

total poethical source friction

A poem that hardly delivers.

An apparition, in a poem, doesn't carry the shock or the magic of feeling the feeling of seeing or feeling one in "real life," which is, in this case, that part of one's life which is spent outside of a poem.

This is why I am troubled here and now. For, how can I represent what I saw then without finding myself immensely disappointed in what I am left with now (this poem)? A ghost is rarely ever anything but more shorthand for a ghost. Of course, most language (with the exception of onomatopoeia) is only shorthand for something *real* (e.g. the word *ghost* alludes to the presence of a ghost: its image, its threat, and its being). Additionally, the image of a ghost rarely denotes more than the mere illusion of a ghost (rather than the actual presence of a ghost) because most have never seen one beyond a poetic surface. Thus, our majority only know representations of specters: shorthand. This is, maybe, why I was most bewildered by my experience. Ghosts don't really look like any of the shorthand we have for them. I couldn't begin to describe the actuality of a ghost. I won't.

Definitions of the word *apparition* tend to include not just ghosts, but also things that are *ghostlike* and *ghostly*. A pale old man in a long white coat may qualitatively be an apparition given enough fog and a proper moan. Even if something is generally *supernatural*, it can be considered an apparition through a more denotative understanding. A discourse could now be developed that finds that the vocabulary surrounding ghosts is entirely fictional: based upon myth and in reference only to itself. Again, the word *ghostly* refers to things that resemble ghosts, and ghosts are those things that are denoted by the verbal and visual symbols that we have internalized as shorthand for ghosts. Furthermore, it could be said that the entirety of what we call *supernatural* is only in reference to itself. The word *supernatural* only includes things which occur beyond the natural world, things which may only occur in stories and in poems. Things which, surely, do not exist.

You will not find me following this discourse. I saw a ghost. I insist.

expanding play place

Cough drops, in a certain context, are useful
for denoting the elderly.

When I remove one from my breast pocket, however,
it tells one that I am in the midst of fighting a sore throat.

I unwrap it and place it on my tongue.

Let it dissolve for the next several minutes.
Two flight attendants move a cart down the shaft
(one pushes, the other pulls);

a man across the aisle unwraps a cough drop

and puts it to use.

He is bald and spectacled.
We decorate our heroes with badges and hats.
A young person is fighting in jeans and a t-shirt

and the medium will call them one thing because of it.

I won't call them anything other than a young person.

I think of Yoko Ono
as she appears in Kenneth Goldsmith's *Seven American Deaths and Disasters* (2013):

not screaming, nor panicked,

just with John in his death

as spoken over the airwaves.

'Got yer nose!'

doesn't work for white parents who have adopted a black child.

Some things just aren't

Another sestina about growth
for Stein & many victims

There is no there there;
it's all soil, which is used to grow
vegetables. They are called vegetables
because they are not the seed or the fruit
of the plant. It's a bothersome
distinction. It's all fabricated to suit

the needs of the market. Sweet
peas and carrots are made similar there,
and we allow the grouping without vexation—
without asking how such a vibrant ghetto might flourish
in the midst of the supermarket, next to the fruit:
no plastic, no artifice, just vegetables.

An etymologist notes that the term “vegetable”
did not exclusively denote “plants which are deemed suitable
for cultivation as food” until three centuries of the word’s fruition
had gone way (1767). Of course, just at this time, there
is the blossoming of a new activity with a great interest in growth:
industry. My inference is obvious, and I shouldn’t bother

to elaborate. There are things with which we are better off not concerning
ourselves. We know that a vegetable is a vegetable is a vegetable
is a vegetable. There is a process called progress—
often conceived of as consumption and growth—, which suits
most. We don’t often have the leisure or distance to note all of its venues
and all of its byproducts, which is why I won’t write about the fruit

or the seed, but the vegetable. We have noticed the fruit;
it is picked and consumed without ever having touched the ground. The seed cares
for itself, as enabled by other technologies (their furs, their tracts, their
water, and their wind) and reproduces the fruit. But it is the byproduct,
the vegetable, that has always faced the question, “what can this do for me?” upon sight;
such is not a question faced by the exemplary, nor by that which has grown

familiar. It is instead, directed at any member viewed as foreign, surplus, and dull. It grows
out of the spirit that is determined to allow no thing to be extemporaneous. It makes fruit
of it. It estranges the thing from itself as to encamp it with the other. It only uses resources economically;
however, it uses each resource until it is dry. It devours all of its surroundings. Its only concern
being its own development in an unshakeable drive towards some finality. It eats vegetables
just as it takes in fuel and work. It cannibalizes upon itself. It has no *there*.

*It emboldens itself and it shows no concern.
It swallows its spoils and it gathers what is left.
It wears a costume; there is no there there.*