

Autopoiesis Season

We need a poet in the laboratory. We need a critic in the studio.
In twenty generations, the field pansies The population of bumblebees low-
have evolved to fertilize their own seeds ered almost 90 percent this century, so
at unprecedented speed. In their ingenuity, flowers are doing it for themselves with no
the scientists decided to call this free- pollinators to enter their folds of sugary home,
dom from the critic / narcissism / autopoie- and these new pansies, selfed pansies, grow
sis / lesbian separatism “selfing.” (If we really smaller than their pollinated parents, know
must weather this dull apocalypse, we little about how to produce nectar, and lo,
deserve some assonance at least.) bees don’t want them, so they go it alone.
We need a poet in the laboratory. We need a critic in the studio.

(But when awakened FT proteins shot through the pansies’
leaves, and the miracle of cell to sex to growth
corresponded with the meter of the day, bumblebees
would swarm toward beauty and clumsily unclothe
the oasis at the stamen’s base, ravage nectaries
and drag neighborhood pollen toward ovules, slow
and heavy with sleep. Hungry, generous emissaries
lunging wherever the ultraviolet glowed.
How beautiful, this organization of cells and sentiments;
Has anyone or anything been so beautiful since?)¹

¹ There are no jobs for writers anymore, no money for poets or critics. No one holds us accountable to sound, to color, to the ultraviolet words that the world might uncover in our prose and alight upon. The surfaces of our poems grow 20% smaller than those of our parents. If the poetry is selfed, then no one will love it, and if nobody loves poetry, then no one will write it, and then no one will read poetry, and no one will love it, and then, and then—

Job 38:24

1 I know the places where the light is distributed,
but I do not know the way. I know about breathless silver
mornings when the clouds acquire gravity by some quirk
of quantum mechanics and tufts of cumuli heave
themselves toward Earth. I know about waking in a room glowing
yellow and wondering if I am suspended in honeycomb only to
slip back into sleep before I have tasted the air to check.
What is the way into these lambent somewheres?
God created us in His image so that we would have the same
questions as Him. We built our Bible from cobalt and lightspeed.

2 What is the way to the place where the
light is distributed? Context collapse:
this glorious feeling of seeing a line from Harry Potter
misattributed to Nelson Mandela and superimposed
over an MS Paint drawing of a cat's sphincter screen-
shotted from a comic written by a teenage agoraphobe using
the pen name Lobotomy Mummy. Context collapse!
We are all supposed to be terrified. We are all supposed
to be reverent. We quake in the face of the absolute signifier.

3 God died, the father died, the brother died, but
the internet is whispering to me that it will live
forever. Absolute signifier awakened by particles of stolen sand.
This alternative hermeneutics that the robot taught me,
this delicious notion that a cavity in the shape of my
spirit slumbers within every scrap of scripture, and my job as a reader
is only to fit the soft animal of my body into the form that
God or Sigmund Freud carved out for me and sleep.

4 No content, only reference. The multiverse is the extended
metaphor of the internet. My experience of the Wong
Kar-wai homage at the center of the film is entirely
constituted by my recollection of the psychological
stars that got constellated into emotion when I
saw *In the Mood for Love*, or when I saw the screenshots of
Maggie Cheung's qipaos in the Bible.

5 No children, only art. My legion of infertile lady monsters is
ingenious when we read against the grain of God's word, but we do
not need creativity to build long memories and broad palates, to
devour particles from every galaxy then applaud ourselves for recognizing
the crumbs of our supper scattered across the pixellated everything.
We find no symmetry with the absolute signifier in our new hermeneutics.

6 There may have been a moment of girlhood, once,
and of boyhood, too, when I climbed a tree and
no one was watching, and I did not think to imagine somebody
watching me and starting to type *if a boy climbs a tree and
no one is watching, does he even post a joke about how if a*

7 I have stolen the metaphors that were in
the tweet drafts and which you were probably saving
for discourse. forgive me, they were delicious—
so mother and so our father who art

8 i have been looking for something to do with
the nothing at the end of the day. perhaps prayer is just
communion with the system of divinity awake inside the white space

9 the east wind carries particles of
everything into my ecosystem

10 i am an expert in expertise