

PROSODY AND APEIRON

There was neither being (sát) nor nonbeing (ásat) ... what happened? ... who knows? ... Creation may have formed itself ... or the One who made it might not even know. — Rigveda 10. 129

If there is no real thing that is perceived of which you say it does not exist, then the nonexistent, being baseless, how will it present itself to the mind. — Shantideva

"... then even nothing was not, nor existence... The poets who've illumined their hearts see that which is, is kin to that which is not." Nasadiya Sukta

An instant is precursory. Prosody is the call and response that causes existence. How much more initial than materialization could prosody possibly be? Conventional cosmogony starts once there is an observable beginning. Fairly late in the game. The initial conditions that bring about a beginning are necessarily integral to what begins. Prosody is characterizable as that which is constitutive of its initial conditions. How so? How to speak of prosody and apeiron in the same breath? Can anything without prior non-existence — having always been — be experienced?

The only observable beginning — our beginning — would itself have had a prior, causal condition, even if that necessary condition would have been *nothing*. Because prosody claims a constitutive role in that condition, poets are particularly implicated. (In the Brahmanas, differentiated phenomena is constituted of meters and mantras and ritual formulae.) Is there a practice or sacrifice poets are no longer performing that is crucial for harmonizing the whole? Our prior condition was the word yet unspoken. An unmanifest word is yet a word.

At what point did prosody begin to embody us? At the emission-point of the first sound wave? The way a body forms in utero before there is a body. Is it *audible*, the way Cosmic Background Radiation (the oldest light in the universe) is still *visible*?

In fact, the CBR and the Primordial Acoustic Event that drove the expansion of the earliest universe, are coextensive. Aided by extremely sensitive spectra instruments and mathematical constructs, acoustic cosmologists like John Cramer and Gavin Starks have “played” the sounds of the CMB, galaxy arms, gravitational waves, pulsar spins, black hole collisions and other astrological phenomena; while in the sonic universe of the *Upaniśads*, an infinitely sensitive instrument—the *self*, or, bare consciousness (as consciousness is itself a modification of waveform)—can tune to the cosmogenic sound, the “unstruck” *anāhata nāda*, the sound without a source. This unproducibile sound, audible as the cynosure syllable *AUM*, runs through Upaniśadic, Epic, Puranic, Yogic and Tantric texts and pre-dates, pervades and sustains the current cosmos while reverberating within the body. The *Mandukya* and *Nada Bindu Upaniśads* are key starting points for practice, while the Hatha Yoga *Praitprika* is perhaps the most recent detailing of a *Pranava* practice.

Harmonizing meditative recitation of seed sounds with inceptive energy of existence is simple enough. purported. Tantric *Pranava*, *Nāda Yoga*, *Anāhata* and *Phonemic Emanations* are profound cosmogenic approaches that correlate quite well with our scientific understandings and the standard model of the

observable universe that began from an infinitely dense singularity event around 13.8 billion years ago. Accordingly, speech cosmologies and sound soteriologies have been practiced the world over.

LET THERE BE (*YƏ·HÍ*)

In the first chapter of *Sefer Bereshit*, the phrase “And God said” (*Wayyōmer Ēlōhîm*) occurs ten times while “And it came to be” (*wayəhî*) occurs fifteen times. Creation comes about through different permutations of the twenty-two letters housed in the Torah. “Twenty-two letters: God drew them, hewed them, combined them, weighed them, interchanged them, and through them produced the whole creation and everything that is destined to come into being.” (*Sefer Yetzirah*.)

What distinguishes prosody (and its expression as poetry) from forthright physical science is a fused factual and figurative faculty of perception (the *definite* and *indefinite*, if you like). *The Book of Sirach* 1:4 states that “Wisdom has been created before all things.” And this wisdom *can* be heard. It certainly is what we’re seeing. The vibratory phenomenal world is the manifestation of wisdom, constituted by and of *wisdom*. What we’re witnessing, whether by means of an optical telescope, electron microscope or a sunrise seen with the naked eye, is what-is as wisdom. As such, as that which came before creation, we are also perceiving nonexistence’s existence. “And there is no beginning but wisdom...” (*Bahir*: 97.) As such, the sensory is teachings.

SA’AH NAAGHÁÍ BIK’EH HÓZHÓÓN AND VOICE

In Diné ceremony the world is thought and spoken into existence from within the sweathouse of the *Diyin Dine’é*, the inviolable Holy People or In-lying Ones. “The earth will be, from the very beginning I have thought it ... The earth will be, from ancient times I speak it ... and so it will be.” (Beginning of the World Song, translated by Gary Witherspoon, *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe*, pg. 16.) The animating powers of thought (*Sa’ah naaghái*) and speech (*Bik’eh hózhó’*) are drawn out of the ordinary medicine bundle. Yet, to simply reduce the meanings of *Sa’ah naaghái* and *Bik’eh hózhó’* to “thought” and “speech” would be more than misleading. As an invocatory term *Sa’ah Naaghái Bik’eh Hózhóón* is omnipresent in Diné prayers, rites and storytelling. Diné Education Consultant Vangee Nez has written that “*Sa’ah Naaghái Bik’eh Hózhóón* is Diné epistemology, a complex system of knowledge encompassing two paradigms: Beauty Way (*Hózhóójii*-female) and Protection Way (*Naayée’ k’egho*-male), with *hózhó* at its core.” (*Diné Epistemology: Sa’ah Naaghái Bik’eh Hózhóón Teachings*, by Vangee Nez.) The word “*hózhó*” is resonant beyond any conceivable interpretation. Perhaps the terms “harmony” or “balance” or “happiness” can begin to give an impression. But what’s involved is a lifelong, ardent, ethical, ecological, participatory practice regarding one’s actions in relation to others, community, environment and cosmos, as full awareness of the cosmogonic, current nature of words. This inter-relational nature in which language is performative and proscriptive — not descriptive — is directly practiced as prosodic transformation of space in the neurosocio-commons. In this sense, translation and indigenization of conscience serve as antidotal medicine of reverse acculturation. From the book *Saad Lá Tah Hózhóón* by Diné poet Rex Lee Jim (translated by the author): “*I come in many forms. Because of me people think differently. Because of me people pray differently. Because of*

me people sing differently. Because of me people speak differently. Because of me people plan differently. Because of me people live differently. Voice I am ... I value different ways of living ... These are reasons why I gave myself over to the earth-surface people ... When I sound within them without falling apart life ceaselessly expands. In the beginning I am."

When the Diyin Dine'é were initially questioned about the nature of their plan, they responded: "*We are planning to extend knowledge endlessly.*" (from Witherspoon.) Prosody perceives this plan as vibratory phenomena. *Hózhó* is the patterning of who we are by harmony-generating awareness. In my own teaching I call this *Implicate Prosody* — prosody as the embodied, enacted, rhythmic integration of wisdom, world and interaction.

Diversity of speech and behavior is evidence of thought's boundlessness. "*In the Navaho view of the world, language is not a mirror of reality; reality is a mirror of language.*" (*Language and Art in the Navaho Universe*, Gary Witherspoon. pg.34.) Through language we participate in continually re-intuited, re-researched creation. In that cosmology is always local (an epiphenomenon of a people in their bioregion and background) it's through language that we participate in creation of place. all things are revelatory, word is entheogenic and breathing is itself the creational, carrier wind. Cosmogony is our nature.

WORD OF THE FOX (PROSODY AS AN ETHIC OF NATURE)

In West African Dogon cosmogony, the original stirrings of elements and impulses are the words of the creator Amma. Amma conceives the world and then materializes it through the spoken word. One of the first beings to be engendered is a key figure in Dogon divination named Ogo. Ogo breaks out of the primordial egg prematurely, anxious to construct a rival world of his own. Ogo is a disordering, selfish agent. For Ogo's repeated transgressive behaviors, Amma metes out a series of punishments designed to deprive him of the creative power of speech. His tongue is torn out, his teeth are broken, his throat is impaired and he's ultimately changed into a fox, forced to live as an outlier and a thief. But Ogo's agitations are at once understood as integral to the formation of the universe, as he's given a mediatory role between human activity and Amma's intentions. Ogo begs to speak to people and people carefully read the signs and symbols of events as the divinatory speech of Ogo, the "Word of the Fox." In Dogon divination, speech is the matrix of the cosmos. The original word and human language are one oscillation in an uncertain and constantly recreated and reinterpretable reality. Action is a form of speaking, and every work is the word of its maker. Ogo's speech-deprivation nevertheless continues to shape and redress the world as the "word of the fox" sought in divinatory rites by people in need of guidance.

Ogo's struggles at the beginning of time created the dynamic irregularities necessary for the evolutionary differentiation of lifeforms. In divination, the freedom of making personal decisions in a contingent, contradictory and conflictual world is a matter of carefully consulting phenomena while accepting responsibility for the communal harmony upon which the fluent workings of Creation depend. In her book *Dogon Divination As An Ethic of Nature*, Laura Kétékou Grillo states that Dogon divination is "an ethical duty arising from the responsibility human beings bear for the proper functioning and flourishing of the cosmos, giving primacy therefore to 'the good.'" Prosody (to reiterate) is the expressive, rhythmic, tonal, intonational, intentional, temporal, performative and repercussive aspects of language—the total gesture of realized interrelationship. Prosodic features are themselves a rapport with cosmogonic forces also

distinguishable as “language” and further distinguishable as *prosodic* forces, as portrayed in the patterned, cymatic, emanation of the observable universe. This rapport between vocal and cosmogenic prosodies is embodied and activated in the courses of action we divine each day in light of this rapport and (as mentioned in Dogon practice above) for the wellbeing of community and cosmos. Prosody as an “ethic of nature” is simply a practice committed to becoming aware of the full significance of phenomena. Prosody, beyond the lexical, discursive, material levels of language, opens into the immeasurable potencies of sound, symbol, suggestion, invocation, incantation, silence and implicit signification. Its divinatory potential (to propose and prophetically *put into place* by way of the about-to-spoken) calls upon these potencies entangled in events to invoke harmonious, equitable outcomes in the momentary. This is not “supernatural ability” but unobstructed insight into the nature of existence; not a paranormal or “out-of-body” experience, but an emptiness of self, an out-of-bias experience; a step outside the dictates of cause and effect where consequences can be weighed, levitated and played out by the prescient and impulsive array of prosody’s tools. Prosody connects act to ethic. There are critical differences between coercing and compelling and occasioning. Superstition acts out of the fear of nature’s presumed inhospitality. Prosody is nature’s trust in us. Reality is otherworldly enough. Immeasurably so.

COSMOI

What are the implications for prosodic practice in the multiverse and unobservable-universe models, including cyclic models in which prior versions of our own universe (as a continuum) may have collapsed and bounced back? The implications both shatter our reality or put things in perspective. In Post-Vedic Hindu cosmology, a beginninglessness in which universes sequentially oscillate in and out of existence is the standard model, in which the imperishable *Vedas*, as both the undifferentiated and differentiated totality of knowledge, formulate cosmos after cosmos. In the West, no later than the time of the first theoretical physicist, Anaximander, teetering between Hesiod’s theogonic table of elements and natural science, would the word “cosmos” have appeared as plural *cosmoi*.

How can we tune to, co-emergently, the bubbling up of potentially infinite cosmoi, each with its own physical nature? Although there is, of course, an outside chance that our known cosmos is absolutely unique and non-successive, the question of a lone, specific prior condition or a possibly-characterizable conditionlessness would still remain unresolved—not to mention prosody’s un-probed relationship with the unobservable 95% of our current universe which is purportedly “dark” energy and matter invisible to us by any known means.

NOWHERE’S WHEREABOUTS ANALAGOUS TO THE UNSTRUCK SOUND

No location. Placeless place. The same as what it’s not. Nihilscopy.

What is it to *disappear* ... like one thought after another? The reversibility of remembering? "Nothing" must have once existed. It yet may. It does now, as boundless love in each cell of our bodies. We're horizon without void of horizon lines. The vast complexity of nothing, abounding. Just as an H₂O molecule is not a piece of water, a person dying, aging, suffering and being born, is not a "part" of everything (things are not

so apart.) Space is not made of space. We're caught in the perturbative tonotopy of our exchanges. The only word that could ever reabsorb every point in space until they vanish is "word." The tip of the tongue. Cavernous suspense. Entirely probable with no real-world application implied. I could do this all day. The unobservable outcomes are calling the shots. There are no building blocks. No rug to pull "under" out from. We were led to believe that space is a byproduct of arrangements within it. It will appear in a phase completely unfamiliar to us, but when? (This ultimate coming home, must we no longer exist to know?) Scrap it and reassemble it before it's too late to ever figure out. Physics will outlive the law. I can't be uncoordinated. We jiggle. We stiffen up in a crowd. If you've ever spent an hour disentangling a daughter's hair, you'll never romanticize entanglement again. Love the occasion with your whole heart, culled from the space of all possible outcomes—what your life actually and only is made of. (The Tantric word for smoothly flowing inner energy is "untangled.") The boundary is nothing and it is everywhere, emitting solids like us. An unassembled bracelet can't contour a wrist, not until we hear humming. I'm no relation to you ... just the same stuff. The more noncontiguous the more we say *many* and seem *one*. If we're oblivious to the ubiquitous, how will we ever get along? Born again though backwards. We've created so much distance between ourselves I can't move on. Inconsistency is as short as flat. The brain is not built to accept its own shortsightedness. What remains is the grain of salt without the salt. Being weighed down is a crutch, just as instantaneity is personal. Primitive prosody is the cause and its effect, the throwing that is the rock that throws itself into the pond, the wave, the floating threads, clumping stars, and the interspersing tonal and intentional landscapes conveyed and interpreted as actually happening. I experience what is not known first. There's not enough distance between us to exist. The intense Eros of being each other's mechanics and information loss, an embrace made of every being that ever exists, without analogue. I can't come until I'm approximate again. Though the buildup must first be built exactly, completely. We are what is real about each other: the appearance of solidity's appearance. The cosmos calls me home. Another universe barging in, how else explain effects without cause? Any hypothesis will fit in my hat.

WHAT'S MORE PRIMITIVE THAN SPACE?

"What is the divine? That which has no origin and no end." — Thales, (DK 11A1 (36)).

Travel back to the portal of creation, step by step, palpation by palpation, where what we've always thought of as 'time' shatters into droplets that have no meaning.

If there can be sound without a source—unstruck—how could there not be space without events as well? If there is a cosmogenic predecessor-space, would it have inherent properties so different from existence as-we-know-it (or void of existence) as to be absolutely unrecognizable? (The unrecognizable exists: there's more of "it" than there is not.)

In a successive-universe scenario, is there an identifiable trajectory? Does the oscillatory nature of the observable collapse limitlessly back into itself or exhaust itself forward (or perhaps both at once)? Does not-even-space exist, and if so, how can we even say "exist"? What would whatever we're able to point to as "nonexistent" be made of? What can't be pointed out perplexes perception. What is anything ultimately made *from*? In his final essay titled 'Eureka' Edgar Allan Poe wrote: *"Because nothing was, all things are."* Would non-spatiality be tantamount to nothing? In our universe, space is supreme. Unthinkable without.

Something without space that is a whole other sort of universe. (In traditional Asian medicines, space is the element the four (other) elements come from.)

I pose these questions only in relation to prosody—problems without the provision of prosodic implications I couldn't even pretend to meaningful tend.

Is it proper to speak of prosody inanimately, conferring its agency on matter? Could prosody per se have played a part in the fraction (and fractioning) of the world that is visible to us? Where would it have started? What is its rock bottom, especially in light of the fact that prosody is always integral to its own emergent conditions? Could vibration itself — indivisible from prosody — act utterly differently in other cosmoi? (Cosmoipoesis?) What would “speech” or Logos be elsewhere? Are there totally inconceivable prosodies? Or could vibration *not* exist while an existence nonetheless does? What is prosody's role in the pre-palpable (if not the substantiation of the nature that it would tune)? Especially now that space is theorized as having properties of its own, with or without having other stuff in it — flexibility, fluidity, springiness, outward push, and so on. It may even have *weight*, or at least mass-producing effects by means of particle-interaction with bosons in the putative Higgs field—like passing a potential mass through thick molasses that saturates and coats that mass. In terms of current testable cosmological questions, one underlying premise is that emptiness has energy, so-called counter-gravitational *dark energy*. Like the impulse to speak. Like a word we have no idea could ever be spoken. Dark energy of the all-generative and unmanifest tacit, staring us in the face by means of that which we call “outer space.” It lays the cosmetics on thick, onto all the surfaces it has created.

Augustine of Hippo's statement about time could also apply to space: “...then assuredly the world was made, not in time, but simultaneously with time. For that which is made in time is made both after and before some time... ‘In the beginning’ can't be said if something had come before.” (*City of God* XI, 6). In our helplessness, why wouldn't we cling to scripture? Homer qualified the gods as everlasting and ageless (*aidion kai agaro*.) Doesn't cosmology today confirm the archaic rumor: that the eternal, infinite, inexhaustible and inconceivable define the divine? Perhaps Aristotle best expressed the archaic moment of the melding of theoretical physics and theology. In the latter half of Book 3 of his *Physics* he finds it necessary to exhaustively inquire into *infinity*. “There is no beginning of the infinite (*apeiron*) for in that case it would have an end. But it is without beginning and indestructible, as being a sort of first principle; for it is necessary that whatever comes into existence should have an end. Wherefore as we say, there is no first principle of this (i.e. the infinite) but it itself seems to be the first principle of all other things and to surround all and to direct all, as they say who think that there are no other causes besides the infinite (such as mind, or friendship), but that it itself is divine; for it is immortal and indestructible, as Anaximander and most of the physicists say.” (*Physics* iii. 4; 203 b 7.) This year's (2019) Nobel prize-winner in physics, James Peebles, concurs: “It's very unfortunate that one thinks of the beginning whereas in fact, we have no good theory of such a thing as the beginning.” (AFP interview, November, 2019.) Peebles said of the Big Bang: “It connotes the notion of an event and a position, both of which are quite wrong.”

Peeling away the doxographic layers—back to the key terms and concerns of the Presocratics—provides us with Western instruments for sensing prosody's pristine stirrings. This etymological odyssey at once opens various concomitant cultural questions. Can early cosmology support contemporary astrophysics? Can a peer-reviewed proof spark a meditative practice? Can mantra coincide with baryon acoustic oscillations? Are geometries of the formative gas flows around galaxies harmonic? Can a capacious understanding of prosody apprise the sciences? The cross-empirical approach of the research field known as

the *Prosodic Body* posits that such correlative questioning weaves together who we are and allows us to feel at home in the scarcely knowable.

EVERYTHINGS

What is that which is entirely (or at least somewhat) different from that which it creates?

The universe is a product of the illimitable exacting a limiting action (a discipline) on itself. What can be known about this action? How did I arrive at this question and from how many angles?

The question whether space has any inherent properties (*not* co-dependent on anything *in* space) is inseparable from the attempt to locate the basic elements or particles, beyond which only pure space would exist. Can the building blocks indeed be removed without obliterating their volume (which might be being/consciousness/bliss)? What underlies even the infinitesimal? “Underlie” is itself a precarious, perhaps misleading and biased word. The origin from which all things come might not exist in any spatial relation to its productions. Spatiality itself is suspect as mere metaphor. Expressions like *God within*, *heaven above* and *underlying reality* might be misdirecting us, not cluing us in. Ultimately (is it delusional to conjecture in terms of the *ultimate*?) there would seem to be a point at which something could have only come from nothing, or from something so different from known matter that it utterly eludes (i.e., *deludes*) us. But why assume “everything” would have only happened *once* as *our* everything? What about *their* everythings, *alien* everythings, *otherworldly* everythings, *separable un-interdependent-in-relation-to-us* everythings? Perhaps phenomena forever springs from phenomena, with no infinities (as Aristotle suggests) separable from the sensible. Assume an infinite number of everythings (cosmoi, in this case) forever generating from something *else*. Is immateriality merely matter we can’t identify? Is materiality more or less or also completely immaterial, perhaps but a holograph projected from the 2D edge of the overall shape of the universe? To be “in over our heads” would be the point of existence, were existence to have a point — to hold up under the awe that blows our separable selves away. Being blown away leaves what behind? What is it to “hold up?” To stick to the delusion of density? To what end? To be somebody? To not miss a moment of the preciousness of existence (which is obscured by holding up)?

Leave behind even holding up. Hear what you say. Prosody is a leaving off from prosody, quite specifically. Worrying is extremely localized. One is worried. Worrying is extremely localized because we own it. It can’t exist without us. What else would want it (other than oneself)? Prosody is being in the position of not being bound to the reinforcement of position. Tonal freedom in all directions, in being inhabital, not bound to chronic outcomes. Does the nature of space hold a key for prosody as an ethic of nature? Is there a behavioral tendency in the practice of tonal freedom? In *Dzogchen* (Ati-yoga), the most ancient teaching in Tibetan Buddhism, emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and compassion are coeval. How different is meditative *śūnyatā* from cosmogonic speculation? Is it the nature of space that is empty, or the nature of mind aware of its own emptiness that is empty? It could be said that *śūnyatā* is reflexive: meditation on space leads to *śūnyatā* and *śūnyatā* empties space.

With regard to the Presocratic project, how “participatory” was the process of thinking? Was there a pronounced tendency among these first philosophers to reflect back on that which theorizes as a constitutive

part of the cosmos they were attempting to comprehend? “To think is the same as the thought: it is.” (*Ταὐτὸν δ' ἔστι νοεῖν τε καὶ οὐνεκεν ἔστι νόημα*. From Parmenides' untitled poem: 8.34.) I.e., both thinking and the thought *are*; this is the bottom-line ontic enlightenment, the prerequisite for Presocratic processing of phenomena. They *theorized* for the sake of the kosmos.

PHYSIKOI

How did the Presocratics self-identify? (They certainly could not have called themselves *Presocratics*.) Adding to the difficulty of identification is the fact that they were very variegated, often writing to contradict each other. Aristotle called them *physikoi*, to differentiate them from the earlier *theologoi* and *mythologoi*. They were a fringe movement (quite literally: their Milesian “school” was in present-day Turkey, while the other, established, Eleatic school was in southern Italy) that began a new way of inquiring into the phenomenal world. Their natural philosophy was an uprising and an uprooting. *Concept* and *critical enquiry* stunned the populace. (Anaxagoras was prosecuted for *impiety* for asserting that stars were fiery stones.) They were proto-scientific etiologists. Heraclitus said “lovers of wisdom must be inquirers into many things,” and the *physikoi* were indeed pan-disciplinary. Their knowledge of nature was intended to bear on all things, namely, the kosmos — a bearing that nonetheless, necessarily, involved the rejection of considerable prior knowledge. They’re known for their revolutionary rationality. Logic *this* pure must have been totally revelatory in its day. Pristine ontology would have indeed burned as bright as the “truth.” But the keenness of their epistemological method can’t be explained without recognizing that they were at once awash with the extramundane. Thales was a hylozoist who held that God is mind. Xenophanes didn’t rebuke Hesiod for being theological, rather he ridiculed him for degrading deity with the attribution of human characteristics. For Anaxagoras, *nous* initiated the motion of the universe and had power over all things without partaking of them. For Heraclitus, knowledge of the structure of the kosmos accorded with knowledge of the soul. The closed communities of the Pythagorean *akousmatikoi* worshiped Pythian Apollo. The Orphic formulae that found their way into Plato’s dialogues would have first journeyed straight through the Presocratic schools. Empedocles was an ethicist. Parmenides’ poem is a hexametered katabasis that carries him to a goddess who delivers the plain ontological truth: what is *is* and what is not *is* not (*ἔστι γὰρ εἶναι, μηδὲν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν*, 6.2-3) and there’s nothing to learn from the latter “for you cannot know what is not” (*γὰρ ἂν γνοίης τό γε μὴ ἔδν*. 2.5)—just get over it, give it up, in order to know what is necessarily real and to hear the everyday speech of mortals for what it is, i.e., that which *deadens*. Parmenides doesn’t refer to the *apeiron*. He simply unifies Being by abolishing nonbeing. In his poem, all differentiation is part and parcel of the specious world of “*doxa*” (opinion) while *beings* like ourselves only have veritable existence as *Being*.

Parmenides was also an *Oulides Physikos*, a physician or *iatromantis*. As such, he would have had an array of revelatory-healing practices at his disposal: dark retreat, diet, dream *incubatio* and interpretation, *enkoimesis*, word cure, baths, herbs, gymnastics and other Asklepiian therapies. Parmenides would have also understood that his poem — in which he was shown what only God knows — would need to be a total therapy in itself, the ultimate medicine of *truth* told: a sacrifice (of his mere mortality, of his being, of untrue poetry); truth told as the centerpiece of his healing ceremony; deepest theurgic doctoring; the poem’s words as Word—being-merged-into-Being as the basis of the poem. One could read his fragments as a mere didactic poem or empirical paradox ... but only at the expense of untold benefits and heightened wellbeing. His

poem has more in common with the mystery religions of his time than philosophy as we know it today—a turning or converting back to the divine; what Jung called *Urefahrung*. First philosophy and first physics were an initiatory purification, an *immortalization* of soul and not its *explication*, as was the case with "next" philosophies and physics.

Prosody implies that *how* we say what we say *is* what we say. The mind making itself up is prosody saying what we say in a way that says what it says. Among the *physikoi*, mind and logos became indistinguishable. Their natural speculations were a clearing of the mind, a returning to mind as primordial; speculations that patterned the mind anew — according to the language of their inquiries — into Nature inclusive of kosmos. If an original writing on cosmogony is not itself cosmogenic it has, then, failed. The *physikoi* were contrarian. They opposed popular culture, they reconciled a universe that was generated and energized by contraries, and they argued with each other. They stood acutely and contentiously between the infinite and the finite, the undifferentiated and the different, chaos and order, the uncreated and the contingent, being and nonbeing, Being and beings, oneself and others, mind and knowledge, as well as elemental contraries like water and fire, air and earth, in order to speak the language of reality for the first time. Their prosodies were the correspondences between that which reveals and their realized revelations. Their mode can rightly be called *henosis*, a fusion with the fundamental, a coming home to logos. Heraclitus wrote indignant aphoristic fragments with the precision of a jeweler, and as though the kosmos were a digestive tract eliminating his speech. Parmenides knowingly wrote a metered, counter-counterfeit-Odyssey to take himself home and tell the story that Being, not *beings*, live on. In effect, the *physikoi* established an intense elenctic collective according their language with the periodicities of cosmogenic logos and with prosody as the necessary particularization of the primordial—a *prosodonoēsis*, an interactive tonotopic organization of what is.

ARCHÊ = APEIRON

There is doxographical agreement that Anaximander was the first theoretical physicist — specifically for having thoroughly thought-through *origin*. He is credited with the first technical use of the term *archê* (beginning, first cause) and the equating of *archê* with *apeiron* (the indefinite, infinite, that which cannot be limited, or that which comes before all differentiation) (see Simplicius *Physics*. 32 r; 150,20 — *Physics* 24, 13.) And even if Anaximander *didn't* ultimately confirm infinite coexistent and successive cosmoi, his disclaimer would have required the conceptualization of their possibility — serving as de facto *introduction* of the idea. Once arriving at the indefinite as *archê*, all contradictions and all possibilities beyond the evident are necessarily in play, even as parallel or simultaneous possibilities. In a very real sense, Anaximander's views bear on the quantum dicta of the indivisibility of observer and observed—that one's observation of a state of matter alters that state and that the energy transferred to a system in order to observe that system is at least partially constitutive of that system. In his search for the primal prose of natural philosophy, Anaximander's introduction of a conceptual abstraction—a neuter, non-representational, metaphysical term such as *apeiron* — would have been in itself earthshattering in 6th century BCE Miletus. And having modelled the beginning of philosophy by directly thinking the beginning—void of theogony or metaphoric, heroic and mythological supports—it's no wonder that modern physics, as well as metaphysics, keep referring back, foundationally, to the few archaic accounts of his writing and the lone extant fragment that appeared in a roundabout attestation by Simplicius (DK 12B1) commenting on Aristotle's *Physics* a full

millennium after the time of Anaximander, and believed to be a quotation from Aristotle's pupil Theophrastus. The fragment itself:

"The Non-Limited is the original material of existing things; further, the source from which existing things derive their existence is also that to which they return at their destruction, according to necessity; for they give justice and make reparation to one another for their injustice, according to the arrangement of Time." (translated by Kathleen Freeman in *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, p. 19.)

Nietzsche redeployed Anaximander's *apeiron* as detonation device for collapsing both the Classical Apollonian Greek ideal and the axiological foundations of Christian civilization. "That which truly is, concludes Anaximander, cannot possess definite characteristics, or it would come-to-be and pass away like all the other things. In order that coming-to-be shall not cease, primal being must be indefinite. The immortality and everlastingness of primal being does not lie in its infinitude or its inexhaustibility, but in the fact that it is devoid of definite qualities which would lead to its passing away. Hence its name, 'the indefinite'." (Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. p. 47.) On the basis of the Anaximander Fragment, Heidegger first distinguished the differences between beings (*ta onta*), to be (*einai*), is (*estin*) and Being (*on*), and our profound obliviousness to Being (see his essay on the Anaximander Fragment.) He further defines *apeiron* as the "empowering power of appearance" and the effective difference between Being and beings, while highlighting Anaximander's correlation of *apeiron*, *archê* and being: *archê ton onton to apeiron*. (*The Beginning of Western Philosophy*. pp. 22-26.) With *apeiron* as presence, a being is that which presences in *unconcealment*. Emanuel Levinas also calls "*apeiron*" by name. In *Totality and Infinity* he elaborates the dependent interrelationship between autonomous beings and infinity; *apeiron* is the primal giver, as well as *nothingness*. In more recent physics, Heisenberg developed a theory in which elementary particles were stationary states in a unified field of matter which he likened to Anaximander's *apeiron*. Max Born proposed to name the primordial quantum substance in which the same particle could manifest in different states "*apeiron*." One explanation for dark energy is that it's a property of space. Empty space may be thought of as an *apeiron* in which virtual particles continually appear and disappear.

UNBORN AGAIN

"There is nothing in possibility more wonderful than what is." (*laysa fi'l-imkan abda' mimma kan*). — Abu Hamid al-Ghazālī

"The Lord of all things is the word "be"..."

"Every shift (in the energy balance accomplished at earth's crust) affects all the universe. Though fantastic, this is scientific fact." — Buckminster Fuller

It would be a fascinating study to trace the development of *apeiron* from Anaximander through the Hellenistic age, as it met and meshed with the major monotheisms (i.e., *archê* is God.) But tracing this theological crossover would be a major undertaking in itself and, for the most part, a sidetracking of the prosodic research at hand. I will, on the other hand, be following forward the Heraclitan lineage of the correlation of *archê* and Word as it is basic to prosody. The harmonic *archê* of Pythagoras and Philolaus is

also a path that may wend its way through this writing in one form or another. I think it's essential, before moving on, to at least touch upon a few corroborative Arabic terms and Islamic sources that speak to the medium of prosody as I have been presenting it.

The lived experience of the eternal, evidenced through its ever-present contrast with the contingent (with everything else, with *everything*) is fundamental to Islamic thought. The 'contingent' is that which could either be or not be. "Hadith" derives from the Arabic root *h-d-th*, "to happen." *Hadith* in Islamic literature of course refers to the collection of sayings, practices and sanctions that trace back to the Prophet. But the underlying meaning of *hadith* is "created-in-time"—*that which begins after it was not*; an existence preceded by non-existence; being-that-has-become. *Hadith* contrasts with *qadim*, 'eternal.' The Quran, as verbatim revelations from Allah, are *qadim* ("uncreated" "uncomposed") while the *Hadith*, compiled generations after the time of Muhammad by his followers and subject to doubt and interpretation, are *contingent*, created in time in relation to the verity and eternity of the Quran. It's an open question (at least for non-Sunnis) whether the Quran was created (by God) or uncreated with no prior existence, not even as God's message to humankind at certain point in time. There's even a Quranic reference to the Quran as a *written* text (*archetext*) existing before creation, then transmitted orally to Muhammad. The Prophet's illiteracy, along with his lack of prior familiarity with the historical scriptures that undergird the Quran, would support the book's status as revelation from self-existent *qadim* (not unlike the beginningless, imperishable *Vedas*, or Tibetan *terma* texts.) To summarize, from Nasir al-Din al-Tusi's text *Tajrid al-I'tiqad*: "What is not preceded by anything else, nor by non-existence, is eternal; otherwise, it is contingent (*hadith*)." (From *Creation in Time in Islamic Thought with Special Reference to Al-Ghazali*, by Eric L. Ormsby.) Ismaili and Sufi interpretations allow Quranic verses to be read on both levels, as created in time and uncreated—as exoterically literal (*zahir*), and as hidden (*batin*.) I'd argue that language itself (and certainly language as cosmogenic Logos) can be understood in this confluence. *Zahir* is the "letter" of language, language as acquired habit, the arbitrariness of sound and meaning; artifice; the mechanistic; rote; face value; a superficial understanding of religion and the real, accessible to everybody; evident, apparent, knowing only the name of God and not God, knowing only God and not that the Name is God; deactivating words; deadness of the word; fundamentally non-resonant. *Batin* is inner, unseen, esoteric. From the Ismaili text *Kalami Pir* (p. 85): "If you look at the reality itself from the point of view of relativity, it will be relative, and if the relativity is seen from the point of view of reality, it will be reality."

If the art of prosody, through its array of transformative tropes and through its grasp of symbolic meaning, is *not* that which senses and expresses the subtle shifts, offshoots and impulses within the contingent/uncreated confluence, it is *nothing*, meaningless. One writes within this confluence in order to reveal the confluence. One writes within this confluence to lift people out of the literal *and* the allegorical (*majāz*: the figurative, metaphorical, sign, caricature; inclusive of the "letters" which stand for things — the appearance we pass through because there is somewhere further to go which is marked by the *meta-phor*). The timeless tropes of prosody mediate *zâhir* and the real (the real as that which requires statement and allegorization to be revealed) as an essential aspect of words saying more than words can say, in the illumination where words are illimitable, inimitable and *real* (*haqîqat*), where benevolence is beheld in every atom, in the origin of the gift of language, as our wondering where words come from begins to reciprocate.

AN AMERICAN APEIRON

“The pulse of the measures of first things.” — Robert Duncan

In Ismaili theosophical practice, interpretation of literal and implied levels of meaning is named *ta'wil*. The *Kalami Pir* defines *ta'wil* as “derived from *awwal*, and means 'to trace something to its origin.'” This is the same source Henri Corbin drew from in his book *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*. Corbin’s *ta'wil* was in turn tapped by several later-modernist American poets, including Diane di Prima, Robin Blaser, Robert Creeley, Robert Kelly and, in particular, Robert Duncan and Charles Olson. While it’s warranted to question the appropriateness of expropriating a Medieval theophanic Shi’ite text for the purposes of American poetics, in effect, Corbin’s experiential, exegetical translations came across as immediately meaningful — even providential and, moreover, concisely mind-blowing—for the syncretic, anagogical, experimental spirit of the 1960s. (Even a half-century after this Ismaili Shiite offshoot first took root in American poetics, even in terms of a poetics as assiduous as Olson’s that claimed to be “secularization that loses nothing of the divine,” the source material can be heard exerting its counterclaim. The *Kalami Pir* explicitly states that *ta'wil* is the state of God only realizable under the guidance of the Imam who possess all the evident and hidden properties of God and who keeps not only this world but 18,000 other worlds from collapsing.)

Everything Robert Duncan perceived was an “omen of the real.” He received, as he wrote, his heretical “grand collage.” In *Fictive Certainties*, referring to his experience of reading Pindar’s first Pythian Ode, he wrote: “My mind lost the hold of Pindar’s sense and was faced with certain puns, so the words *light, foot, hears, you, brightness, begins* moved in a world beyond my reading, these were no longer words alone but also powers in a Theogony, having resonances in Hesiodic and Orphic cosmogonies where the foot that moves in the dance of the poem appears as the pulse of measures of first things [archē].” When Duncan introduced Charles Olson at the 1965 Berkeley Conference he said of Olson: “His knowledge of language is such that its usability seems everywhere. He has had to occupy an area in history big enough for a spirit which can roam all over anything it can imagine and then imagine one that is still restless because it can’t find a space big enough for it to exist in.” In Olson’s essay ‘The Animate versus the Mechanical, and Thought’ he added this note: “I am here seeking to speak within, or across the ‘range’ of a principle of likeness which includes, and seeks to ‘cover’ what Henry Corbin reminds me is a constantly affirmed homology among the initiatic cosmos, the world of nature, and the celestial world.” He mapped a cosmography — the Animate — in which the events of his life would allow him to pass through a counterpart self who would be his archetype, or an angel thinking his thoughts, if you like, or all of his angels as a hierarchy of active intelligences. Olson referred to these intelligences as “given things or voices which come to you from cause.” Although the archetype he moved toward was necessarily individuated, it was at once, essentially, *cosmic* (in terms of the Anthropos or “homo Maximus” whom Jung spoke of, via Ezekiel) and *extra-cosmic*. Olson was writing an *apeiron* event inclusive of the uncreated, of those events happening prior to creation which are conditions for creation: “But behind it all, backwards (Ocean forwards *ta'wil* the Angel of Cinvat / Bridge you will pass through it you / propose it / the 1st Angel (of the Plerom —/ the 1st samsarar) / the 2nd Angel. farushta / the 3rd angel your own / outside Creation outside God himself”. This concatenation of Ismaili terms appears in the fifth section of Olson's *The Secret of the Black Chrysanthemum*, displaying a poetics impossible to project without the Illuminationist writing of Suhrawardi and the epiphanic theosophy of Ibn Sīnā, as made available via Corbin’s writings.

Iranian metaphysics animates Western poetics on a number of levels. *Ta'wil* is a template for cutting through far-from-home occidental materialism and situating organism in cosmic communion, as new world pioneers become medieval Persian pilgrims. Also, the imagination is primary for both poetry and the

Avicennan recital in which the *ta'wîl* procedure takes through the “organ of metamorphoses,” namely, the *imagination*. This is why I position prosody—the performance of the organ of poetic imagination—as mediatory between the senses and *apeiron*, between the contingent and that which exists without having come into existence. Through prosodic imagination the literal, sensible and exoteric are transmuted into *symbol* and *exaltation* which are identifiable as the spiritual reality they imply, and which could never be revealed otherwise or as anything else. This spiritualized imagination operates autonomously within the dictates of cause and effect; it creatively composes with causal details, transferring words and actions—by means of themselves—beyond themselves into boundless being. Finally, it must be mentioned that the *ta'wîl* return-to-origin necessitates originality, a perilous “finding out for oneself.” Innovative American poetics was capable of *mainlining* Ismaili mysticism because our current age of maximal egoism is consonant with the *ta'wîl* procedure which requires, in order to be genuine, intensely personalized experience and a privatized, performative reading of the phenomenal world; opportune for putting together a paginated path in the name of *poetics*. The cosmos can only be local! “Paradise is a person. Come into this world. The soul is a magnificent angel. And the thought of its thought is the rage of Ocean.” At times Olson conflated soul and angel, which is not accurate relative to the Avicennan angelology he tapped. “In every case this figure [the angel/guide] represents the heavenly counterpart of the soul; it manifests itself to the soul only at the dawn (note also that Olson self-identified as archeologist of morning) the “sunrise,” of the soul’s perfect individuation, its integration, because only then is its relation to the divine individualized.” (From *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, p. 21.) (Interestingly, Corbin also mentions “*fravarti*.” *Fravaši* is the Avestan word for a person’s archetype which sends the soul out into existence to fight for the preponderance of benevolent over baleful actions.) Thus, the Ismaili recital (as a dramatic situating of oneself in the cosmos, as “spiritual autobiography”) and field-composition overlap. The poet can’t bring the poem to reality without the soul (troublesome to define; perhaps “animated self” or “terrestrial angel”) undergoing the return, and a return can’t be undergone without the writing of the poem creating the conditions for returning. This reciprocity is the hermeneutic circle, the cosmic self/text cross-exegesis. “my memory is ... the history of time ... I am making a mappemunde, it is to include my being...” (*The Maximus Poems*, p. 256.)

HOME

Dying is to move from the figurative to the real and even further from the limitations of the literal—from mere metaphor to before-that-which-begins, to that which one’s life has all along implied. Once this implication becomes an image or understanding, from that understanding one looks back upon one’s life as that which has all along implied such understanding. The image is *theophanic*, the understanding is originary word.

In the last few days of his life, in the house he build and lived in for the last 65 years, my father, of perfectly sound mind, repeatedly and imploringly asked to be taken home. What’s that all about? Not backward in time, a forward-oriented nostalgia. Pleromatic dissolution. No more wondering, just wonder, then no wonder. Agnostic nostalgia? No need to either believe or not believe when finally faced with glaring *fact* that, at once, can’t be known. The facts are always beyond themselves, until the contingent crystallizes for real. One’s end anticipated by exultation and anguish. To have now been in exile then. An experience of the formerly familiar. In his defamiliarizing of phenomena, he must have included me as well (how new or

unknown was I in that changeover from father to forgoing of life?) as he gathered up his family and friends in mind as requisite fissile matter. (One can only de-familiarize by sacrificing the familiar.) He was preparing, packing up, coordinating meetings with boyhood companions on the Avestan bridge, while wide awake, driving to Los Angeles (where he'd never been) from his easy chair in Southern Minnesota, the brutish *apeiron* pressing in. An acme of individuation about to accomplish the dying away of all suffering. His recital. Mysticism when it's happening is simply the immediate. It can only be first-hand. A spiritual romance indeed, with its sweetness nowhere to be found as it overwhelms. Unable to even spit up.

Who wouldn't be ready to leave 7,423 bombs dropped in Afghanistan last year alone. Everything is instantly long ago with nothing in between now and then. Quarantined on a cruise ship. To want to go home makes one a stranger where one currently exists, or at best a guest (gnosticism is *harsh* reality). To return to that which one never wondered whether one left. It wasn't there until before—which is to say: there is a counterpart to the home that no longer feels like home because there always was, if indeed now it is. To return to conditions prior to one's creation and be before creation itself with those pre-primordial events as one's real family. It is a sound that can't be heard, yet it can be heard. It has rung. All ten timbres of the unstrung. The Almighty's tinnitus is us. Belonging to the uncreated by means of all that the Goddess has made by being uncreated. A *machinist* of morning. Solid man among men. Father who would follow me to the ends of the snowstorms to glow with the glory of his boy athlete. Lifetimes of my efforts to honor him can't compare to even one step he took in order to survive by means of his natural ease and effortlessness. To now let passing away be as effortless, to take its course. Changing over to the tacit, the non-adventure. "Got to go." Though it's still the early universe for another millionth of a second. Wrestle with outworn senses. Not enough strength to lift an eyelid in the bed in which I was conceived and he won't breathe again. Why look again? It only detracts from inconceivable coherence. We can't know as little as each other. I'm intruding again. I want, and I must not. Only "I'm sorry" is vaster than a cosmos.

To bear the original grace to leave the crypt without the bitter a priori retrospect of being cast into exile or hurtling ahead into oblivion. Our hands are not in our hands. A faith stronger than fate. All there is, made mostly of address, crying out. Listening to listening. The frozen winter branches. We do know the origin of language. Evolution is but a diacritic, a critique, as in "let me go home." We do know the origin of language: existence that would exist and existence without having been brought into existence distilling the first infinitely dense dot. Matter far more impressionable than any readymade anatomy. The operation has had to be physical, that is, unendurable. Exactly what is happening as though it can't be happening. Watch me go. Do as you're told when you don't listen. Command lament. Material returns to create energy. We each independently do the same, though at the critical instant we cry that "each" not exist. A savior of separation. The syzygy of home and home. Ingenuous gnosis. Partially is only whole. How am I understanding this, following the scents, hanging on my own words? My father's just died. Forever.

ACCORDIANIST OF MOURNING

Not seeking revelation, one's life is revelation. What is the effect, as the uncreated plays out in the contingent? For Abu Hamid al-Ghazālī to write: "There is nothing in possibility more wonderful than what is" (*laysa fi'l-imkan abda' mimma kan*) he had to open the last door: *the experiential Apeiron*. Under the bodhi

tree. Between two unruly shrubs on the pre-cast concrete steps of the house where I was born. Entwombed without an outside. Entombed without a tomb.

Thought responsible for maintaining integrity of the cosmos tunes to self-occurring sound. Emptiness is constitutive of the specific. This is the way in which any object that exists, in that it exists, is beyond comprehension. Better to say *boundless* rather than *otherworldly*. There's nothing unnatural, only things handled with less reverence. We're caught in the inability to create creation, though it's ours to smash to bits, to see how it ticks, proving how easily we might have never been, or never ever be, in a rock bottom that never began. Prosody cuts conduct and ethics into gnosis. The meaning of compassion is the manifest.

Words knew they'd need us, their substance, to refer to the unspeakable bliss that can only be expressed through them, as our viscerality. The literal level exists as ambiguity that serves the concrete's need for change, and as unprecedented existence's need for original evidence.

Prosody is the metabolism of visible, invisible bodying. This is what I have meant all along by *vibe*. Our correlational Organ. The recital (without which there is no context) for finding a way home by spatializing (spiritualizing) space.

The suprasensory buckling columns and pancaking floors slapping progressively downward in the collapsing of a skyscraper, collapsing the spine stacked up like gold coins, still spreading panic.

Uncreated words can cut off circulation.

Compassion can have no reference, no object, or it will be quashed by contingencies. Our meditations fail as premeditation. Nothing is not compassion. Without emptiness there's no instant, no sudden tears as the astonishing accordionist in the subway station sends forth her dulcet sound, salvaging the lot of us languishing on the platform. I did die for her, who sustained me for that moment. While on another front, monster autocrats make the decent people fight to not fall to their level, where all will be devoured.

A word can differentiate, divide, democratize or dissolve even the identical. Speaking the unexpressed is creation. (Words are the inexpressible.) How much simpler can it get? Phonemes are *archē*. Once Creator thought the words, already there, for their corresponding objects, they would *need* to be vocalized. This is the same as saying that mind and speech entered into union, each before the other. What then does that make Creator? Who, distilled to Aum, to Am, and to irreducible A, in whom no one can believe.

Doesn't have parts, it's everywhere. I mean, any one of the charms I bought and brought home for my daughter to make her tiaras. Exaltation is always turned on, though only through its details which at some point, after all the delusions and desperations play themselves out, *suffice*. The ethers, oceans and suns are in the revolving cochlea. Eternal though not imperturbably so.

There's little occasion for having these discussions about the nature of everyday speech: whether we "think it ourselves" or think that it's thought *thought* by thought. Of course, there is trance, the autonomic, channeling, universal grammar, musing, mediumship, prophecy, revelation, psychoactive ingestion and other conditions of extraordinary speech. But what I mean is the taking for granted of the basic paranormality of the norm in order to get by. Prosody is gratitude for the immensity of interchange, realized in real time in ways that dumbfound by unfettering.

Say this too many ways, but only once, at once.

Differentiation is a symbol of unity.

Only the unknown is home. Composition of the contingent conducting us to the uncreated—creativity Creation, mother Mother, father Father, who Whole. The cheap tricks of capitalization capitulation save us from damnation.

PROSODY AS ARCHĒ

This writing on the origin of prosody actually had a false start. I initially set out to make the case for prosody as the *evolutionary protolanguage*. My starting point (relatively recently) was Early Homo and the emergence of symbolic culture, long after the "beginning" (much less *before* the beginning). One step later I was in freefall, down the proverbial rabbit hole ... the bottom of which would open the bottomless *apeiron*, initiating the pursuit not of the *archē* of prosody (which would have been far simpler to chart, with its course clearly set from the trillion-Kelvin dot nuclei and post-plasmic background radiation forward) but *prosody* as *archē*.

By way of vibration, formation, periodicity, patterning, embodying and cohering (or "poetics" if you prefer) the natural correlation between prosody and cosmogony can be proffered. Knowledge of prosody's connection to the conditions that brought the cosmos about would require knowledge of the existence of those conditions, with prosody itself playing an integral part in the pursuit of such knowledge. The radical, root, the premise, is that prosody would naturally be constitutive of the conditions that brought it about both as *archē* and as current speech.

Typically we think of prosody as a temporal phenomenon ... or at least as inseparable from time-sensitive formation. Prosody's spatiality, particularly in terms of a pure, inceptive space from which the universe possibly formed, is entirely unexplored. On what grounds to proceed? Is prosody necessarily *experiential*, as distinct from *conjectural*? Yes. If cosmos is an epiphenomenon of consciousness (to take this leap) consciousness would then be vibrational.

COMING APART AT THE SEAMS AS THESE SENTENCES

Can it be said that consciousness has never not been? What's your understanding of this, and where is it coming from (if not from itself)? On what is it predicated? Is it a process of palpating the imperceptible to produce a pulsation readout? Aren't comprehension and creation fully correlated? Is making-things-up convulsively cosmogenic or a mere matter of more messy manifestation and logorrhea? Is imagination a blueprint? To hear, we reverse-engineer. Remember, orality was preceded not only by *revelation* but *reception* of a text written in, and indistinguishable from, so-called eternity. The first poets *untranscribed*.

Listening was *that* pristine. Listening was itself inceptive. It still is. It's difficult to describe what actually happens:

existence without prior existence is transliterated as its text is carried over, exactly, though orally, without a sound, without actually having been spoken or read aloud — perhaps as an impulse or jolt without spacetime (and certainly not syntax) to be unfolded by an organism which the post-primordial text specifically brought about in order that it be spoken.

Now we write, as well, and have a new evolutionary relationship to the all-inclusive, undifferentiated dot of dots that begot the beginning. Writing carves out.

A piece-of-paper infinitely-dense-and-hot sub-infinitesimal dot-breakout.

Speaking out also extrapolates observed conditions all the way back in time. Prosody is the autonomic system coordinating all these loose ends, a mixing console beyond our machinations and imaginations. Poets, as adepts at pitch, pattern, stress, gesture and suggestiveness are those who pick up on and play with all *this*. *Apeiron* is the organ of language, prosody its impulse ... always initial. I can't work out all the incongruities. Again, only partial can be whole (or here life could never be).

COMING HOME TO APEIRON

"The Inexpressible is the Great Note that harmonizes all the notes that make up the expression of nondifferentiation into discrete beings." — Wang Bi

Doxographers right up to today vent their frustration, indignation and even surprise over Anaximander's failure to define *apeiron* beyond its definitive identification with *archê*. Countless books and essays are now being written to fill in the blanks, bring the seed to fruit or plot fresh courses through the conundrum; to comb through, iron out or further frazzle. Anaximander may have felt it would be contradictory to definitively define the indefinite, or that he had indeed been perfectly, necessarily concise ... or that the act of non-definition completely conveyed his meaning. Perhaps he in fact had raised *apeiron* to the heights of the ineffably self-defining and self-subsisting. Perhaps he had extensively propounded *apeiron* ad infinitum in his lost writings and his early commentators, faced with Anaximander's prolificacy, determined that extreme aphoristic abridgement was in order.

Can *apeiron* be written? If I bring you there by means of this perilously practiced *ta'wil*, would that be evidence of direct experience, as distinct from Presocratic or third party hearsay or overheard heresy? Can *apeiron*, as Undifferentiated Name, be contained by its name? Could countless definitions add up and overtake the extent of its indefiniteness (an all-accommodating account of non-existence following every overtone, modulation, undertone, connotation, implication, contradiction and concealment, as nuanced frequencies in its illimitable illegibility, altogether sensed as a harmonics we entirely tune to and address simply by being)? A practice too infinite to continue, topples over. Correlation's non-illusory lustration, to wash and wash and wash to blot. To attempt to exceed the indefinite, like exceeding the infinite by adding more rooms, while the infinite must lose track of itself, to let live. While eternity turned its attention away, we crept out.

INDEFINITE HARMONICS (LEAPFROGGING INFINITIES)

I hear seeing.

Plus and minus an all-inclusivity of what is not. And nonspecifically not even remotely part of or made of. The infinitely definable.

A word for "entirely distinct from." In an intense intimacy with what even infinity over-determines. The use of "is" is demiurgic, perhaps imperialist. We can do without.

The leaves that are left on the trees in winter, dark against sunlit bluest sky. This morning, over a celery root, shitake mushroom, spinach, garlic and jalapeño omelette billowing between two slices of pan-toasted buckwheat bread, I can only imagine the grandeur of the initial abstraction.

Our nature is to be in union with what is not. An oscillation generative of solids, rapid beyond any conceivable sensor. An impasse behind impassivity. A continual, unbegun counting, like a song playing in my head. Each number a starting-line gun, a defibrillation for a new dysrhythmia. Too unique. Jerked around just like you, I'll make it to the end. More or less one perfection after another.

If it is, it's infinitely divisible. If it's indivisible, nothing has been left out. There's nothing I can't make inchoate that already is. Know not that which doesn't make sense to you (nor the way in which it does not) but that which tells you so. Subtract energy, then subtract *subtract*. If you're on top of your game, offer your self-gratification to another. You'd think two cosmoi couldn't be both simultaneous and timeless. Let me rephrase the existent. God is perfect provided we have no idea what we mean by "provided." The phrase "It all depends on how I look at it" bores me to death. Ecology in a world revealed as fully as possible by the existence of as many beings as possible. This degree of sadness is a condition in which we're less revealed with each new day. Who die out. Who doubt. God is unattached. Hard to hear the imperturbable. It's so deafening. How owe who? ow oh wh oo. *Nothing* can, itself, step forward and snap us out of negative fascination.

When obvious, add "unless." Fill in the blank or leave as is (then list exceptions). If it can't be erased it can't be. Delineate a constituent with spatial extent without content. A large, parched vertebrae from the high Chihuahuan Desert set next to a blue sphygmomanometer. Tongue twister over rough terrain. Peyote locates us, after a detailed public recitation of my involuted sexual history. Touching only where it hurts (when it's that which touches that is hurt). Saving all kinds of boxes for who knows what.

There are things the omnipotent just won't do. It won't include the oblivion of whatever it would refuse. My thirteen-year old sister had her right arm amputated to no beneficial end. Today she'd be saved. This is which atrocity's yesterday? Questioning is incapable. The indefinite will make you whole and place you in a frame. In order to not deserve a gift received, in order to emphasize its good.

True, metaphorically speaking, or not. It's the principle of disharmony that disproves, ironically, the autonomy of individuals. We need a local name for the cosmos in which this condition is apparently the case. A good greater than maximal happiness for all. Evident because unprovable, the way the word for its sounds is what it means, purely because agreed upon. Another one of those. All the ones of those. All those.

I've had to look up its definition every time I've used the word "space."

Gracious regardless, gratuitously good. Do all the good you can to *not* deserve the gift finally given. It only seems contradictory. The evidence for which is so hard to come by that it's necessary to crisscross — not merely cross — the untraversable.

I know what I would do, not whatever happens.

I take that back. Paint each stair tread a different fluorescent color. To be more perfect, decide to not know. I made mistakes when I was feeling munificent and more apt to be mistaken. Awaiting any windfall to come and squeeze my clown nose—a circus component infinitely divisible into the various days of countless cosmoi pulsing in and out of existence in an inflatable pool.

It's not necessarily redundant to say "infinitely indefinite." The difference to note between finitely and infinitely indefinite is not only the noting, but the in between as well. The series of numbers, for example, is actually infinite, while each number in the series is ordinal; totally tranquilizing Avicenna.

Avoid every preconception, before during and after, to never arrive at definitive definition of the awkwardly worded originative content. It would take a billion rocket scientists countless *kalpas* to see that just *anyone* would know that an element can't rise of its own accord or create its contrary *and* remain simple. No preference formed. No preference formed the phenomenal. One day, a pot to piss in.

In my hand is something other than what I grabbed from the bag, while leaving only more of it in the bag than before. Realism is in the particulars, without a boundless stockpile elsewhere. Our creativity can't be a mere instance. How many infinities fail to meet the criteria for their disproof? How many will come to exist simply because they are not demonstrably impossible? Demonstrate that you can't imagine this or that — determined by the ability or inability of the estimative organ that can't even picture itself. If it reaches the limit beyond which there is no limit, sit back, enjoy the ride. I have a set of construction plans for "qualitatively infinite." Fits on a napkin, a matchbook. A mastodon.

Is it beyond comprehension or simply of no concern?

More infinite. Paint this on the ceiling of an atom. Meaning waits for us to add to meaning to it. The genie was not out of the lamp until there was a lamp. Apodictic presupposition, meaning *meaning* doesn't know what it means. This is my experience. Countless *concoctures*. Without *the*. More than all is made of. Otherwise the whole would grind to a halt. Was the word '*apeiron*' even in use in Miletus?

Mutile. Cosmoitic. Cosmitotic. Cosmeiosis. Excessive cosmauxesis. Parallel and materially unrelated though born of one what. What would without limit with and without? One place and time in the place and time of another place and time. Now that I think of it. It can't come from what it is. What else could limitless

mean? We even feel that love and mind are anthropic, who gave birth to the inanimate (as only we could) that it might be. Everything is speaking, with the exception of *everything*.

Peanuts from Chinatown left on the window ledge for brownstone blue jays. Changeless constitutes everything that changes. The interdependence of the literal and the metaphoric outlines an originary ornament, dependent upon progression. At some point there must be basic reconfigurable parts that can't break down any further. A cycle can't start from scratch each instant and still be a duration in which the blue jays return to the window. Why this happens in place of nothing is due to the irrepressibility of beauty.

The fat melting away from flesh. Greased crematoriums. Mud mother. Must not-evident always be more real? I keep coming back. Because it's unclear doesn't mean it's indefinite. Keep heaping attributes upon. Filling the time. Frills the kill, without which we couldn't suffer our losses. The point from which a thing is first observable. Not a moment sooner exists.

I, for one, can't be predicated on things that would then not be. Not even an existence that didn't come to exist. Though I can wrap my head around that, and though I am at home in all we'll ever symbolize of the nonexistent, I can simply incinerate at any synapse.

What can be pinned down is fictitious. I don't reread I re-corpse until I breathe again for the first time. Dollhouse elevator, cookie cutter decor, Easter basket hung from the ceiling, rainbow sequin curtain, colorful beaded jaguar head, mortar mix of only lime and sand, pear and millet porridge, framed Antonie van Leeuwenhoek engravings, woodworking clamps, rolling pin, thinly-sliced birch branch bulb ornament from Finland, empty plastic Radio City Rockettes popcorn souvenir, what seeps through tissue in the one room in which this is being written. Indefinite will be my last lover as it has been all my loves all along flaring up, filling the cut-out reality that claims my pressure is the imperishable breaking the spell of specifics, bursting the final colossal superposition.

How many worlds would it take for each one of them to be comprised of all the others? How far could "far" ever go? I did the time, only to be freed to knock my crown foramina against the underside above. Now I have no lid.

Because we can pose only trick questions, our sense of hearing must be breathtaking. Infinity is no more than that which is enough. Conceptually, in relation to what's at stake, it's a mercy, something to sleep on. As a backup, I've built a universe outside itself for polymathic invisibility-skeptics; replete with septic systems plugged with godawful *apeirons* causing supposition sepsis ... "turning tissue to shit" (as my mother's doctor so delicately said of her undiagnosable and ultimately iatrogenically fatal sickness). Rot is alive. Anything that begins is but love that overcomes us. Invert abiogenesis in one breath.

Once the *apeiron* is identified as the organ of language (masked as the inferior frontal gyrus) it speaks for itself, noting only language itself is vast enough to be idiomatic. Not only Mitochondrial Eve or Mater Matter, and not even a shared subjective identification with the whole cosmos as ancestral ecology ... rather, the *apeiron*, our one womb that we never leave, is earthling indivisibility—felt as something rather than nothing, in the sense that "things" could have — and do — go either way, in the immeasurable power of suggestion.

What's left to forget? Don't even want how greatly you'll benefit, in order to benefit even ever more. A paradox is when it never worked itself out. Words don't survive their meanings. That we even have

thoughts! God is what we don't know. This total intimacy is not a name that can be named, but a name that names—inconceivably subtle enough to cause at first.

The word exists before it's spoken. Do we then say that it doesn't exist? The word exists without being spoken. After having not existed at all.

Granting precious little to speech, so intent on what we're trying to say, as if speaking for ourselves. While the words we use to describe the world consistently constitute it. And when words that constitute language are used to describe language, we must be mindful of colossal energy loss.

NEITHER CORRELATED OR CO-EXISTENT NOR EQUIVALENT BUT SELFSAME

“Concerning the unseen, the gods have clarity, but it is for men to conjecture from signs.” — Alcmaeon (DK24B1; tpc)

Anaximander's astrophysics boils down to *apeiron is archê*. Can the formula reduce any further? How could anything other than origin itself be the origin? For that matter, following this abductive heuristic to its finish, I would ask: how could origin even be original?

First, there is the antonymic tension, with the primary divide: *existence/nonexistence*. Really, what's the difference? Certainly not the death of any one of us who will have existed, as though the two contraries could ever be un-intertwined. Moving ahead a millionth of a fraction of a second in newly created time, according to most cosmogenic accounts, it was *opposed elements* that seeded creation — whether the good and evil of dualist cosmologies, water and fire of elemental creation myths, hypostasized rival gods such as Set and Osiris, or the more amoral, nature-based, complementary contrariety of *yin* and *yang* adjoined as sunny and shady sides of a mountain.

Integrative, implicate writing, to a great extent, develops by means of correspondences (*bandhu*, in Sanskrit, "kinship" "respect") although only in order to exhaust correlational perception and open to the freer (potentially infinite) prompts and patternings of the syncretic mind. Interfacing antitheticals is also integral to this integrative approach. Still, there is a more basic "nature" beyond correspondence and the complimentary interdependence of opposites that underlie my process. Correspondences can collapse into one identity, or scatter aimlessly. Contraries can be one and the same. I would be unable to identify myself or identify with my practice if, for example, my person, poetry, prayer, and part played in harmonizing existence were not identical. There is a word for this. The Gaudīya-Vaishnava *acintya bheda abheda* (inconceivable difference nondifference).

Even within the compound word “undifferentiated” a contradiction abounds between the interdependent needs of affix and stem. Inversely, "un" (annulling) can be used to differentiate all kinds of non-existences. These aren't word games, but *language* as divisiveness and indivisibility carrying out incongruity and interconnectedness as having always been the same.

Are *apeiron* and *archê* identically differentiated or perhaps differently indistinguishable? Is there a nondual word not bound by spacetime? If I state that *apeiron* and *archê* are equivalent (as they certainly cannot be

poised as contraries) I still uphold the pair as *binary*. What's between them, binding them, blowing "apart" apart? To say "homologous" suggests developmental separation. "Interchangeable" still plays on the weight of phenomenal distinction: one in place of another. "Synonymous" is seductive but still sorts into separate words and respective sounds. "Coevality" is of course a duet. Maybe something more like quantum's particle/wave same-phenomenon ... yet that construct dichotomizes the viewing and deals with effect, not cause. Even in multi-phonetic *Aum* one's mind diffuses into the pre-eminence of Atman, while the Vedantic term *advaita* (nondual) requires a positive to negate along with an illusory world to deal with as it falls in line with other nondualist traditions that situate the battle not between poles but against polarity per se, in contradiction to the fullness of differentiation, unable to be anything other than all its contrary is not.

In my spacetime freefall, the only term that prevails is "selfsame." At least for now, "selfsame" clears the mind—*apeiron* and *archê* as *selfsame*. With what criteria could we tell if this term "works"? It would liberate itself, and in doing so free the mind and end suffering as *archê* to *apeiron* drop their meanings.

Call in another correlate? Put it to the test. In Mahayana Buddhism, emptiness (*sunyata*) and compassion are selfsame. This is the *Great Seal*, the guarantee. The experience of absolute boundlessness breaks down the boundaries between us. Believe me. Or perhaps, inversely, the experience of relative compassion opens the mind's natural vastness. If not the selfsame experience of origin, what would be bliss? (Aristotle did speak of happiness as a lifelong practice with conduct and quality of mind as selfsame: "For as it is not one swallow or one fine day that makes a spring, so it is not one day or a short time that makes a person blessed and happy." (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098a18.) Are *Apeiron* and *sunyata* made *selfsame* by my mere suggestion? Does what-is-not consist of—or is it itself—what is called *bliss*? Mind is an altered state of mind, most of all in its pure absence of contingency and sickness. (Mental illness is what any one of us makes of a mind.) Is this the Great Plan: creating conflicts through which those in conflict decondition themselves and become *selfsame* as bliss? But selfsame itself is not the selfsame as anything else, and so it is nondepletable. "As" is a two-letter word that makes the world go round. Its unremarkable strangeness is the final barrier.

Nothing can come between. Nothing is between. Between is nothing. Between nothing. Wearing out words is not particularly ecological, or ethical. On whose time?

If there is no elephant in the room can it be said that the room contains *elephantlessness*, even though no one is wondering whether there is or is not an elephant in the room? Although the substance of heaven and hell can't be found (other than the earth itself) their allure nonetheless pushes people around. Both heaven and the absence of elephant are *ascribed* ... just like the room. Agreed upon terms are the most egregious of human hungers, guaranteeing we get what we want once we cannot.

Name something you're not thinking of. When the room is empty and we're emptied of the room, why would there be light, and how would pure light not be loss of life? Who'd want light alone? Who'd ever want light alone cannot be other than light. Who wanted light alone can no longer want. What we'd name (from our embodied beings as heavenly bodies) *nectar*. Nectar radiating from a heart whose body is now everything.

Experience without an experience. Just take a number at the Human Resources Administration Benefits Center in Brooklyn and sit.

I write to be converted. No, *saved*. What, exactly, would be saved, if not *when*? I write to no longer be stirred. To be done and unbegun while among us.

THE SCALE OF THE ECOLOGY OF SPEECH

In a world rife with violence, poverty, bigotry, greed and warring sides both divinely justified, how can we keep clarity from causing further confusion? Contraries *are* a contrivance, not objective observations of nature. (The Paleo-Siberian Lygoravetlat people see their cosmogenic spirits as cooperative.) Perhaps al-Ghazālī's threshold (from which *nothing-could-possibly-be-more-wonderful-than-what-is*) is too resigned. Perhaps the scientific method and unknowns are already and always blissfully *selfsame* in an interminable game. Perhaps immemorial dread of death and dread of nothingness are *selfsame* and we'll always be half-homeless and caught unaware.

I'll bring this reflection on *apeiron* to a close by performing a final *ta'wil* on word-use itself—an experiential etymology, if you will—tracing moral dualist cosmogony to its source in ancient Persian Zoroastrianism and ultimately to the nuanced multidimensionality of the key Avestan word *aša* (truth), in order to get at the root of word-use and our rootedness in speech.

Rabindranath Tagore (in a forward to *The Divine Songs of Zarathushtra* tr. D.J Irani) stated that Zoroaster was the first person to give religion “a definitely moral character and direction.” (The implication is that Zoroaster radically reformed the existing tribalistic, bloodstained culture of worship.) In Tagore's view, Zoroaster defined his faith by contrasting tradition and *truth* “which comes like an inspiration out of context with its surroundings.” But Zoroaster's prophetic innovation exceeded even the ethical dimension. Imagine a prehistoric time in which “truth” as a concept, as *conscience*, did not yet exist. To meaningfully read the *Gathas* (the oldest and innermost core of the *Avesta*)—to read for *theophany*—it would be essential to perform a sort of reverse mantic engineering of the terms found in the divergent translations, in order to be reconstituted on the Old Avestan Persian Plateau and glimpse the perilous meanings that were originally revealed to Zoroaster. The message of the *Gathas* alone would not have been enough to ensure their survival. Their intricate, concatenating, agrammatical and incantatory prosody would also have had to engage in battle and enthrall the enemies of the new, truth-based theology. In our current, relativistic world, after murdering each other for millennia over absolutes, it's easily imaginable that truth cannot exist (that truth isn't true, that “perception” of truth reigns supreme). Or that realization of the absence of truth is itself enlightenment. But for now, don't the heuristic of spiritual truth having never arisen—no such truth to even negate—considering as well the possibility that we've become so disillusioned and distanced from truth that we've lost track of any possible working definition.

The standard, narrow meaning of *aša* is, indeed, “truth” (Plutarch translated *aša* as *alētheia*). What is it that makes truth *true*. How is it made true and for whom? Another meaning of *aša* is “existence.” Yet another meaning is “creation” as primordially ordered, including *moral* order, implying further a “right working” and “properly joined together world.” The overarching signification of *aša* is “true-statement.” What is it that makes truth *true*, specifically in the active sense of truth being stated (as though it is statement that makes truth true) manifested by speech as existence itself? To ask what makes a true statement true, a statement so totally attuned as to reciprocally make the cosmos ring true, is to ask, at once: what did Zoroaster *see*?

Both *aṣa* and its Vedic cognate *ṛtá* derive from Proto-Indo-Iranian *h₂t₂s* which stems from *h₂t₂s* “to fit.” The Old Avestan language of the *Gathas* and the Sanskrit of the *Rigveda* are sister dialects, distinguished more patently by certain phonetic shifts than grammar. *Aṣa/ṛtá* is the primary ethical concept in both the *Gathas* and *Rigveda*. The entire edifice of Western morality is founded on *aṣa/ṛtá*. It is the name for the observation of — and reverence for — the workings of the natural order, the awe of it all holding together. It’s the omnipotent wisdom manifest as the patterning and periodicity of the manifest world. *Aṣa/ṛtá* is *nature* inclusive of the cosmos; a nature in which any separation of human behavior would be inconceivable. *Aṣa/ṛtá* is that according to which all things happen. God, cosmogony, consciousness, ecology, ethical conduct and the ceremonies for maintaining the intactness of the whole are interactively constitutive of *aṣa/ṛtá* as true-statement. The *Gathas* often condense this ethical ecology (or behavioral cosmology) into the concise formula: *humata hūxta huvaršta* “well thought, well said, well done.” It’s also possible that Heraclitan *logos* (“that which everything happens according to” and “truth is that which is confirmed by all facts universally”) was influenced by *aṣa/ṛtá*, as Heraclitus’ native city (Ephesus) was, at the time, part of the Persian Achaemenid Empire. (The element of “fire” was *archê* for both Heraclitus and Zoroaster, as well.)

With *aṣa/ṛtá* as its proper medium, it is prosody that makes true this true statement by composing with every expressive component that constitutes *aṣa/ṛtá* according to its nature. Prosody is the embodiment of Logos, the Logos that would otherwise be relegated to the abstract and inertly absolute. In terms of poetry (as the key element of the rituals (*haurvatat*) that harmoniously hold everything together) truth is predicated on an effective joining of words within language’s own nature, capable of causing such truth. And given that the *Gathas* are metered, liturgical songs revealed in a purely oral tradition, the phonic aspect of the verses would have been as revelatory of meaning as the lexical features. *Newly prophetic, newly prosodic*. The *Gathas* are anything but “doctrine cast into poetic form.” (See, for example, the essays of Martin Schwartz: *Sound, Sense, and Seeing in Zoroaster: The Outer Reaches of Orality*, Cama Oriental Institute Congress Volume, 1991; *Coded Sound Patterns, Acrostics, and Anagrams in Zoroaster's Oral Poetry*, Schmitt and Skjaervoe, Studia Grammatica Iranica, Festschrift für Helmut Humbach, 1986; *Dimensions of the Gāthās as Poetry* http://www.hridayamyoga.com/martinschwartz/pdf/SchwartzGathasFINAL_AT_MS.pdf.)

Truth is physics (if only we *knew*).

Truth is its (truth’s) origin, without it (truth). Perfectly enough.

The *Gathas* function on what is now a largely lost scale of ecology. Perhaps it’s our inability to recognize the ways in which our typically earth-centric and egoist actions might maintain the integrity of the whole (by performing the sacrifices of truth as existence) that enables us to be so destructive locally (i.e., globally.) (Only two months ago, a few days before Christmas 2019, the president of the U.S. signed into law the creation of a new military branch called *Space Force*, declaring space a “warfighting domain”—a Donald Rumsfeld dream-come-true, and de facto obliteration of the *archê* of space as pristine primordiality and our deepest sense of home.)

THUS FAR THUS

There is a tension between the ideal and the real. Proffering the ideal is ethical only if presented with a realistic (truthful) practice. Otherwise, we're caught in the fantasy of cutting all tension (via *samadhi*, nihilism, private wealth, cynicism, entertainment, violence, wishful thinking, addictions, withdrawal and so on) without necessarily acting on ethical outcomes.

It's the very constitution of the *Gathas* that makes them a particularly lucid, ethical practice. The *Gathas* embed the terms of truth in experience. They demystify ponderous terms such as "good" and "evil" and offer a framework for questioning and addressing Creator/Creation. But above all, the *Gathas* are non-prescriptive; they serve to heighten awareness in a field of implications and consequences for committing one's free will to outcomes that bring harmony and happiness ... or, on the other hand, more discord. Again, Tagore: "Zarathushtra was the greatest of all the pioneer prophets who showed the path of freedom to men, the freedom of moral choice, the freedom from blind obedience to unmeaning injunctions." Creativity is the act of choosing *creation*. Behaviors that cause unhappiness go against the grain of existence. It was left to each person to decide for oneself what truth implies in any given context. Doing the right thing is not doctrinal but individually decisive, revealed through attuning to *aša/ṛtá*. The integrity of the whole can only be maintained by our freedom of discernment.

Zoroastrian cosmogony is a ditheism interfacing the moral opposites of benevolence and malevolence. We inherit this adversarial tension by coming into existence. Things could have gone either way; things could have gone *any* way—yet the initial conditions didn't produce disorder or some other order, it generated exactly this form of creation, and our freedom to choose creation over incoherence. In the *Gathas*, "good" and "bad" bear on human attributes, and are scarcely (if at all) hypostasized as deities, demons, personifications or abstractions. The real drama of existence takes place in the arena of the mind, and the *Gathas* implore *vohu manah* "good purpose, good conscience" over *aka manah* "bad intent" and *acištəm manah* "the worst thinking." Truth-telling is situated in a whole ethical, enactive and deeply harmonizing ecology. To act in ways that are not in keeping with of *aša/ṛtá ecology* is to deny life at its source.

The Gathic list of negative mental and behavioral consequences includes: anger, deception, looting, aggression, insolence, affliction and duplicitous speech. Rudolph Steiner associated the Gathic *angra mainyu* "maligning mind" with materialism, objectivity and hardheartedness. In defense of life itself, Zoroaster directly identified, addressed and "did battle with" the phenomena of the mind. Here are a few Gathic excerpts adapted from Yasna 32, 3-11:

But you O products of the Worst Intentions and Self-Interest, and of deceit and of arrogance...

...you defrauded the people of happy lives and the chance for ever-living bliss, as the Worst Thought used negative mind and harmful speech to envenom the spirit and ruin humankind...

...Who dwell in the Worst Mind destroy understanding, destroy the design of life and prevent the realization of Good Conscience from being valued. It is with these words that I cry out to you, Uncreated Wisdom, and to existence as Your Truth expressed...

...Who feed enmity abhor the Ox and shun the Sun, refusing to honor the Living World, turning the pious into impostors, laying waste to the fields and raising weapons against the innocent. It is the Liars, exalted as leaders and elites, who extinguish life, depriving others of their inheritance of amity and benevolence and dissuade them from their Best Intentions, O Lord.

Resonating back to ancient Iranian religious poetry doesn't serve to rarefy, but amplify the performance of *aṣṣā/ṛtá*. True-statements consonant with an expansive, ethical, ecological coherence are in fact commonplace; evident in the everyday decency of countless people, like my own parents, in the detonative denotation of Will Alexander's poetry and in the "inter-being" and simplified belly breathing of Thich Nhất Hạnh.

This consonance was also evident in an Indian Kuchipudi dance performance I recently attended. In this classical form, the dancer merges her presence with her adornments—makeup, jewelry, costume, sacred Ghungaros bells—and acknowledges that the movement of her human body represents the movement of the entire universe. She then conducts a *puja*, a "sacrifice" or *yajna* akin to Avestan *yasna* (the same name given to the Zoroastrian hymns). The Kuchipudi *puja* is an act of adoration of the particular deity the dancer will dramatize and merge into. This *puja* is also an act of worshipping the stage itself as the One Source of Creation. Immediately before the dance begins the dancer performs a *namaskaram* by touching her eyes and then bowing to touch the ground. The entire performance is consecrated by this initial gesture of the dancer touching her eyes as part of the *namaskaram*—the bowing to the supreme within that which one is doing. (I was later told that the dancer can't begin the dance without forming this gesture. Through the *namaskaram* the dancer asks Mother Earth to forgive her for the tapping on the ground on which she'll dance, avowing that Mother Earth is as precious to her as her eyes. As I was transfixed by her gesture, by its degree of graciousness in honoring the Earth and Cosmos through a formal practice, *everything* fell into place. I saw that actions congruous with the preciousness of the gift of life we've been given are possible, are actual. I even enjoined the *namaskaram* to somehow "cover" for me, as I make my living as a builder— gouging the Earth, cutting channels into her, tearing out her rooted beings, displacing her insect and microbial communities, converting her body into materials—bearing responsibility for incalculable and unceremonious destruction.