

This River's Bank

I stand here looking out
at a now becoming a then
and what was once is coming into view.
Quiet swirls move with the current.
A log of a distant tree surfaces,
of its forest no more,
it rides now on a current of no choice.

This wet wilderness of further expanse
reflects celestial light.
A dazzle that catches my eye
as a ribbon of general movement
lulls me to dream
of chance.

My mind, body, spirit expressed -- my all --
is not as that log's path.
Nor as the plankton, so small.
Invisible, perpetual;
They move up, then down, then up again,
as the current takes their multitudes along.

Surely plankton has little more choice than that log.
They of little agency have little will to roam.
What do plankton know but light, not light,
eat, reproduce. And I
with my hands and feet win propulsion.
Don't i have will
to say where I'll go?

Hmmm ...

Yet, for the pursuing weight of this water's flow,
were i dropped in the middle,
would my good swimming nature,
the right angles and persistent strokes,
(with and against flow)
propel me to shore
to set seed, to make home?

What do i know but
light, not light, eat, reproduce,
and imagination's knack
to feel and wonder as i roam
in a world not just for my own.

And i stand here on this river's bank
watching over time itself.
Here, now, downstream of the mighty
San Joaquin and Sacramento,
bedraggled by utility, but not dead.

It was the cry "Gold!"
rippling through an 1848 world
that first brought desire's tidal bore
to these shores.

A world's people died in forlorn flood.
Multitudes chased the sparkle to catch one's eye.
Other folk built conduits for needs.
And those who struck it well
were in flow with free exchange as it goes;
sense and heart valued,
thought before take,
and care given to what's left in one's wake.

It seems time flows faster in desire's rush,
slows down with empathy's reflective grace.
These forces of nature within,
embanked by conditions for trust
intertwine the currents of tempering love
to set seed, to grow, to be
unfolding toward a best.

This river flows by gravity's pull
seeking paths of least resistance.
A life time, a multitude of lives, flow
finding paths of right resistance.

Layer by layer,
my imagination remembers,
i depend on the tangible invisible to my eye.
Measure by measure,
my body knows,
a variability within, the steady beat belies.

Ahhh.

Hannah Arendt, Martin Luther King, Aung San Suu Kyi.
they might agree.
We flow along the currents we claim
'till it won't jive with what's left in our wake.
And water in its wild state
reminds us of the give and take;
rejuvenation after winter's floods,
anticipated thirst of summer's dirt,
the cycles throughout each year
and patterns of longer view,
we build edifice on the flow
of what we say and do.

We are moored in a moment of time and space.
Why not give dignity and respect
to person, thing, and place?

And that log, i see circle and surface again,
once determined itself among its brethren,
reaching, reaching, in a thirst quenching,
light energy grow....
That log here, now,
carrying stories
from somewhere its been.

As i stand here looking out,
that then is gone from now,
i see what is
drifting on waters I've known.
They move somewhere beyond my place
and I'm too far up to hear, smell, touch, or taste.
But I have my hands, my feet,
and my conscious too,
to come down for a swim
finding right resistance
to desire's push and empathy's embrace.