearer to the essence than

Trees forming forests, mountains, and houses;

And the innumerable stars and the celestial orbs,

The world that is a concourse of matter.

The word that expresses the imperceptible  
Heads straight like an arrow to the target of concept,  
One could speak more truthfully of the heart's longing,  
Then of the flourish and decay of transforming facts.

## Microcosm

*I am my World – Wittgenstein*

I am the world, man's sin discovers death,  
The decay of a flower in the passing of time,  
The fall of the aged beasts of the forests,  
And of the foul that soar like dust through the wind.

Without consciousness there is no universe,  
The miraculous heavens an untemplated chaos,  
If the panoply of stars goes unnoticed, does it still exist?  
If my song remains unsung, is it a truth that ceases to be?

For centuries—that scraped the bounds of eternity—  
The stars in the cloudless black was a miracle unknown,

Lost on creatures like the longing for a beloved to a child,  
A Blakean etching in a gallery to a base, oblivious public.

Then does man make the world?

Are we one of two separate universes?

The one where we are conceived in sin,

Or the birth after birth, the fresh one of our charting.

Am I the faithful servant to things forbidden?

Is my raison d'être yoked as one to flesh?

Have I crossed the flow of my metaphorical Jordan?

To reside in my Israel of the spirit, becoming the seed of the  
heart.

I have had the trickle of water poured upon me like rain,

My baptism following birth like the immersion of the world,

The ark of my salvation taking me into new land,

A universe architected out of the drenched, archaic ruin.

The world's form is made by the meditator

The lack of awareness of the self becomes knowledge's funeral,

Where in the obliteration of man is a genocide of stars,

The burnt-out, wind-borne dust of a consumed, ashen pyre.

## The Dreamer of the Night

The night's a miraculous marvel,  
With stars perceived through the crystal air,  
Owls are still awakened and lucid  
When the hearth of the moon brilliantly glows.

Things come alive under its blanket,  
The darkness of mysterious shadow and black,  
Like ingenious thoughts left unuttered,  
Like visions dormant, and wordless in mind.

When the majority of mankind is resting,  
Carried off to the Isle of the mind,  
No one knows the lustre reflected  
From the satellite's grey, and half-hidden orb,

Or the swarm of the forest's fireflies,  
That swim through the twilight air,  
Whose embers dissolve in the dawn light,

Like a nightingale's song with the morn.

Dreams are like the contrary songbird,  
With wonders seen in the black nocturn,  
Whose ineffable melody is sounded,  
To a world dead to a bewitching sleep.

«[Previous Article](#) [Table of Contents](#) [Next Article](#)»

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