Pedagogy of the Imagination: philo-poesis, non-verifiable truths, and other existential celebrations

by

Daniela Bouneva Elza


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Name: Daniela Bouneva Elza
Degree: Doctor of Philosophy
Title of Thesis: Pedagogy of the Imagination: philo-poesis, non-verifiable truths, and other existential celebrations
Examine Committee:
Chair: Robin Brayne, Adjunct Professor
Heesoon Bai, Associate Professor
Senior Supervisor
Lynn Fels, Assistant Professor
Committee Member
Carlo Leggo, Professor, UBC
Committee Member
Celeste Snowber, Associate Professor
Internal/External Examiner
Susma Walsh, Associate Professor
Mount Saint Vincent University
External Examiner
Date Defended/Approved: 21 April 2011
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ABSTRACT

The central theme of this thesis is *philo-poesis*. The work engages the hearts of educators, speaks to a way of being in the world that calls us to attention, to an embodied awareness of the poetry that is our lives. *Philo-poesis* is a practice: an experiment in the alchemy of the imagining/thinking/embodied being. *Philo-poesis* requires active perception: a way of thinking and dreaming *with* the world, while at the same time cultivating the awareness of potentialities in the moment. *Philo-poesis* is a way of loving better—a love making between *world* and *word*. Thus a pedagogy of the imagination is born.

This thesis is, first and foremost, an invitation to the reader to walk with the writer in the open field of *philo-poesis*. In the writing of this thesis I play, explore, evoke, provoke, invoke, enact, and live poetically in the midst of philosophy and philosophically in the midst of poetry. The poems in this thesis become the testimony for this play and presence.

*Philo-poesis* requires the reader’s participation: a way of walking back to a mind that is true to itself, a knowing that is purer and freer of possession and control, a way to restoration. The work is written and presented in a manner that includes the reader to participate with the writer in a kaleidoscopic world of poetry making where no pattern ever repeats the same way twice. Each turn of the kaleidoscope highlights some aspect and element of *philo-poesis*, and provokes the reader’s greater awareness and curiosity. These turns scatter in the open field of awe and wonder, exploring, and bursting into new beginnings and delight.

Ultimately, *philo-poesis* is a state of mind, a more courteous way of being, a vehicle for transforming consciousness, a way of loosening our grip on the world to invite a more intimate connection with it. This connection and intimacy in turn create space for insight and revelation.

**Keywords:** pedagogy of the imagination; philo-poesis; reverie; writing; being; phenomenology; word; world; language; creativity; poetry;
DEDICATION

To my family, teachers, mentors and friends.
For you, who found time to walk by my side.
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My gratitude goes out to all who have accompanied me on my journey. I need my passions and inclinations, as well as the communities and conversations I emerge from and merge with. When I write, I like to emphasize this by inviting the voices on the page, thus demonstrating that the creative process is not as solitary as it is usually presented.

It will be impossible to mention here all of these voices, just some crucial ones. I am grateful to my excellent committee for their presence and guidance. My sincerest gratitude goes to my senior supervisor Dr. Heesoon Bai who not only recognized and supported my work initially, but also pulled me back into the academy and continues to encourage my propensity to break out into verse where philosophical issues are concerned. Dr. Carl Leggo has been a support and a beacon in the poetic inquiry pursuit. Dr. Lynn Fels joined to further this pursuit. I am grateful for her engagement with my work, her discerning eye and her sensitivity to language.

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I am deeply grateful to my parents for the safe spaces they created for me to grow up in. I thank my friends who have been by my side and believed in what I do even when I was not sure I believed: Nevena Tadić, Christi Kramer, Robin Susanto, Christina Shah, Rob Taylor, Bonnie Nish, to mention only a few. I thank my children for being the creative forces that they are, and for sparking a lot of my ideas around learning. And last, but not least, my partner and husband, Dethe, whom I met through a poem, was my first fan, and a support ever since. I suspect it might be because of his trust in me that I kept at it for so long and trusted enough to bring my work to fruition.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

:(pre)face: ....................................................................................................................1  
:introduction: ...........................................................................................................3  
~turn 1~ :reverie: :an apprenticeship in freedom: .........................................................13  
~turn 2~ pedagogy of the imagination :a testimony for what cannot be (ascertained: .................................................................16  
~turn 3~ :beginnings: ..................................................................................................22  
~turn 4~ :language: ......................................................................................................24  
~turn 5~ :seeing: ..........................................................................................................27  
~turn 6~ :text: ..............................................................................................................46  
~turn 7~ :to carry across: .............................................................................................48  
~turn 8~ :memory: :versions/sub.versions: ..................................................................55  
~turn 9~ :the singularity of our attention: .................................................................66  
~turn 10~ :turning toward an.ther: .............................................................................70  
~turn 11~ :imagination: ...............................................................................................79  
~turn 12~ :turning toward: collab.oration: .................................................................83  
~turn 13~ :writing: sophistication and innocence: ......................................................89  
~turn 14~ :wandering into resonances and coherences: ..........................................99  
~turn 15~ :intrinsic schedules: ..................................................................................107  
~turn 16~ :between inspiration and institution: .........................................................116  
~turn 17~ :passing on the passion: .............................................................................126  
~turn 18~ :listening: :the shape of questions: .............................................................128  
~turn 19~ :poetry and knowing: ................................................................................146  
~turn 20~ :form::concrete and light: .........................................................................150  
~turn 21~ :enchantment::awakening spiritual presences in material things:.............164  
~turn 22~ :di(versify: ................................................................................................169
Nothing can really prepare us for what is about to be experienced. In the case of creativity and imagination nothing really should. So what is an introduction to do? I prefer to think of *induction* in the sense that you will make your own path through the writing presented to you as a reader. *Induction* in the sense that suggests *the process of action of bringing about or giving rise to something*: of me and you and the spaces between, the distance that we choose to traverse, the spaces we choose to create, the participation and potentialities we choose to be.

In an attempt to tease out some of the vehicles/aspects/elements of *philo-poesis*, as I have conceived it so far, I offer my work to you as turns of a kaleidoscope. Each turn brings an aspect that I feel is part of *philo-poesis*, which in turn propels me into the potentialities of a *pedagogy of the imagination*. I do not intend the sections here to be linear. The limitation is imposed by the form of the book. I do not wish to prevent you, dear reader, from going places I may not, and possibly could not, have imagined. My goal is to *include* you to participate with me in this kaleidoscopic world where no pattern repeats the same way twice, where I explore the shoreline of my mind. The word *shoreline* too misleading for the fractal patterns that emerge at a closer look (Mandelbrot, 2010). Take this work as a manifestation, an embodiment of the spaces I dwell in, but only hold loosely to such a manifesto, “where the insight is fruitful, but the doctrine remains
“a challenge,” to borrow a phrase by Roger Poole (1972, p. 81) when talking of phenomenology.

If by spending time in these pages I manage to replicate this experience for you and invite you to do your own exploring and rejoicing, if I manage to convey in any small way the sheer delight of what I call philo-poiesis, then perhaps this will be an accomplishment in itself.

This is the testimony I can leave behind after emerging from explorations of world and self, becoming myself, in the inconclusive manuscript of life that I keep writing, and that keeps simultaneously writing me. A place of embodied cognitive, and imaginative possibilities I explore/express through/in words. The place, perhaps, where most of us meet for the first time.
if bachelard were in verse II

life begins well.

it begins enclosed.

protected. all warm in the bosom (of the house.

it is body and soul.

it is the human being’s

first world.

when being is being-well

in the well being originally associated

with being.

in its countless alveoli space

contains compressed time.

within the being

in the being of within

an enveloping warmth welcomes

(being

reigns in a sort of earthly paradise

of matter.

and the poet well knows that

the house holds childhood motionless

in its arms.

here space is everything

---

1 Elza (2008b) & Bai et.al. (2010, p. 363). Note: As I read Bachelard I was struck by how poetic he is in his philosophy. Lines and phrases lifted off the page. I could not resist, so I gathered them in this found poem (Bachelard, 1964, pp. 5-15).
for time ceases to quicken memory.

in this remote region memory and imagination remain associated.

and even when we are in a new house the memories of other places travel through our bodies.

the house we are born in is physically inscribed in us. it is a group of organic habits.

the word *habit* too worn (a word) to express this passionate liaison of the body which does not forget.

we are never real historians but always near poets.

and our emotion is perhaps nothing but an expression of a poetry that was lost.
The practice of *philo-poesis* is an experiment in the alchemy of the imagining/thinking/embodied mind. It began when I allowed myself to respond fully to *what* and *how* I am reading, to *how* and *what* I am observing, to *what* and *how* I am feeling/thinking/experiencing. It began when I got curious about the question: *How would I truly engage with my world, if I let myself?* At the time I was steeped in philosophy and its big ideas. It was 2005. When I gave myself permission, I discovered I was reading and processing such ideas poetically. They wanted to emerge in their full wonder through my passion for poetry, in concise expression. Philosophical ideas lifted off the page, wanted to be part of my life, to feed into my life, to be relevant. And I let them.

This approach launched my scholarship into an exploration that required a commitment to an active participation, active paying of attention, an active way of being in the world. The practice took the form of writing everyday along side my readings. I reach into both disciplines and call on their strengths, while working toward uniting concept and image, poetry and philosophy as they pass through the circuits of my senses, imagination, mind, body, life. It is a balancing, an in-between. I never know what is going to get caught in the net of this attention, but I *have to* pay attention. This is a practice of integration, one that resists simplistic and dualistic views, one that troubles certainty. It questions the world and itself as a practice. It does not narrow down the points, it points to possibilities that open up in the moments of our participation.

Both philosophers and poets have inspired me to walk into this open field I have come to call *philo-poesis*. *Philo-poesis* as a state of mind, as a more
courteous way of being in the world, as a vehicle for transforming consciousness, and as a way of loosening our grip on the world to invite a more intimate connection with it. This connection and intimacy in turn create space for insight and revelation. *Philo-poesis* as an active mode of perception, a way of thinking and dreaming with the world. *Philo-piesis* as a way of walking back to a mind that is true to itself, a knowing that is purer, a knowing that is freed of possession and control, a way to restoration, a way of loving better. *Philo-poesis* as a practice, as the love to read, to create, the love to write. *Philo-poesis* as love making with the world. “When a dreamer speaks, who speaks, he or the world” (Bachelard, 1969, p. 187)?

I play, explore, evoke, provoke, invoke, enact, live poetically in the midst of philosophy and philosophically in the midst of poetry. This is not just a personal, but also a political act. A stance that claims my freedom as an imaginative, intelligent, creative, connected, and unique being. It is holding the space where I can be, and can breathe as such a being. This way of being may inspire another, help free another, hold the space for another. As Toni Morrison says: “The function of freedom is to free someone else” (Lamott, 1994, p. 193).

I have embraced a view of poetry that matches the experience of my creative process, a view that is confirmed through Robert Bringhurst’s and Tim Lilburn’s work. Poetry as a way of knowing, a way of inquiry into the world, a way of leaning into, of singing along side. This is also an understanding echoed by proponents of Poetic Inquiry (Prendergast, Leggo & Sameshima, 2009), a field within which this work is not only finding its place, but honouring, expanding, and
growing it. I suspect that any true and honest inquiry into the world begins with poetry—on that threshold of thinking intensely and beautifully, of awe and wonder. Poetry, as Bringhurst (2002) sees it, is a quality of the world. It is a texture of thought (Bringhurst, 2007). “When you think intensely and beautifully, something happens. That something is called poetry” (Bringhurst, 2008, p. 143). And there is where I position philo-poiesis—at this source.

While working on final stages of this dissertation I discovered Cesare Casarino’s (2002) work. I was thrilled to encounter someone who used the word philopoeisis. I was also anxious to find out if Casarino’s philopoeisis coheres with, supports, or differs from my notion of philo-poiesis. Philopoeisis for Casarino (2002) “names a certain discontinuous and refractive interference between philosophy and literature” (p. 66). Philopoeisis does not only produce interferences, but is itself an interference: “Interference as the very movement of being, that is, as becoming” (Casarino, 2002, 79). “Being is being-in-interference. Being is always and only embedded in practice” (Casarino, 2002, p. 70). My initial response was the excitement of two writers arriving at a space of intimacy and recognition. At this early point of getting acquainted with Casarino’s work, what I can say is that even the form of the poems (as they appear on the page) with the spaces between words speak to interferences. This form has grown overtime along side with me. (I speak more of the form in ~turn 20~ of this work.)

As I further delve into Casarino’s work I will be able to see more the points of connection and departure.
A major source of inspiration in this exploration has been the work of Gaston Bachelard, namely *The Poetics of Space* (1964) and *The Poetics of Reverie* (1969). I was immediately drawn to the idea of the dreamer, the importance of his reverie, and what happens in that timeless solitude of expanding images where “poetry forms the dreamer and his world at the same time” (Bachelard, 1969, p. 16).

_Reverie_ is not a word we talk about much, yet it seems key toward processes that, to borrow an idea from Linda Barry, might be to the mind what the immune system is to the body. We think of it as “unproductive, impractical, and so completely unempirical as to be considered almost immoral in a society oriented toward pure and sometimes mindless action” (from translator’s preface, Bachelard, 1969, p. v). The reverie Bachelard investigates, however, is a place of relaxation, abandonment, freedom, and at the same time a place of alert consciousness, awareness, transformation and growth. Bachelard gave me back this gift of being, allowed me to dwell in its small spaces.

The reverie Bachelard explores is _poetic reverie_. “This is a reverie which poetry puts on the right track, the track an expanding consciousness follows. This reverie is written, or, at least, promises to be written” (p. 6). Such understanding of reverie reinforces my practice, calls me to pay even closer attention to my being in a moment. I schedule my reverie time, if one can schedule such things. It might be more appropriate to say: I invite it everyday.

Inspired and guided by Bachelard’s work, I also hope to contribute to it by reconciling the gap between concept and image through the interplay between
poetry as philosophy, philosophy as poetry. Bachelard’s investigation into *The Poetics of Space* (1964) and *The Poetics of Reverie* (1969) appear to be such attempts at reconciliation. Bachelard (1969) says: “One must love the psychic forces of two different types of love if he loves concepts and images, the masculine and feminine poles of the Psyche. I understood that too late” (p. 53).

In his last book Bachelard (1969) goes on to say:

> Too late, I came to know the clear conscience in work alternating between images and concepts, two clear consciences which would be that of broad daylight and that which accepts the nocturnal side of the soul. For me to enjoy a double clear conscience, the clear conscience of my double nature finally recognized, I would have to write two more books. (p. 53)

> We have the freedom of our reverie, and the freedom of how we go about inhabiting it. And this process is freeing, teetering on the potentialities of the moment, has unpredictable results, one of which is being propelled/ compelled into spaces of restoration and transformation. (I devote more space to reverie in ~turn 1~ of this work).

> Such exploration leads me to question how we perceive intelligence, how we limit it. Intelligence, Robinson (2009, p. 46) tells us, is diverse, dynamic, wonderfully interactive (interdisciplinary) and distinct. What Robinson (2009) calls the *Element* “is all about allowing yourself access to all of the ways in which you experience the world, and discovering where your true strengths lie” (p. 51). This reminds me of the question I asked myself that launched me into *philo-poesis*: *How would I truly engage with my world, if I let myself?* Robinson (2009) believes we have a crisis in human resources; he thinks of it as *the other climate crisis*,
and he suggests that, “The only way to prepare for the future is to make the most of ourselves on the assumption that doing so will make us as flexible and productive as possible” (p. 20). Philo-poesis is aligned, and in tune, with this call. Perhaps it might lend a hand toward Robinson’s call for a radical rethinking of what it is to be intelligent.

A similar sentiment is echoed by Felix Guattari (2007) who says in *The Three Ecologies*: “Life is a work in progress, with no goal in sight, only the tireless endeavour to explore new possibilities, to respond to the chance event—the singular point—that takes us off in a new direction” (p. 12). How to be vigilant, attentive, and open to the possibilities of the moment? How to cultivate this quality of attention? How to pick up on the opportunity the chance event presents? This is a challenge in today’s life, where we are so goal driven, schedule and timetable bound, that we might miss to attend to what is right there before us/right here inside of us. As educators we are not immune, we too become victims of this rush. This work is offered with the hope to touch the hearts of educators, to speak to a way of being in the world that calls us to attention, to an embodied awareness of the poetry that is our lives. Where we can extend our environmental concern to include Robinson’s crises of human resources, what he thinks of as the other climate crises (2009, p. 254), and the way Guattari (2007) has extended his definition of ecology “beyond merely environmental concerns to include human subjectivity itself” (p. 12).
The closest I have come to a definition for something so elusive and devious as the practice of philo-poiesis is pedagogy of the imagination. I borrow a definition from Italo Calvino (1988). Calvino attempts to define what a pedagogy of the imagination might be like: “This is of course a kind of pedagogy that we can only exercise upon ourselves, according to methods invented for the occasion and with unpredictable results” (p. 92). The definition strikes me as quite in line with Robinson’s and Guattati’s calls, as well as with Bachelard’s phenomenological investigations on reverie. Such ideas accompanied me side by side, until I recognized the connections between them. Philo-poiesis propels me into a pedagogy of the imagination, of tapping into human subjectivity, into its (re)sources and potentialities, and reverie is one of its vehicles.

Tim Lilburn (2002) urges: “We need to find our own way to take this place into our mouth; we must re-say our past in such a way that it will gather us here” (p. 175). These ways will be unique. And we need to let them be, because that is a way of acknowledging and accepting our uniqueness in the world, and with that the world’s infinite complexity. Bringing that complexity and uniqueness into words renews our language, fills up the words we share, allows us to inhabit the meanings we harbour in them, from lives lived meaningfully and authentically.

Faced with a future we find ourselves less and less capable of predicting, this practice is ultimately an inquiry into: What is knowing? What is it to be an educated human being? How do I participate more fully in the world? How do I make the world my home? I still have a lot of questions. If I can say something for sure it is that this journey of conceptualizing, articulating, bringing philo-poiesis
to presence, of seeking the poetic within our lives, and how in turn we come to understand our lives philosophically, is self-perpetuating and seems to have its own intrinsic schedule (one I cannot force, control, or push). It is inexhaustible, while at the same time not exhausting. Like performative inquiry (Fels, 1999) philo-poesis, “is a risk-taking venture and promises no final destination, only new possible horizons to explore” (p. 37). 

“We have to go, as Hán Shan says, together in different directions.”
(Bringhurst, 1986, p. 121)
Since talk about reverie does not pervade our everyday, at this first turn of the kaleidoscope I will highlight some of the characteristics and features of reverie, as Bachelard presents it to us, just to give you a taste, perhaps whet your appetite.

Reverie, Bachelard (1969) tells us, is a “phenomenon of relaxation and abandonment” (p. 10) yet a place of alert consciousness (p. 168) where “we participate actively in the creating imagination” (p. 4). “Reverie sacralizes its object” (p. 36). Reverie is a spiritual phenomenon (p. 11), and illustrates well-being (p. 12). “All the senses awaken and fall into harmony in poetic reverie” (p. 6). “It is necessary to dream a great deal in front of an object for the object to bring about within us a sort of oneiric organ” (p. 166). Bachelard speaks of reverie as a place of deep repose. Repose points to the Greek word for pause, cessation. Becoming empty, receptive perhaps? Which echoes Dillard’s (2007) seeing as emptying, seeing that involves a letting go.

For Bachelard (1969), “reverie assembles being around its dreamer” (p. 152). “The subject of reverie is astonished to receive the image, astonished, charmed, awakened“ (p. 153). In Bachelard’s phenomenological investigation, “any awareness is an increment of consciousness, an added light, a
reinforcement of psychic coherence. Its swiftness or instantaneity can hide this growth from us. But there is growth of being in every instance of awareness” (p. 5).

Reverie transports the dreamer into another world, makes the dreamer into a person different from herself. “And yet this other person is still himself, the double of himself” (p. 79). We dream our ideal self. “And it is here that the intermediary play between thought and reverie, between the psychic functions of the real and the unreal multiplies and criss-crosses to produce the psychological marvels of human imagination” (p. 81). I was immediately attracted to the statement: “Poetry forms the dreamer and his world at the same time” (p. 16). At first I was mystified, curious, and I had to evolve in my practice to understand it. I have come to realize and cherish the daily benefits of my reverie.

Bachelard (1969) writes:

How simple it is to discover one’s soul at the end of reverie. Reverie puts us in a state of a soul being born. Thus, in this modest study of images, our philosophical ambition is great. It is to prove that reverie gives us the world of a soul, and that a poetic image bears witness to a soul which is discovering its world, the world where it would like to live and where it deserves to live. (p. 15)

Reverie sustains a strong connection to our childhood reveries. In our childhood, reverie gave us freedom (p. 101), and “it is in reverie that we are free beings” (p.101). For Bachelard, childhood is a state of mind. “A potential childhood is within us” (p. 101). “Furthermore, this childhood continues to be receptive to any opening upon life and makes it possible for us to understand and love children as if we were their equals in original life” (p. 101). “Isn’t it also in
reverie that man is most faithful to himself?” asks Bachelard (p.136). This recognition echoes Jacques Rancière (1999): “Truth settles no conflict in the public place. It speaks to man only in the solitude of his conscience” (p. 90).

Something happens in these spaces. I believe they are crucial to our transformation and restoration, even if we are not capable of detecting the instantaneity of such incremental changes. I am also beginning to think spaces of reverie are important to our mental, physical and spiritual health, to our capacity to be truly present and to connect with a world that we can easily become alienated from if we do not nurture our authentic connections with it. “And when the poet comes to help the dreamer in renewing the beautiful images of the world, the dreamer accedes to cosmic health” (Bachelard, 1969, p. 178).
"This is of course a kind of pedagogy that we can only exercise upon ourselves, according to methods invented for the occasion and with unpredictable results."
—Italo Calvino (1988, p. 92)

“If, however, we were able to recapture absolute naïveté in our observation itself, that is, really to re-experience our initial observation, we should give fresh impetus to the complex of fear and curiosity that accompanies all initial action on the world. We want to see and yet we are afraid to see. This is the perceptible threshold of all knowledge, the threshold upon which interest wavers, falters, then returns.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. 110)

“Words—I often imagine this—are little houses, each with its cellar and garret. Common-sense lives on the ground floor.

...To mount and descend in the words themselves—this is a poet’s life.

...Must the philosopher alone be condemned by his peers to live on the ground floor?”
—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. 147)
"The natural world is the old river that runs through everything and I think poets will forever fish along its shores."
—Mary Oliver (1994, p. 106)

**the weight of dew**

can I fill these words with what is not intended? with what the river keeps hidden under her tongue.

with the maps birds carve in my marrow fill my bones with air my eye with their dying.

to wait on the river bank long enough to know what knowing looks like before it is disturbed.

stepped on. sanitized. poked with a stick. put in a vial. anesthetized.

to know the shape of me nameless— my given names left out like shoes I was meant to fill.

they gather dew now it slides down their tongues. I watch them through this open door where even the clock wipes its face clean.
“Poetry must convey the idea of perfect thought. It is not a true thought. Poetry is to thought what a drawing is to an object—a convention that restores what, in the object, is briefly eternal.”
—Paul Valéry (1971, p. 416)

“Whatever breathes, breathes you, exchanging inert landscapes, the long ago, that had without notice, drifted into uprooted pavement, illegible hands into the present that climbs on itself like frost.”
—Adam Dickinson (2006, p. 47-48)

what breathes in (a view²)

in the painter’s vast strokes
the solitude of
   (this place
pulls me.
   from afar
language emerges
as the trees become (the mind
searching.
the geometry of painter
moving (in words. deep roots
exchanging inert landscapes
   the long ago
of stark contrasts.
*
defining the eulogized space of poet
I push through tangled twigs and vines
complete the etymo- logical paths of her mountains

---

2 Elza (2009a, p. 48)
that had without notice drifted
into uprooted pavement illegible hands

their mute possibilities.

*

how the eye moves
through what (echoes
in the rhythms

of trees and moss of winter

and spring.

and a house
its cosmic light on

a familiar face

(looking out)

into the present
that climbs on itself

like frost.
“Not only do Descartes, Hegel, and Feuerbach not begin with the same concept, they do not have the same concept for beginning.”
—Deleuze and Guattari (1994, p. 15)

“Happiness is visible like the sun.”
—Paul Valéry (1964, p. 77)

where

(do I begin?)

the first line of the poem is missing.

in its wake
the sense of sudden water
the stillness of an egret.

it came and left the bodies of rocks warm with the parting

the urgency of what is absent.
of what went astray

(in the beginning.

the first line of the poem is

* 

3 Elza (2009a, p. 50)
or was it snow in its twinkling quiet.
(in the eye) the momentary shiver of

*happiness* — *visible like the sun*

on the limbs and trunks of trees

(begun by someone else)

reaching

for the poem perhaps

whose shape and image are not indifferent to what is

(thought.

what moves like water in the hands of gravity lingers on the edge of

breath.

and when it comes to a crack in the rock—

falls

disappears right through
the first line.

startling the egret.
Perhaps my journey began with the laborious penning of letters on a lined page. Perhaps it began with the delight in the sounds of a song I learned in daycare once when I was two. (The lack of an audience at the time did not stop me from singing the song to a tray of vegetables. Perhaps the vegetables themselves were a worthy audience.) Perhaps it began with the writing of a poem about a daisy in my pre-elementary school years.

Perhaps it began with my work on metaphor, when my teacher Maya Pencheva talked passionately about the field of cognitive linguistics (new at the time) in my fourth year of my first Masters degree. My attention arrested, her passion went straight to my heart in that small attic room of Sofia University overlooking the green copper domes of the old buildings. (I can still hear the pigeon’s coos echo in the courtyard). Fired up, I felt I knew what I was going to do for my then thesis, for the rest of my life. Or perhaps it was when I studied with Dorothy Leal at Ohio University for a PhD in Reading Education.

Perhaps it started with the poetry that casually spilled into my day with my children’s words as I listened to them thinking with their world. Or perhaps it started when I signed up in 2005 at Simon Fraser University after I read Kieran Egan’s work on imagination in education. Or maybe it started when I left after two
terms, knowing that there was still something missing. (What faculty of the mind—or is it body—detects something missing?) I can be sure that was one of the beginnings of this journey. This leaving. Perhaps one of the more recent beginnings. But there were so many more beginnings before that.

Perhaps the journey began when I came to see language as embodied and metaphorical. George Lakoff’s (1988) ideas around language, metaphor and embodiment peaked my curiosity in the 1990s. The notion that we can think abstractly because we have metaphor fascinated me. In his empirical study on metaphor Lakoff (1988) shows that thought is not only embodied, but this embodiment is writ large in our language. It stares us in the face. Then Lakoff and Johnson (1999) came out with *Philosophy in the Flesh* where I was fascinated with a few more curious conclusions: most thought is unconscious, abstract concepts are mostly metaphorical, and the mind is embodied (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Was that the beginning? Who knows?

The sense of beginning humbles me. It is a disruption in the fabric of habitual thought, which keeps me in a place of active questioning, curiosity, creates openings. Returns me to childhood which “remains within us a principle of deep life, of life always in harmony with the possibilities of new beginnings” (Bachelard, 1969, p. 124).
"Language is not a fixed or ideal form, but an evolving medium we collectively inhabit, a vast topological matrix in which the speaking bodies are generative sites, vortices where the matrix itself is continually being spun out of the silence of sensorial experience."
—David Abram (1996, p. 84)

We come into the world faced with what Edmund Husserl calls the life-world. “The life-world is the world of our immediately lived experience, as we live it, prior to all our thoughts about it. ... reality as it engages us before being analysed by our theories and our science“ (Abram, 1996, p. 40). Language and print are very likely part of this environment. Children are nursed on environmental print (word-images, flashing shapes), in a world of sound, light, and image. Before meaning emerges children are already absorbing language through their senses, embodying it, forming unique relationship with letters, words, their shapes and sounds.

The body is steeped in language. We are en-languaged beings. Language creates sensations. Just like sensations prompt us to weave them into words. Language is metaphorical. Words are visceral. We respond to them with our bodies. Words carry senses along side their meanings: “the sum of all the psychological events aroused in our conscience by the word... Meaning is only one of the zones of sense, the most stable and precise one” (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 146). There are words to which my body responds before my mind can engage with their meanings. I have words I have not formed any relationship with. They
do not call to me. Sometimes it is the sound of a word. I carry these senses in my body, consciously and unconsciously. These senses attached to words (and images) are unique and personal, and can change. Other than the public space of words, the reader/listener has a private space in which words will do things the literary critic cannot touch.

Some words evoke energy, others steal energy, in a string of other words. Our responses are not always conscious. Language is unruly that way: entangled in our perception circuits, cells, environments, memories. “The contact I make with myself is always mediated by a particular culture, or at least by a language we have received from without and which guides us into our self-knowledge” (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 66). Our concepts and images are tied and tangled in a complex knot, or many knots. From the sounds, from the letters on a page, worlds can be spun into our imagination. And then back into language.

Whatever else we do when reading, we are also asking after the being of texts, and after being in texts, we are always already reading texts as forms of being. It is only by owning up to this basic fact of reading and by running the risk of transcendence intrinsic in any ontological inquiry that a truly immanent practice of reading might take place. (Casarino, 2002, p. 89)

Language can comfort, horrify, pacify, disturb, delight, unsettle, and we cannot always predict which words will do that for whom. Language can help us think through our experiences by providing a framework and imposing a certain type of linearity. It helps us shape meaning. It can also blind us to what is before us. Language can manipulate us. Or it can free us. It can be a dis/ease, it can be a cure. Language is a very tricky business (Banack & Elza, 2010).
“The awareness of language may begin with ordinary consciousness, but it soon becomes clear that language is a means of intensifying consciousness” (Frye, 1990, p. 38). That gives language immense powers in our shaping, our perceptions, our world views, ways of being in relationship with others. I can play with language, make meaning of my life experiences. The words I line up on the page can slip into new possible meanings whose impermanence both delights and disturbs. “Under the pen, the anatomy of syllables slowly unfolds. The word lives syllable by syllable, in danger of internal reveries” (Bachelard, 1969, p. 17).

How to live with, in, through, alongside, over and under this medium through which we swim daily as academics, educators, human beings? What has been of intense interest to me in employing poetic language for inquiry is the awareness of the poverty of language when facing the world. An awareness that allows me to be content with the pointing, to delight in the playing. Philo-poesis is a response, an acknowledgement of this complexity, of the uncertainty and the approximation, a rebuke, a celebration. “A poem, or a poem-in-waiting, contemplates what language can’t do: then it does something with language—in homage, or grief, or anger, or praise” (McKay, 2002, p. 62).

We have to understand the artistic process not only as an attempted solution of a paradox, but as the paradox itself. What one knows, one cannot say, and once said, it is no more the same.

Vision is a powerful sense. We tend to rely more on our eyesight than any of our other senses. We say: *seeing is believing*, and *I see* means *I understand*. But seeing is not without its problems. We will see what we are prepared to see. Dillard (2007) says: “Seeing is of course very much a matter of verbalization. Unless I call my attention to what passes before my eyes, I simply won’t see it” (p. 33). What Dillard attempts on many occasions in *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* is to see the way Lehrer (2007) tells us Paul Cézanne did with his paintings: “what reality looks like before it has been resolved by the brain. The light has not yet been made into form” (p. 98). Dillard practiced that in her year at Tinker Creek, to possibly escape the sly interpretation of the mind, and enter in direct conversation with the Thing/Other observed. Perhaps to become part of what is not seen, has not yet been seen, to interrupt/disrupt habits of seeing, so she can see better. A way of questioning cultural, individual assumptions, abstractions, generalizations, stereotypes. Much of what we believe, know, hold onto is not even made ours until examined, re-examined, *questioned*. “Where do I get my standards that I fancy the fixed world of insects doesn’t meet?” (Dillard, 2007, p. 70).

To encounter something as *presence* requires us to cut through the assumptions we breathe as readily, and easily, almost unthinkingly, as the polluted air in the city. We are too eager to substitute language for this *presence*.
Part of my work with language is to remind myself that language is multifaceted, kaleidoscopic, fractal. It can think for us, while at the same time we can mould it and play with it to fit in our creativity and imagination. Leaving gaps in my words is a way of reminding myself not only that I do not know everything, but that language is a net I dip into my lived experience to catch the slippery fish of meaning. And of course I fail, because words inevitably break down and simplify, make things appear separate. Still, I am better for having tried.

Evernden (1985) says: “It becomes increasingly apparent that there are many different ways of approaching the world, and that what we call ‘objectivity’ is but one of them. It is not an absolute, not an epitome of consciousness, but a stance in the world” (p. 107). Imposing order, efficiency, and understanding on the world we live in, is not only a simplification (Skolimowski, 1994), but also a distancing from a more primary environment with which we are connected, yet cannot understand/rationalize the many ways and points of connection.

How do we sustain and re-affirm these connections? “But there is another kind of seeing that involves a letting go, when I see this way I sway transfixed and emptied” (Dillard, 2007, p. 33). I am curious about this letting go. This resonates with what I feel when I write. A kind of giving up, yet not completely. A place of relaxation and abandonment, yet of alert consciousness. A place that holds the tensions between such opposing forces. A place where images become the generative vortices around which thought begins to form lattices. A place where words become generative vortices in which images begin to form. “The present is a freely given canvas” (Dillard, 2007, p. 84)
“The texts about fire tell more about ourselves than about the external world. ‘Fire is more likely to smoulder within the soul than beneath ashes.’”
—Bachelard (1988, p. xv)

“nothing can be seen of the soul, but it sees everything”

saying is (seeing as)

the way the eye sees
upside down something incomplete.

the way
it is not present
in the picture but no picture will be complete without it.

the way we see what we have learned to believe. and the way (everything begins

from a point in the distance.

the soul is the eye

nothing can be seen of the soul
but it sees everything

the way sometimes green
is blue. the way we believe

what we have learned to see.

the way the eye (the soul)
casts its fire on what it sees

4 Elza (2006c, p. 98)
weightless without dimension

that initial

point

. 

in the distance

where convergence is

a (seeing as saying is)
“the image is an emerging of meaning.”
—Paul Ricoeur (1978, p. 149)

“five lines become eight fourteen
the movement of a river rushing to sea.”
—Zhang Er (2004, p. 23)

emergent river of meaning$^5$

the image    is an emerging of meaning
in the eye     of the sunset. the egret
taking off    the footprints
left         in sand

(in the thickness of

imagining

fresh fallen leaves— hands taking
the pulse of     the earth.

（opens a gap

in the logical and we are

the egret

lifting off    the page    holding

our breath

in forms

five lines become eight fourteen
the movement of    a river rushing to sea.

---

$^5$ Elza (2007a, p.41)
an introduction to semantic collapse

inside the collapse of the literal

through play emerges

semantic proximity

through deviance

a single word might fill the air with birds

clarity

*

Semantic

twilight, the river, a late mirror

lacuna

throw a word in the gap

(a proposition

watch the fireworks

this (seeing as

---

6 Elza (2007a, p. 40)
“The image offered us by reading the poem now becomes really our own. It takes root in us. It has been given us by another, but we begin to have the impression that we could have created it, that we should have created it. It becomes a new being in our language, expressing us by making us what it expresses; in other words, it is at once a becoming of expression, and a becoming of our being. Here expression creates being.”

—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. xxiii)

(of non-verifiable truths 37

each one of us is the beginning
of a city. we cannot ignore

(for the language
to dwell in it.

pyramids of needs justify
the existence of temples and order.

the stone makes visible
what a word has already stolen
out of thin air

we fall (a snowflake

our words ) re-interpreted
re-drawn re-constructed by other.s

to live (as if

3 Elza, Manery & Cohen (2007)
one snowflake makes a winter

(is what we do—

a slow down to earth melting

in palms and mirrors

(a round memory

of cherry blossoms. on the tongue

the way knowing holds (knowing

the transformation in the holding

(the blooming after.
“Learning and understanding are two ways of expressing the same act of translation. There is nothing beyond texts except the will to express, that is, to translate.”
—Jacques Rancière (1999, p. 10)

“What unity remains for philosophies, it will be asked, if concepts constantly change?”
—Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari (1994, p. 8)

To 8
Get
*
to
*
his
*
True
*
Forms
***

Plato* could not do without them*
The shadows on the wall the cave
the captain* of the ship had to marry True * Forms to* image.

Elza (2009a, p. 53)
“Truth is not told. It is a whole and language fragments it; it is necessary, and languages are arbitrary.”
—Jacques Rancière (1999, p. 60)

“The greatness of poets is that they grasp with their words what they only glimpse with their minds.”
—Paul Valéry (1971, p. 401)

metaphor (bridges)

kinship between disparate ideas.

a shift.

our logical distances

(suddenly)

Aristotle’s Is contains in itself what It is not.

---

9 Elza (2009a, p. 54)
To mean *is to invent* (word image) a new sentence

the whole vibrating with what will not the sum of its part.s

a new hold

metaphor (focus frame) (tenor vehicle)
a screen

a filter

through which *the poet* is a penguin

is understood.

---

10 Elza (2006a, p. 10)
Still, Ricoeur wants to know where the extra (meaning) he swims with his wings comes from.

*

three tensions between

focus 1 frame

literal 2 metaphoric

3 seeing

the poet is a penguin

at the same time (as

It is not
"The movement of bodies to their meaningful end."
—Pain not Bread (2000, p. 38)

feed them
ordinary words sustain
a pair of swans
frame.d in.focus

will keep returning
together for life.
until one dies
the one left the sum of both.

the movement of bodies to their meaningful end

11 Elza (2006a, p. 12)
a metaphor is a fox\textsuperscript{12} in the coop
throws the mind off balance
in the literal dark chaos
all chickens are in the air
except the one the fox came for
(meaning the fox will catch it.
as it leaves (the lights come on in the house.

\textsuperscript{12} Elza (2006a, p. 14)
"It is a non-sense to claim to study imagination objectively since one really receives the image only if he admires it."
—Gaston Bachelard (1969, p. 53)

"The poem is a fox. With its tail it wipes clean its own tracks."
—Lyubomir Nikolov (Harteis & Meredith, 1992, p. 157)

The poem is a fox. objectively is a contradiction.

one receives the image
only if one admires it

The poem is a fox.

With its tail it wipes clean its own tracks.

re.gains its potent.ial for (dual) meaning.

in poetry words dream

the Truth

(that are so many.)

13 Elza (2006a, p. 13)
“Metaphor is more than a special effect within language; it is the very essence of language. Even a philosophy of metaphor is itself inescapably metaphorical, so that metaphor cannot be adequately defined outside its own system.”

—Karl Simms (2003, p. 76)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>true</th>
<th>or false</th>
<th>(a triptych$^{14}$)</th>
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<tr>
<td>in language)</td>
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<td>or false.</td>
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<td>the flapping</td>
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<td>irrelevant.</td>
<td>the pursuit</td>
<td>left</td>
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<td>in (the mouth</td>
<td></td>
<td>open.)</td>
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$^{14}$ Elza (2008a, p. 47)
“...not only poetry but literature in general implies a mutation in the use of language. This redirects language toward itself to the point that language may be said, in Roland Barthes’ words, to ‘celebrate itself’ rather than to celebrate the world.”—Paul Ricoeur (1978, p. 152)

“He loved this part of the city, the evening streets an extension of his limbs.”
—Michael Ondjaate (1987, p. 158)

“The poet speaks on the threshold of being.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. xvi)

“The lamps are broken time.”
—Alan Davies

in the skin of the city

he loved this part of the city
the tap-tap of rain drops
on cardboard on copper

reverberating

on roof tops through walls
on street lights

(in-sight—

the movement of rain
(in-words)

the emptying of streets a deepening
dichotomy.

(is poetry

a mutation in language?
where the lamps are broken time

the image of rain caught
between side-walks.

15 Elza, Manery & Cohen (2007, p. 60)
of distances
bridging the split—reference—
the streets.

he loved this part of the city (the evening)
where the poet speaks on the threshold
(of being)
a space where rain repeats itself
washes away his footprints from
right underneath him. streets
an extension of his limbs.
“I hear the cane falter on a step of the stairs, 
the body that makes itself secure, sighing, 
the door opening, the dead man coming in. 
Between a door and dying there is little space, 
and there’s hardly time enough to settle in.”
—Octavio Paz (1973, p. 73)

---

**a meta eulogy**16

... coming in.

how small a metaphor is

to start such contradictions.

*I hear the cane falter on a step of the stairs*

inside words our small gestures

*the body that makes itself secure, sighing*

the breath of lyric distances

invites

... opening,

*the dead man coming in* Remembering that

which never happened

*between a door and dying there is little space*

... The image raps its rhythms with a wooden spoon

calls us by (name

*and there is hardly time enough to settle in.*

---

16 Elza (2007a, p. 42)
~turn 6~
:text:

“Even if you jump out of your skin, the hand can only grasp five ancient lines.”
—Zhang Er (2004, p. 23)

In their attempts to think and write with the poets of the Tang Dynasty, Pain not Bread (2000) comment in the afterword:

If (as one of the poems says) for the poets of the Tang Dynasty, “the use and reuse of traditional Chinese poetry” represented a way of allying themselves with the long tradition of that poetry, and, at the same time, “honouring the masters”, one could equally well see, in that combination of fondness and hubris, an admission that it is impossible to fully enter a text (even one’s own), no matter the language or century. As the subtitles to the poems (perhaps repetitively) insist, it is nonetheless possible, through reading and re-reading, to find a place for oneself, to stand, as it were, as if perpetually stuck, in some doorway which opens out onto those great works. (p. 123)

The poem becomes the threshold of this encounter. I knock, ask for admittance. Knowing I cannot fully enter, I might be happy with a nod, a bow.

How do we read our texts? What shall we claim of them? Shall we just claim a place for ourselves? Shall we stand with another in text’s doorway? Shall we pass text between us like bread? Shall we dream with texts? Imagine with texts? Get lost in our thoughts through text’s doorways? Are we allowed to dream with words of text even if whole text is elusive, ambiguous? Hold bits of text? Weave a nest of words to sleep on? Shall we stand in doorways and let text’s
winds blow through our thoughts? Clarifying, imagining, reconfiguring, re-assembling, re-engaging, enlivening, verifying being?

And when we write text do we think words are written in stone? Shall we read our own words and be surprised? Shall we grow in/with our words, grow inside our images? Are we afraid to speak out of fear that in a few years we might regret what we have said/written? Who has written? Can we claim same person wrote then, that reads now? Or are we just going to sneak into text as thieves, only for the purpose of taking things out to prove our points? Whose points? How sharp?

“How can you be objective in the face of a book you love, which you have loved, which you have read at several different times in your life? Such a book has a reading past” (Bachelard, 1969, p. 75). What is to become of text then? Our interpretation of it? “I can make a passage mine by dreaming it” (Bachelard, 1969, p. 75). The quotations I weave within my poems are many times broken up in attempts to model what happens when I dream with a piece of text that has jumped out of its context and has entered my world. Reading and writing are always in danger of internal reveries. The mischievous patter of being across the page. The footprints left behind.

Writing is always murmuring with virtual questions, and above all with the question of itself, that is, the question of what it is, and of what it is that it is doing there on the page, as well as with the question of what it is that you and I become when reading it in the first place—for it is always the realm of the virtual that puts us and the whole world into question. (Casarino, 2002, p. 77)
“Our daily speech continually fluctuates between the ideals of mathematical and imaginative harmony.”
—Lev Vygotsky (1962, p. 127)

“The real discovery is the one that will let philosophy resume thinking metaphorically when it needs to.”
“...philosophy either recognizes or invents the different categories of being in the world while metaphors feed on the violations of such categorical distinctions.”

**semantic anomaly**

(this way ideas take form inside:
November light congeals
on the Japanese maple I gave you
falling in the shape of

child hands
leaves hold onto
black earth.

(this way a cognitive synergy:
and the earth sighs out of
such deep red

(in-sight an offering in a literal
century already tired of
its a-priori truths.
wooden wooden soldiers.
soldiers. plastic guns.
tug-of-war questions.
even poppies do not seem to fit

this sorrow.
(leading me
words—lumps in the throat
turning in the pit of the stomach
and still surfacing as pure beams of light

(prayers curled up inside little fists.

---

17 Elza (2006c, p. 94)
“We feel like what we see like.”
—Paul Ricoeur (1978, p. 156)

“Feeling is not contrary to thought. It is thought made ours.”
—Paul Ricoeur (1978, p. 156)

“The unity of a poem is the unity of a mood.”
—Northrop Frye (Ricoeur, 1978, p. 157)

**feeling is believing**¹⁸

Ricoeur tells us:

*feeling is thought, made ours*

the sublimating effect of
a body of words
inhabiting
where

we share icons
verbal
of thought

that could be muddled by
an afternoon rain

or the way
a wing gathers
into itself.

Frye believes:

*the unity of a poem is, the unity of a mood*

already the mention
of an egret
in water
is a way of touching

what cannot be
named
a way of carrying
across

what resonates

with the compelling voice of

the image

its clarity.

¹⁸ Elza (2006c, p. 95)
It is not his [Bachelard’s] aim to answer such ambitious questions as: What is imagination? What is an image? Rather, he would ask: what is our comprehension of images?”
—Bachelard (1988, p. xiii)

Bachelard “invites us to experience with him ‘the essential mobility of concepts.’”
—Bachelard (1988, p. xi)

“To know is to use a metaphor.”
—M. Friquegnon

**a possible explanation (of knowing)**

the front part of a crow comes into the picture: a gradual emergence

there are no trees here among an iteration of meta pieces

the snowflake is. (unspoken.
this place could be as dry as sawdust

or as full as a savannah rain

*to know is to use a metaphor.*

weave a cocoon of (a possible explanation. to escape the fire of the half blade.

here

half a woman will serve you half a bread on half a scarf

the other half exists in a place of

---

19 Elza (2006c, p. 96)
(seeing as

where blades are another way of imagining
ourselves bowing in a wind of steel.

in the slow fluidity of redefining
only the numbers here are (whole

and when you turn your head
after the crow (you may see it

leaving (with your one eye.
“Laughter is the sound of sudden knowledge.”

“We get our authority from authenticity.”

“The story itself pulls us because we are fascinated by the way time can unfold itself, the end finally revealed as present in the beginning.”
—David Weinberger (2002, pp.144 & 145)

**small metaphors loosely joined**

laughter is the sound of (sudden knowledge)
a proximity (an intimacy)
where walls are just (rain) we walk through

and are absorbed in the poetic of language.

the reader is grounded in what is built out of another’s words.

we get our authority from authenticity placed just so that we are (closer
to the sound of our own knowing
to our—selves
(words mere vehicles) resonating

*the story itself pulls us*

through its narrow streets cracked windows creaking stairways

---

20 Elza (2006c, p. 97)
because we are fascinated by the way
the buildings look with their green copper roofs

the way
time can unfold itself

in front of the bakery the old sign

the end finally revealed as Present

in the Beginning

the smell of the brick oven waking me up
in my grandmother’s house.
How do we come to possess our experiences? We have to compose them, to make sense of them. Crowther (2007) says that, “in the very recollection of key Moments another factor comes into play. For our recollections of them are selective; they exaggerate and omit on the basis of who we have become since they occurred” (p. 206). We do not recollect a moment in exactly the same way twice. In these moments of recollection, in attempting to make the first translation from world to word, we are in the grip of transformation. We are changed ever so slightly, imperceptibly, instantaneously. The memory too changes in the process of remembering. We write down the moment, with every rewriting and editing of the poem, the thoughts and the words work like scaffolding for each other, a process of making sense: careful back and forth stitching of the inside with the outside.

This process perhaps begins to resemble the process of seeing (or unseeing) mentioned earlier. I am not only writing my work, my work is writing me. Daniela is writing Daniela. This other Daniela (I would like to get to know better) forming herself into being. A kind of birthing. What joy to be present at one’s birth. “Thus we believe that one can know states which are ontologically below being and above nothingness. In these states the contradiction between being and non-being fades away. A sub-being is trying itself out at
being” (Bachelard, 1969, p. 111). As mentioned earlier: there is growth of being in every instance of awareness.

It now makes sense when I say: I learn from my own poems. When I made this statement in a philosophy class, however, it was at best overlooked, or regarded with a darting, suspicious, pathologizing eye. Why? We are happy to admit that a poem read years ago, when read now has a richer meaning, or makes a lot more sense, or has a different sense. Or a book re-read after a decade offers new insights. What has changed? Not the words in the poem, not the re-read book. Who has changed? Who is making sense? Paul Valéry (1971) helps me understand better:

The true poet does not know the exact meaning of what he has just had the good luck to write. A moment later he is a mere reader. He has written non-sense: something that must not present but receive a meaning, and that is very different. How can this paradoxical enterprise be conceived? To write something that restores what was not given. The verse is waiting for a meaning. The verse is listening to its reader. And likewise, when I say that I look at my ideas, my images, I can just as well say that they are looking at me. Where is one to situate the self? (p. 397)

Which I wrote these words? Where is the thinking done? Where do our experiences/memories live? Scientists are more and more talking of the second brain21 found in the gut.

We have more nerve cells in our gut than the entire remainder of our peripheral nervous system. The enteric nervous system is also a vast chemical warehouse within which is represented every one of the classes of neurotransmitters found in the brain. (Gershon, 1998, p. xiii)

21 Gershon (1998)
Gershon (1998) suggests, “the language spoken by the cells of the enteric nervous system is rich and brain like in its complexity.” This might lend some evidence toward gut feeling/intuition. Regardless of what we accept, we are complex entities, far too complex an organism to even *grasp* ourselves. A grasping that at times seems desperate, greedy, and dangerous in our drive to dissect thoughts, cells, atoms. How about holding our/selves, attending to each other in our invisible quiet altering?

Many times thought is conscious. What about the rest of the time? What of memory? Where is it located? “Poetry believes in the body as an instrument of knowing, its rhythmic awareness and sensations a gift” (Stewart, 2010, p. 91). Even if I sense that work is being done, I am not always aware of it, until in some moment it surfaces. I do have to give it space to surface, my writing space is such a space, an invitation. “Creative thinking goes beyond linear and logical thought to involve all areas of minds and bodies” (Robinson, 2009, p. 77). I have slowly learned to trust more, doubt less, in this creative process. This integrated possibility for knowing thrills me and gives me hope as we strive to grasp (shall I say *hold*) the complexity of what it is to be human within a complex ecology.

There is far more to our minds than the deliberate processes of conscious thought. Beneath the noisy surface of our minds, there are deep reserves of memory and association, of feelings and perceptions that process and record our life’s experiences beyond our conscious awareness. So at times, creativity is a conscious effort. At others, we need to let our ideas ferment for a while and trust the deeper unconscious ruminations of our minds, over which we have less control. (Robinson, 2009, p. 79)
The self (the singularity of our attention) seems to emerge as some organizing principle, which does not seem to have a physical location in the brain; an immaterial coherence that draws the canvas of our comprehension. A coherence that shifts.

“Each journey into reality is always a journey into our mind” (Skolimowski, 1994, p. 31). “Every life lived, is also an inner life, a life created” (Atwood, 2002, p. 7). Our minds are malleable, ever renewing. Recollections shift as the self shifts. A key part of this renewal is a stimulating environment, a will to engage and participate in an ever changing, flowing, sensate world. “I write in haste, choreographing a remembered moment” (Fels, 1999, p. 6). Language—the medium within which I emerge according to the moment’s potential, the moment’s possibilities. A coherence emerges that surprises me.

A word tugs at the strings of my memory, a hem is undone, something vital spills, pure, never remembered before. I (re)member, I was there. I look around astonished by how much I find stored here.

Explore, (re)store, replenish, (e)merge with insight.

Each time I bow at the altar of my altering.
“Aesthetics is a way of being, a stance towards the world; an aesthetic experience requires a relationship between a seeking subject and a responsive world.”
—Neil Evernden (1985, p. 54)

“The birch branch is an intuition meandering endlessly toward a clear idea.”
—Tim Lilburn (1999, p. 30)

in the flicker of (time\textsuperscript{22} \\

_for Danijela Gasevic_

in this moment where the sun finds its way through the mist to the river. lights up this spot for you. where branches curl stark against sun beams ripples flicker toward you outlining rocks—

their long green moss bowing at the edge to drink.
even the sludge brown water looks beautiful in this fan of sudden light that found you (here. your eyes dilate with Now with what is passing.

this river is not time. in the shutter of your eye

\textsuperscript{22} Elza (2009b, p. 3)
it is always.

* the way trees lean in over the flowing

as if trying to make it into the frame of your memory.

they want to stay.

keep calling to you.

and you will (think you are coming back

as you come forward.

and you will keep coming here not because of this moment

(that will never be

* again).

but because

here what is remembered

(is
to be understood

for the first time.)
memory calculus

march snow—
salt on my black jacket
memory dusts the dark surface of

(Now. march salt—
just enough to make me notice
this moment on my shoulder.

crystal after crystal (Past
the corner of my eye
melts.

I try to capture this fractal of
(all that is left—
march snow

lingering. memory
salt
on a black sleeve—

a snow drop when I touch it
a snowflake—
ininitely differential

while I watch it fall
on the surface of
this moment.

23 Elza (2009c)
"In Nietzsche metaphor builds the bridge between morality and immorality."
—Parker (Miall, 1982)

"Each new poetic world is not a pure invention, it is a possibility in nature."
—Gaston Bachelard (1988, p. xxvii)

bridging distances

the fear of falling (is) distances
lack of bridges (over) old spaces

that yawn (the need) to be occupied.
crumbling brick (marks on

the peeled façade) of warehoused ruin
words (the witness of decay)

the river sweeps away distances
(under bridges.)

the fear of falling (is) turning us
into rain
and rain re-turns
memory to water.

this twilight curled up
inside words where

24 Elza (2006c, p. 99)
(suddenly)

distances become bridges over old spaces
and clouds shift-shape our destinies

to purposes we do not remember
dreaming of.

(the fear of falling) is turning us
into something else.
“The image in its simplicity has no need of scholarship. 
...In its expression it is youthful language.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. xix)

“The helplessness of language when facing the world
separates me from the bird.”
“bird writes poem, one vowel at a time.”
—Zhang Er (2004, p. 7 & 11)

**the algebra of reverie**

we are language
dreaming itself

into knowledge.
the fluidity
of the world
compressed
but

the helplessness of language when facing
the world separates me from the bird.

where
(bird
Is and Isn’t

(thought

the pin point of light in the eye
watching

(me

the shaping of concepts
between distances (formations

in flight:
exploring shore-lines between
verbal and visceral


to capture
the opaque wisdom of cells.
the dreamer lives (here)

*

in the brush strokes of mountains
in the white space that holds

the light:

between breath and wonder
invention and intervention.

in the vast silence that defines

*

mountain

*

bird writes poem
one
vo-
wel

at

a time.
When our self-conscious ego self involved in being with others is shed, does another larger self emerge? Where seeing is “less like seeing than like being for the first time seen, knocked breathless by a powerful glance” (Dillard, 2007, p. 36)? Where we have given up control of what is seen and are rewarded with some deeper insight into the reality we encounter? Where:

To touch the coarse skin of a tree is thus, at the same time, to experience one’s own tactility, to feel oneself touched by the tree. And to see the world is also, at the same time, to experience oneself as visible, to feel oneself seen. (Abram, 1996, p. 68)

“I see poems as the tip of delight.” says Lilburn (1997). “And the excitement of delight sometimes goes immediately into language; it’s a cheering, or a praising, just happiness. Or else it’s a kind of touching of the thing” (p. 138).
inhabitions

for Dethe

put your head on the bark of this century old tree.
surprise me. stretch arms around as far as they will reach.
feel them extend into the crown feet split into fractal roots.
now push a little further. let the tips of your fingers crawl another inch. last night you said in your dream
I pulled a tree out of black earth. gave it to you. all you wanted was something to eat. still you stepped inside the trunk and moved its limbs as if life depended on this dance.
on our accepting the silence of growing. rings as essential as the memories that inhabit us. our home.
inside the skin of this century we stretch our limbs.
uproot one another out of deep shadows. become resonant drums.

“Imagination is a tree.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1988, p. xxix)

25 Elza (2009b, p. 17)
Dillard (2007) says:

The death of the self of which the great writers speak is no violent act. It is merely the joining of the great rock heart of the earth in its toll. It is merely the slow cessation of the will’s sprints and the intellect’s chatter: it is like waiting like a hollow bell with stilled tongue. (p. 262)

Here again the idea of cessation. The repose in the reverie.

I embrace Lilburn’s (1997) idea of poetry as a courteous way of seeing. When asked: “Is ‘seeing with courtesy’ a way to truth?” He answers: “It is truth. The thing is more than your name for it and more than your ability to know it” (p. 136). This idea of truth as a way of approaching, as an attitude, truth as something between us, appeals to me intimately because it is a turning toward the other (be that other person, rock, or tree). “Meaning is not a thing; it is a relationship” says Bringhurst (2008). “To deny that a relationship exists is to deny that meaning is present” (p. 202). To acknowledge meaning is present is to acknowledge a relationship exists. Margaret Kovach (2005) also expresses the idea that research, like life, is about relationships. This attitude is a recognition that we are partaking in a sensate and mysterious world, which is beyond rationalization, and understanding, an opening onto life.

In this attitude there is a validation, an emancipation of the self where we exist as equal intelligences, equal beings (Rancière, 1999). Similar to what Buber calls devotio, an epistemic stance where one learns by leaning into or toward the other; it is a sympathetic stance that includes a loving admiration of the other. “A
world in which every object displays the human face it acquires in a human
gaze” (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 54). Lilburn (1997) entertains this idea of being in
a relationship with a kind of Thing/Us possibility for consciousness, which has
given me a lot of hope. He says:

There is consciousness as thief, going in to this thing that is not it
and taking stuff out; there is consciousness as stranger, never on
the inside. But if this possibility is true there is consciousness as
integral or necessary to the thing, participatory. Eros becomes part
of cosmology: the tree in order to be this tree and no other tree
needs me or you or somebody else to need it, love it, celebrate it.
Then it becomes itself in the excitement of human consciousness.
(p. 140)

Lilburn does not limit this possibility for consciousness to poetry, to use his
phrase, “there are sorts of prose that are fine vehicles for eros.” If we move away
from the forms on the page, I understand this to be the texture of thought of
which Bringhurst speaks, and which defines poetry for him. Bachelard (1969)
says: “In cosmic images, it often seems that man’s words infuse human energy
into the being of things” (p. 189). This kind of poetic thought, this vehicle for eros
fills our words, regardless of what human controlled genre we attribute to them.

If you divide the world into them and us, and history into ours and
theirs, or if you think of history as something only you and your
affiliates can possess, then no matter what you know, no matter
how noble your intentions, you have taken one step toward the
destruction of the world. (Bringhurst, 2008, p. 194)

Poetry as the quality and texture of our attention, a courteous way of
seeing, and being in the world. The poem as a testimony for the quality of this
attention and participation with the world.
Growing up in Nigeria I spent a lot of time climbing, sitting on, hanging from, thinking, dreaming in/with trees. Maybe in those initial years a strong bond was forged. To this day I cannot not admire/see trees, dream with them. As an adult I also think with trees. Buber (1970) speaks about contemplating a tree: “But it can also happen, if will and grace are joined, that as I contemplate a tree I am drawn into a relation, and the tree ceases to be an It. The power of exclusiveness has seized me” (p. 57). Buber (1970) writes:

The living wholeness and unity of a tree that denies itself to the eye, no matter how keen, of anyone who merely investigates, while it is manifest to those who say You, is present when they are present: they grant the tree the opportunity to manifest it. Our habits of thought make it difficult for us to see that in such cases something is awakened by our attitude and flashes toward us from that which has being. What matters in this sphere is that we should do justice with an open mind to the actuality that opens up before us. (p. 173)

In my youth I remember falling in love with a tree. (That was the only word I had at the time to describe the connection). I remember walking out of school one day quite upset about something that had happened, crossed the street to a park with a playground and benches. I sat on a bench under a tree. I looked up. All of a sudden, the tension was drained from my body. I felt lighter. I was transported by the sunlight filtering through the vaulted crown, felt at peace, being connected in an instant, as if some kind of healing had happened, some
kind of balance was restored. I returned to that tree often. I named the tree Grandino. That experience left such a lasting memory that many years later (about 1999/2000) it found its way into/became a poem.

**my cathedral (of green)**

I knew a tree once
I did not know her name

but in rapture I would sit beneath ascending in her vaulted frame.

in her silent presence I would whisper when from the world withdrawn

in her leaves I wrapped my secrets small and left them to the crows.

in turn her green altar she would offer unseen by passers by

I’d lean against her century bark and hang my thoughts up high.

It is curious how this youthful experience has a voice that is different from my other work. This is the voice of a much younger Daniela. Perhaps the one who was truly there, then. The one that liked to rhyme. There is an embodiment of a younger self here in these words. As if I was transported, and still am when reading the poem.
A few years ago, I had a powerful exchange with another tree. This one was during a hike with my family in Capilano Park. We stopped by a tree with a plaque on it. The name of this massive, old-growth Douglas-fir is Grandpa Capilano. I read the plaque to my eight-year-old son. Something about the distance in time (perhaps being a sprout at the time of Columbus), the size, and presence of the tree (2.4 meters in diameter, 61 meters tall) overwhelmed me. I looked up taking this ancient being in its all-at-once and my voice cracked, as I read. My son asked what was wrong. I did not know what was wrong. It did not feel wrong. I did not know what was right either. I was puzzled with my response. I buried the puzzlement at the back of my head, and we went on with our walk.

Time passed and something sprouted. I wrote the following poem. I knew it was in response to that moment of not knowing what happened there that day. The voice of this poem is very different from the first one. A couple of decades at least separate the experiences.
“Life is a growing tree of sensitivities.”
— Henryk Skolimowski (1994, p. xiii)

“It was less like seeing than like being for the first time seen,
knocked breathless by a powerful glance.”
—Annie Dillard (2007, p. 36)

to the me inside the tree  inside of me
(for Grandpa Capilano, Vancouver, B.C.)

the distance    between us
makes             me             turn to you.
an ache           centuries old     tree—

its edges    expanding    witnessing
a history    unwritten    a shrunken vision
of man.      I have turned to you before

I met you.     entering the future:
a mist          as slow as grief      descends
among the convergence    of tree tops—

their mouths open     into the singularity
of this moment        we share.

this is how    this distance    works:
between You     and           Not-you—
the absence    that meets      the mouth.
on some days such a burden to carry
this whisper of you—ascending
a verticality with which to capture the sky.

my heart beating across centuries
inside a tree as wide as us
holding hands.

and you do not know how
you know it is not grief that fills
the eye with tears.

in this brave moment of Not-you
when you have no words
for the sky that holds your absence.
I knew these tears were not grief. Yet, I wanted to know what they were. What was this overpowering response, this overwhelming and intense feeling, this turning, this moment of opening onto, this recognition. A beautiful thing. Ever so brief.

To participate one has to be open to the possibility, to the moment. I have chosen to express this effort through the discipline of writing. There are other means of expression equally worthy. The point is to participate, the practice leads me. Bringhurst (2008) says: “The reason for writing poetry is that poetry knows more than any of us who write it. Poetry is what I start to hear when I concede the world’s ability to manage and to understand itself” (p. 145).

Lamott (1995) says: “To participate requires self-discipline and trust and courage, because this business of becoming conscious, of being a writer, is ultimately about asking yourself, as my friend Dale puts it, How alive am I willing to be” (p. 236).
Plato killed a moth in my dream

all night I chased moths
around my house. desperately
waving my arms—as one sinks

behind a pillow. pawing the air
as another flies high out of reach.
smacking my hands as a third

(or is it the same one?)

disappears in the shadows of my rational walls.

my neighbour Plato says he has moths in his house too.
and he too chases them into his dreams

as we yearn toward the light—
this almost out of reach

attempt to grasp (the True Forms of
our longing.
suddenly  I see  a long white moth.  
I pick it up.

it sits  on my hand  so white  
it gives off  its own light.

does not even  struggle.  
I walk to the door.  out to let it go.  
meet Plato on my doorstep.  coming in.

holding a moth.  mumbling:  
this one is not  the True moth.

I look at the Thing  balanced on his palm  
and say:  of course  it's not.  
this one's dead.

then lift my hand to see my moth take flight  
lighting up  my meta- physical night.
“Now we must return to our study of the imagination, all of them positive.”

“But words carry with them obligations.”

“But images are more demanding than ideas.”

“But exaggeration is always the summit of any living image.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. 78-80)

shifting (of obligations)

when you take the r out of

regret
it turns

into a beautiful (bird

swoops down

ripples the sky
with a singularity—

that consumes.

(my awe)

lands (with the precision of

a well chosen word)

pulls a fish out of
its shadow.

26 Elza (2007b, p. 83) & Elza (2010d)
One enters the world by admiring it. Bachelard (1969) says: “the poet no
longer describes; he exalts” (p. 190). He also says: “It is a non-sense to claim to
study imagination objectively since one really receives the image only if he
admires it“ (p. 53). What if one were to study imagination subjectively? Or inter-
subjectively? Might we conceptualize imagination as an inter-subjective stance
characterized by this quality of admiration, where our stance of admiration or
devo
tio allows the other to come fully into being? Buber is adamant about this:
the other does not fully come into being unless we form a loving relationship with
it. Philo-poesis—the love for making-love-to-and-with-the-world. Love practiced
as methodology? Abram (1996) tells us:

From the magician’s, or phenomenologist’s, perspective, that which
we call imagination is from the first an attribute of the senses
themselves; imagination is not a separate mental faculty (as we so
often assume) but is rather the way the senses themselves have of
throwing themselves beyond what is immediately given, in order to
make tentative contact with the other side of things that we do not
sense directly, with the hidden or invisible aspects of the sensible.
(p. 58)

I suspect for Bachelard imagination comes before perception. Bachelard
(1964) says: “Indeed the imagination sharpens all our senses. The imagining
attention prepares our attention for instantaneousness” (p. 87). Bachelard (1964)
also tells us that "space that has been seized upon by the imagination cannot remain indifferent" (p. xxxvi).

Can language too acquire this potential of throwing itself beyond what is immediately given to sense the other side of things? Can it too sharpen our senses? A way of sensing? "And why should the actions of the imagination not be as real as those of perception" (Bachelard, 1964, p. 158)?

As I take these turns of the kaleidoscope I am becoming more and more aware how interrelated these aspects, and elements of philo-poesis are. How it is hard to line them up. Make them sit still. Like children, they scatter in this open field, bursting into laughter.

Northrope Frye (1990) writes:

In our day the intensifying of consciousness, in the forms of techniques of meditation and the like, has become a heavy industry. I have been somewhat puzzled by the extent to which this activity overlooks or evades the fact that all intensified language sooner or later turns metaphorical, and that literature is not only the obvious but the inescapable guide to higher journeys of consciousness. (p. 39)
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27 Elza (2006b, p. 28)
the title escapes me:  

try to own that which changes by the second.
there are many skies in the corollaries of the heart.

we find rhyme sometimes the best way to woo them.
maybe some book to tempt us to look down upon

the many translations of sky.

this poem needs skies to come into the world
as much as the sky needs this poem to worship it.

this poem needs the devotion s with which the sky is the same
and always different.

you think it’s a minor affair this coronary way. this birth
every moment. this pre-occupation with the slightest of changes.

this constant falling in love.
is love really blind? I don’t buy it.

this kind of love is seeing, every moment.
:a way: of circulating the blood through the four chambers

of the world.

:this love:

is forgetting yourself. the very notion of time.

if that is blind let me be blind.

now try it. try to own that which changes
by the moment.

try to own that which changes you.

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28 Elza (2009b, p. 26)
In the last couple of years I have been collaborating with different poets/artists. I have worked so far with 10 poets (three women and seven men). Some of these collaborations are with poets I know, and others are invitations from across borders and oceans. To date I have written 20 poems in active collaborations (ten with women poets, and 10 with the men poets). I am currently working on a few more. Each experience is a unique encounter. Each has its snags and surprises, its push and pulls, its compromises and celebrations.

Twelve of these poems have been published in special collaborative issues like Mutating the Signature issue in qarrtsiluni online literary magazine, The Collaborative Issue in Poemeleon: a literary journal and The Synergertic Transformations issue of the Blue Print Review. Also in regular issues such as Pedestal magazine, and Other Voices. Recently we even did a collaborative reading with the poets who are local. The readings were in two voices, almost improved on the spot as echoes and conversations.

The following poem (memory revises us) is written in active collaboration between myself and Arlene Ang (Spinea, Italy). We use a webspace called Piratepad where we can both edit, make and save changes. Once we even happened to log in at the same time and work simultaneously on finishing a

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Elza & Ang (2011)
poem. Something strange about seeing the words shift, disappear, move on the page before your eyes. A back and forth stitching between two. Where we hold hands and teeter, balance, on each other’s words, each other’s breath. I have never met Arlene in person (one day I surely hope I would). Such spiritual intimacy we might fear to speak about. But why fear? It is there, and it is exhilarating, unsettling, thrilling, scary, and rewarding.

memory revises us

as in we walk out of our body enter the world in various stages of crucifiction

the sky is an anatomy lesson
viscera and brain positioned like twin moons

in the fetal forest of criss-crossing paths
we curl into the eyespot on a luna moth’s wing

is it heat one feels raising up roots of hair
or is it rain searching for what is lost in Pi

as in if we could eat what we dream up our lungs would be created in images of fish

what is the physiology of a woman’s head held under water

for every heart soaked in brine what is it we seek to preserve

even memory revises us

30 The title of this poem comes from a line by Li-Young Lee (2008).
take this breast with its flavor for bio psy

take this human knee to find where
the mirror shards have fused with bone

as in the mind is everywhere dissecting
the mind is morphing

the child. what comes across—
DNA song lyrics trees translating

pixels letters chromosomes—
a frightening blender

the dead always murmurous in the living
possess us from the inside

each night apparitions sync with our heartbeat
reflecting upside down in their silver spoons

what has passed on what we polish
like sur faith of the missing

we are their re visions altered
curved bent broken splayed

as in the moment we see ourselves
from a distance

the distance changes us
The *Thing/Us* possibility for consciousness echoes Buber’s *I and Thou*: where “[i]n every You we address the eternal You” (Buber, 1970, p. 57). I have been asked on some occasions, who the *You* in my poems is. Perhaps the answer lies here. Buber felt that we as individuals are not complete until we are in the *I-Thou* relation. Not the Thou completes us, but the *I-Thou* relationship completes us: “becoming I, I say You.” I am grateful to Buber and Lilburn for their brave thoughts because it frees us from the tyranny of the self in isolation. Rancière (1999) writes:

> Intelligence is not a power of understanding based on comparing knowledge with its object. It is the power to make oneself understood through another’s verification. And only an equal understands an equal. Equality and intelligence are synonymous terms, exactly like reason and will. (p. 72)

The implications here—that we have such immense responsibility for each other in our forming, in our verification, and emancipation of each other—are astounding. This has bearing on concepts like *freedom, ethics and morality*. Morality is a name for a working relationship with objects and ideas as well as creatures, trees, people, etc. (Brinhurst, 2007, p. 191). Bachelard says: *in reverie we are free beings*. Brinhurst (2007) says: “Aesthetic decisions are moral decisions” (p. 194). “Morality, like language is a fibre of thought, a fibre of respect, of interconnection between realms” (p. 192). Just like Brinhurst suggests, a piece of design is a kind of sentence, as well as a fossilized moral transaction. I think of the poem as *a fossilized moral transaction*, where the poet/philosopher has tried himself/herself out/at this new being. A transaction that is also living at the same time. With each reading, breath and meaning are poured
back into it. “We are reading this text together, my shadow spilling into the light of your reading” (Fels, 1999, p. 22).

“The acquisition of knowledge is not only a process of transformation for the one who comes to know; it is also a process of creation for the world at large.”
—Shimon Malin (2004, p. 49)

the way (of the river)

I take the path by the river. stop
where the willow bows its head
to the water. I am

the passing of time. a shifting
point of view. slender fragile branches

sweep the surface of this moment
in a permanent caress.

(Now)
flickering a string of

moments where I remember myself as before

this moment. linger here in its making.

again

pop.cans. cups. bear.bottles. butts.

I bow my head to the rushing
*
the pooling

where the water styro-foams.
each time

the shiver of

(knowing.

insists. haunts (the river.

steals my gaze.

my eyes drink.

(and knowing is a loss

I have

to mourn.)

mourning is recognizing myself

ever transformed.

as my heart

beats in the slippery mossy

hands

*

of the water

*
Is the writer the instrument? This word sounds too mechanical, too rigid. Is the writer the tool? If the writer evolves and changes in this process what kind of instrument is s/he? Perhaps we need more appropriate metaphors that allow for the malleability of the self to shine, or to reveal that the writer is the conductor of this ephemeral, lively, diverse, kaleidoscopic, symphony.

I think of myself as someone who looks, or someone who engages in various contemplative acts. That's my work. The writing is the sort of wake thrown by that ocular and contemplative momentum. ...How does seeing what I do that way affect my work? The work has no shape before the look. The work is shaped by the contemplative exercise. (Lilburn, 1997, p. 135)

The subject is seeking and trusting in a responsive world. This faith in the sensate, responsive, and animate world, where everything has meaning, where the world speaks to us, where we are in a relationship, where something happens in the turning toward, seems important in the process where poetry forms the dreamer and his world at the same time. It is this curiosity, wonder, receptiveness, openness, authenticity, that contribute to the texture of thought that breathes life into philo-poesis. Not writing because we have to, but questing, contemplating because we want to, because we are astonished with the world, and this astonishment warrants our full attention. In this type of attention the world regains its animate and sensate qualities that we have known as children.
If, however, we were able to recapture absolute naïveté in our observation itself, that is, really to re-experience our initial observation, we should give fresh impetus to the complex of fear and curiosity that accompanies all initial action on the world. We want to see and yet we are afraid to see. This is the perceptible threshold of all knowledge, the threshold upon which interest wavers, falters, then returns. (Bachelard, 1964, p. 110)

In the beginner’s mind the possibilities are endless. The beginner’s mind is a participatory and engaged state of mind, perhaps a mind that takes place in the middle of things, disrupts. Unlike the mind that seeks to customize certainty. Annie Dillard (1989) nicely makes the connection between writing and knowing:

The writing has changed, in your hands, and in a twinkling, from an expression of your notions to an epistemological tool. The new place interests you because it is not clear. You attend. In your humility, you lay down the words carefully, watching all the angles. (p. 3)

Paul Valéry (1964) also has thought deeply about this connection:

All these people who create, half certain, half uncertain of their powers, feel two beings in them, one known and the other unknown, whose incessant intercourse and unexpected exchanges give birth in the end to a certain product. I do not know what I am going to do; yet my mind believes it knows itself; and I build on the knowledge, I count on it, it is what I call Myself. But I shall surprise myself; if I doubted it I should be nothing. I know that I shall be astonished by a certain thought that is going to come to me before long—and yet I ask myself for this surprise, I build on it and count on it as I count on my certainty. I hope for something unexpected which I designate. I need both my known and my unknown. (p. 141)

Such thoughts cohere with a pedagogy of the imagination and with the idea of intrinsic schedules (a turn further along in this work).
“Open them. Open the three fists clinging to the world.”
—Robert Bringhurst (1986, p. 15)

“The sea has no end, in spite of its edges.”
“The seed is the tree thinking and speaking its knowledge of trees.”
—Robert Bringhurst (1986, p. 13)

this is not the beginning of the poem.
this poem was begun like the future long ago.
threshold a visitor on the blue sky.
my words and is looking for rounding
someThing—(round and
while it makes its attempt to
open the three fists clinging to
the world.
where let go of these mountains with every poem
the seed is the tree
thinking and speaking its knowledge
of trees.
this poem you will) recognize its is
in its questioning mountain mind attempting
heart of sky.

it wants to hold. it cups

31 Elza (2010e, p. 46)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>its hands</th>
<th>for you.</th>
<th>to catch.</th>
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<tr>
<td>to drink.</td>
<td>but only</td>
<td>enough</td>
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<td>for a few</td>
<td>sips.</td>
<td>only enough</td>
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<td>for you</td>
<td>to remember</td>
<td>the cool</td>
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<td>touch</td>
<td>of being</td>
<td>to your lips.</td>
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<td>then</td>
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<td>seeps</td>
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<td>through</td>
<td>the attempting.</td>
<td>through</td>
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<td>that gap</td>
<td>you almost</td>
<td>crossed—</td>
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<td>that shiver</td>
<td>that almost</td>
<td>turned</td>
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<td>thought</td>
<td>but escaped</td>
<td>while we were</td>
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<td>busy</td>
<td>assigning</td>
<td>words.</td>
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<td>(in time.</td>
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<td>the sea has</td>
<td>no end</td>
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<td>its edges.</td>
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<td>forgive)</td>
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<td>if this</td>
<td>isn't the end</td>
<td>of the poem</td>
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<tr>
<td>I will)</td>
<td></td>
<td>try again.</td>
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Anne Lamott (1995) tells us:

Writing takes a combination of sophistication and innocence; it takes conscience, our belief that something is beautiful because it is right. To be great art has to point somewhere. So if you are no longer familiar with that place of naive conscience, it's hard to see any point in your being a writer. ...I can almost promise that this quality is still in you, that you are capable of quiet heroism. This sophisticated innocence is a gift. It is yours to give away. (p. 206)

Bachelard (1964) quotes Jean Lescure:

...Knowing must therefore be accompanied by an equal capacity to forget knowing. Non-knowing is not a form of ignorance but a difficult transcendence of knowledge. This is the price that must be paid for an oeuvre to be, at all times, a sort of pure beginning, which makes its creation an exercise in freedom. (xxxiii)

“These lines,” says Bachelard, “are of essential importance to us, in that they may be transposed immediately into a phenomenology of the poetic. In poetry non-knowing is a primal condition” (Bachelard, 1964, xxxiii).

Are we ready for this difficult transcendence of knowledge? For such beginnings? Are we keen on allowing the cycle to renew itself? If new knowledge comes from the non-knowing can we sustain such polarities within? Are they polarities? Can we use them like two hands which need each other to achieve something? The rules are simple: pen words on paper. Be present. Watch things unfold. Like Benoit Mandelbrot’s (2010) fractals, “bottomless wonders spring from simple rules which are repeated without end.”
between you  (and a blade of grass)

only you.  right now.  right here.
you   and this green   tall   slender

silence.  where your ears   grow
as sharp as grass.  this epi.stem.ic quiet

and what hap.pens   between a blade
and everything that wants   to be said.

only you   with these words.
your papers  strewn   across the desk.

your book open   as if you fear
you will lose   your place.

between you   and the p.age—   thought
hovers.   awaiting its name.

and you wait   because you know—
once named you have   trapped it.

you sit with it   learn form its tender
   sm.all freedom.

watch it blow   this way and that
in the wind.   bowing.

watch it fl.utter.   follow it with your eyes
with your ears   with your feet.
until  it condenses   like dew   the soul.

then
serif.fed   to the white   of the page.

and you know   something will be gained.
but more may be lost. then the ache.

*

only you here in the grass
framing a thought in your fixed gaze.

your body. and the word cooling
on the page.

so fragile it can heal.
so fragile you can break.
“We are the space where the Earth dreams.”
—Brian Swimme

“All that breath poured into a form that already has unlearnt more than we have gathered from its broken breath.”
—Harold Rhenisch (2007, p. 46)

in the green-blue dance (of the moment)

suspend

your ability
to comprehend.

hold each instant in the arc of a foot
the cup of a palm the small curve

of the back. (all that breath poured into a form.) wade through the silk

of the body (that already has unlearnt) falling

through the beat
of the dance (we are.

the space where the earth dreams
its green blue breath rippling

more than we have gathered.

already walking backwards

you want to draw things towards you

but the head can only turn after
through language—speak (from its broken breath.)

bodies
swirling with memories float leaves
on the mirror surface of mind.

outstretched arms
find their hands pointing.

and just when you think you’ve got it
your hands turn (to water

a swirl of silk—
time bends back(words)
as far as you will go (in this blizzard

of bodies.

get carried away.

* get carried on the small hands

of the moment.

get lost in the folds
of its

silk sleeves.
in earth dreams

her limbs are all sky
her body inhabited
by wild birds and busy mammals—

an endangered species.

she lost her head
where reason gives
the impression everything is clear.

she motions to dance
a rhythm spins
and turns attracted
to light.

if she had eyes I would see
the stars she holds dear.

then there are all
the words she escapes
 slips past their curved

seashell ears as they listen
to capture her

on the page my words
are already changing her

as she weaves gossamer
and soft moss to hang

in autumn woods.
In her Nobel lecture (Dec. 7th, 1996) Wislawa Szymborska says:

Poets, if they’re genuine, must also keep repeating "I don't know." Each poem marks an effort to answer this statement, but as soon as the final period hits the page, the poet begins to hesitate, starts to realize that this particular answer was pure makeshift that's absolutely inadequate to boot. So the poets keep on trying, and sooner or later the consecutive results of their self-dissatisfaction are clipped together with a giant paperclip by literary historians and called their 'oeuvre'. (para. 15)

This willingness to see before theorizing is what qualifies both genuine poetic and philosophic thought. It is also what qualifies philo-poesis. Where the one who inquires has embraced an active state of uncertainty, an active curiosity. A state of being in wonder. This is a place that is pure, where human management has been suspended ever so briefly. An insight into the coherences and the resonances of the world driven by intrinsic schedules.

In Poetry is not a Project Dorothea Lasky (2010) says:

Nowadays, poetry critics and scholars often refer to an entire body of work by one poet as a "project," but I don’t think poems work that way. I think poems come from the earth into the brain, rather than things that are planted within the earth by the brain. (first page of book, which has no page numbers).

She goes on to say later how: “having a project (and naming it) is a powerful tool.” How “a poet with a nameable project seems wiser, and better than
other poets with unnamable ones” but ultimately she says: “I think that if you really are a poet, you don’t think this is how poetry works” (Lasky, 2010).

Erazim Kohák (1984) says:

In philosophy both linguistic analysis and theoretical construction are, surely, legitimate tasks. Yet the thinkers whose insight withstood the test of time, from Socrates to Husserl, were of a different breed. They were perennial beginners, taking the sense of lived experience in its primordial immediacy for their subject matter. This stance was one of wonder, not of sophistication; the task they undertook was one of articulation—and their virtue was naïveté, a willingness to see before theorizing, to encounter the wonder of being rather than enclose themselves in cunningly devised theories. (p. xi)

We follow this path not because we have to, but because we feel good when partaking, ever so briefly, in this coherence, this tuning into the low pitch voice of the earth. An activity that appears to create a feeling of calm and well-being. Something akin to the feeling one gets when out in nature, interacting with natural spaces, even if it is a short walk, or a quick spurt of gardening. One feels calmer, more relaxed. At some unconscious level, we tune in, are restored, healed, rested. We need to nurture such spaces in our fast paced, and busy world. A place also where we experience a sense of wholeness, and a state of resonance where we can know something we have not warped yet, have not wrapped up in language. We have let go of our certainties, and our theories, and the plots and explanations the mind devises for itself. We have walked open into this unknowing in order to know better. And we feel good doing it. As if something is re-stored, re-storied. It becomes its own driving force.
How quiet can we get? How does one listen to the music of the world? There are so many other voices/noises that can tune it out. The voice of teachers, parents, critics, the voice of reason (which sometimes seems to contradict or go against this softer voice). Do we need to wait for a crisis moment, like I did, to listen deeper. Or can we start right now? When I hear the call and follow it, it is usually with a sense of adventure. Like I am being called out to play. It is a creative and generative place.

Csikszentmihalyi (1996) writes of this creative place:

When a person is working in the area of his or her expertise, worries and cares fall away, replaced by a sense of bliss. Perhaps the most important quality, the one that is most consistently present in all creative individuals, is the ability to enjoy the process of creation for its own sake. (p. 75)

Robinson (2009) speaks of this place as being in our Element. One of the features of being in the Element is “the activity that consumes us becomes intrinsically rewarding (p. 92) and “being in the Element, and especially being in the zone doesn't take energy away from you; it gives it to you” (p. 93). These inquiries are akin to the benefits of the reverie Bachelard presents to us.

Even though this place is worry free and timeless we need time to wander, meander, follow our methods invented for the occasion, feast on the unpredictable results, which one designates. Wonder practised as a mode of inquiry. Still, “to follow a wondering mind means having to get lost. Can you stand being lost” (Barry, 2008, p. 49)? Do you see this as an opportunity, or as a place to fear?
Aldo Leopold (1966) suggests there are two ways to hunt a partridge:

One way to hunt a partridge is to make a plan, based on logic and probabilities, of the terrain to be hunted. This will take you over the ground of where the birds ought to be. Another way is to wander, quite aimlessly, from one red lantern to another. This will likely take you where the birds actually are. The lanterns are blackberry leaves, red in October sun. (p. 66)

It is this wandering, which to an outside eye/observer may appear aimless, that describes most of my practice. This getting lost to be found. Yet, time and time again there are signs, confirmations along the way that I am getting where I am going. Which helps with the trust in the practice.

Both poets and philosophers can get caught in logical plans, interpretations upon interpretation, in the forms and techniques, and suffer from, what my yoga teacher calls *positis*. Where it looks like you are doing the pose, but the internal work is not being done. Where you fool yourself first, and then others, that you are actually experiencing the pose. When you make it look like a poem, or make it sound like philosophy, but it is not genuine. It is empty. “Those who empty words of their meanings, are making themselves (and maybe their neighbours and heirs) inarticulate. And a word is like a heartbeat or a breath” (Bringhurst, 2007, p. 189).

When talking about Parmenides’ work, Bringhurst (2007) says: “It isn’t the versification that makes his language into poetry; it’s the shapeliness and texture of his thinking” (p. 167). This shapeliness and texture of thinking is at the same time aware that language is inadequate for its purposes. I suspect that this awareness also helps interrogate the language that it is using to think in: a good
combination to avoid the pitfalls of taking the *word* for the *world*. To avoid speculation upon speculation, where the first person to be impoverished and separated from the world is the one who seeks. Then the *one who seeks* can easily become *one who seeks to please*. “What we hear in many poems is institutional or habitual form: the stride of fixed opinion, not the brief ecstatic dance” (Bringhurst, 2007, p. 29). This disconnect is easy to achieve when we dwell within the walls of institutionalized knowledge, human control, power, and management. Jan Zwicky (2003) says: “When meaning holds still long enough to have its picture taken, it is dead.” Bringhurst (2007) cautions:

Translators, lawyers, doctors, teachers and engineers, like bakers, potters, and carpenters, all have to be poets in their own way. When they are not, things are apt to go awry. And they do go awry, because professions become institutions, and institutions close their doors and windows, leaving poetry outside. That does no harm to poetry, of course; it only harms the institutions. Outside—meaning outside human management—is the place where poetry lives: in the mountains, in the forest, in the body, in the mind. (p. 74)

We are stuck between the *calcification* of knowing and the *fluidity* of knowing. Between goals to be achieved and being and becoming. Between the institution and the personal pursuit. Between the expectation and the desire. Have you lost your balance yet? It is a constant balancing act in which it is no longer a question *if* you will fall, it is all about *when* you will fall. Because that is when you know you have reached your edge. When with little effort you push yourself past to a place you have never been before.

Wondering into resonances and coherences the poet follows a sense, an impulse, an intuited coherence. Starts to *play* the words on the page. Follows.
T. S. Eliot (1957) writes:

In a poem which is neither didactic nor narrative, and not animated by any other social purpose, the poet may be concerned solely with expressing in verse—using all his resources of words, with their history, their connotations, their music—this obscure impulse. He does not know what he has to say until he has said it; and in the effort to say it he is not concerned in making other people understand anything. He is not concerned, at this stage, with other people at all: only with finding the right words or, anyhow, the least wrong words. He is not concerned whether anybody else will ever listen to them or not, or whether anybody else will ever understand them if he does. He is oppressed by a burden which he must bring to birth in order to obtain relief. (p. 107)
of non-verifiable truths  

to say:

.reality is that ill perceived light
that has to look into my eyes for meaning.

is to put forth a hypothesis. build a city on the foundations of

a metaphor.

(clouds gather
I keep telling everyone
any minute now (it will rain

and the rain turns (in words
and the light is ours (to give meaning to—

the mood that pulls us along wet shimmering

sur f a c e s

.I untie k.nots. watch the city
I have built slowly float a.way.

a mi.rage .turning cloud.

to enter its meta.phoric gates
is to build the city a new)

from the sky down

32 Elza (2010b, p. 29)
“Philosophy is becoming, not history.”
—Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari (1994)

of non-verifiable truths 133

I keep trying to exit
assuming it has a beginning.
I am this thought
* the light.
west of the day I follow
the footprints of (words
from horizon to horizon.
* in my youth I never thought as far as
* the sunset.

now I know this light is not new
in its dawning. it comes to this city
as the past of an other. steals my eyes
for light has nothing
to see itself with.
(these words:
what are they but
labyrinths (I unravel
in mirrors and pauses and dashes
horizons of morphology (in time
carrying me across to another
to find each seeing
* I am this thought summing.
(the rest is light.

33 Elza (2010b, p. 28)
Exploring *philo-poesis* I became acutely aware of how I happen upon, seek out, research, linger, pursue, breathe with, wonder through, dream and dwell in places no one told me to attend to. Yet, these were exactly the places I needed to be in, the ideas I needed to absorb at the time to further and enrich my practice, to satiate my curiosity, to celebrate in the exploration, and discovery.

There is learning, Paul Shepherd (1982) suggests, that is different from preparation by logical operations with dialectical and ideological ends, by art appreciation or creativity, nor by overviews of history and cultures. It means a highly timed openness in which the attention of the child is predirected by an intrinsic schedule, a hunger to fill archetypal forms with specific meaning. (p. 110).

The *highly timed openness*, and the *hunger* are what catch my eye. This hunger reminds me of Plato’s *eros* (as articulated by Lilburn (1997): “Eros is simply a lack, it’s the awareness of a lack” (p. 137). Who will best know of this hunger, but the self seeking and looking to attend to that lack? “Give us our daily hunger” is the way the devout reader’s prayer goes for Bachelard (1969, p. 26). My children, as they get older, go to school less and less hungry. At home they are insatiable. I cannot prevent them from attending to their curiosities within these windows of highly timed openness. I can only witness the moment of hunger and perhaps hope to guide by laying out a few nibbles which would
increase their appetite. The rest is in their hands. While I listen and attend more deeply to their need.

Leopold (1966) tells us: “Education, I fear, is learning to see one thing by going blind to another” (p.168). He refers to the natural world as giving an education, and the creatures, the Others in it, as being our teachers. For example calling his dog his professor, a farm—a textbook. This echoes Bringhurst’s notion that poetry was here long before we were. “It is the language of the world: something humans overhear if they are willing to pay attention, and something the world will teach us to speak, if we allow the world to do so” (Bringhurst, 2008, p. 145). Also Lasky's (2010) idea that poems come from the earth. Bringhurst (2008) writes about the complex and fragile inter-relationships among language, culture, the environment and the people, who are the hosts to language and stories the way trees are hosts to lichen and moss. “The perennial connection to biological and physical reality is what feeds and shapes and calibrates a language” (Bringhurst, 2008, p. 161). Bringhurst gives language the status of an organism that is dependent on the culture and the environment in which it lives. There is a feedback loop. A language is a means of seeing, understanding and talking with the world (Bringhurst, 2008, p. 163).

As we become desensitized to our world, our language is impoverished as well. “When you kill a language off and replace it with an import, you kill part of the truth” (Bringhurst, 2008, 163). Again I am tempted to think of language as an extension to our senses. A way of making sense, of sensing the world. What emerges for me is that language is a sense making medium, an organic
membrane, if you will, through which sense flows back and forth between us, and
the world, between writer and reader.

In my explorations I encountered a number of concepts and ideas which I
believe are important to this making sense, to our intrinsic schedules. They seem
to be part of how we approach the world, how we sustain our presence and
awareness, how we engage with the world, as well as guide our meandering, our
passing through. Such ideas as Evenrden’s wonder, Bachleard’s reverie,
Shepards’ idea of the highly timed openness, and hunger, Plato’s eros, Lilburn’s
seeing with courtesy. Then there are Skolimowski’s sensitivities, through which
organisms react to their environment in ever more knowing and purposeful ways.
“Sensitivity, therefore, holds the key, not only to our understanding of evolution,
but to the understanding of ourselves,” (Skolimowski, 1994, p. 15). The more
sensitivities we have, the richer our life. Also reminiscent of Bachelard’s (1969)
oneiric organs.

Leopold (1966) speaks of biases: “Our biases are indeed a sensitive index
to our affections, our tastes, our loyalties, our generosities, and our manner of
wasting weekends” (p. 77). And of his perception: “the outstanding characteristic
of perception is that it entails no consumption and no dilution of any resource” (p.
290). Bachelard is hinting toward a similar self-sustaining ecology of being: “In
happy hours we know a reverie which feeds on itself which maintains itself in the
same way life maintains itself” (p. 64). This state resembles Robinson’s (2009)
being in the zone.
“When it is a matter of nature we rarely find ourselves on familiar ground. At every step there is something that humiliates and mortifies proud minds.”
—Abbé de Vallemont (Bachelard, 1964, p. 118)

“A word is a bud attempting to become a twig.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1969, p. 17)

where the mind sheds its proud skin
t34
from the road it looks like
there is no access.
a creek rushing.
we step over. and the sound drifts
with us up (words.
we make our way through twigs
catching onto hair crackling underfoot
my boot s inks into a fallen birch—
its bark in tact but
like a word holds together
what is rotting underneath.
we sweep away vines. move aside
branches get through
(language. untended overgrown
here where I define it
tame it make it wild.
face the jawbones of elk or deer.
their scattered teeth— syllables
I carefully examine.
in this thick under-
the trees predate memory
growth.
the roots twisted etymologies
I look up in my need for rational

34 Elza (2010b, p. 32)
greens against metaphysical blues.

the boulder will not budge from the spot in the sun. its moss

a perfect garden. the air sweet with pine birch and such small varied life

at every step there is something that humiliates and mortifies (proud minds.) and thus

I mistook the sound of the wings of grouse for an engine starting in the distance.

it is not spring yet but you can see the words are eager buds. like the rushing of this brook skipping rocks—such eagerness it foams.

and once we have crossed we are truly here (re cognize this (k now it—

this wondering among the trees. this mingling of thought with leaves.

the bursting buds swollen with new definitions.

and the way the light shafts through to make a point.

here (I will stand still.
The above ideas all point to how we engage the human consciousness with the material world. How we place our awareness in the present moment. Becoming aware of signs that are ever present where the whole universe is speaking to you (Buber, 1970). Evernden (1985) writes: “It is the kind of relationship we establish which will determine the world we live in” (p. 99). This relationship defines what we will find, how we will do our research, how we will write our poems and our philosophy. This turning toward, and this attitude, are what comes even before our scientific thought and experiments, before our objectification of the world. The primacy of the attitude, of that relationship, will strongly influence and, perhaps, determine our ways of abstracting, our methods of inquiry. If we do not allow for these primary relationships to develop, then how could we possibly claim we truly know anything?

“We need a new concept of truth, which would be congruent with the participatory nature of the universe” (Skolimowski, 1994, p. xix). Our knowledge stems from our embodied existence, our experience in the world. “Our spontaneous experiences of the world, charged with subjective, emotional, and intuitive content, remains the vital and dark ground of all our objectivity” (Abram, 1996, p. 34). Otherwise, we fall . . . into a vicious spiral of abstractions that have no relation to being, and being suffers.

In his investigations Towards a Deep Subjectivity and more specifically while thinking of philosophical space, Poole (1972) says:

A final judgement on a specific philosophical problem cannot be made at any level higher than that of the intuitive judging consciousness of the individual. Either understanding becomes
existential, or it does not come at all. There is no specifically "philosophical" faculty of the mind in which or through which a dilemma can be finally, once and for all, solved, aufgehoben, done away with. Even at the limits of our inquiries we are only judging according to our lights, as best we can. (p. 144)

Where does that leave us? What are our final judgements? Are they consolations, simplifications, complications, denials? What does that tell of us? Can we hide behind these judgements and not take responsibility for them?

"Philosophical space is thus the space of choice. ... In deciding what he wants to become, he [the thinker] decides indirectly what he wants his world to become" (Poole, 1972, p. 145). The responsibility lies so heavily on the thinking/feeling/being.

*Philo-poesis* follows intrinsic schedules, where we dance in the spaces of human-ecological renewal, intuition, recognition, responsibilities, replenishment, reconnaissance, and a freedom which allows for their fullest realization.

I shape myself as I think. I write my poem, and my poem is writing me.

"The poet's poem interests me less than the subtleties and enlightenment he acquires by way of his work. And that is why one must work at one's poems, that is, work at oneself" (Valéry, 1971, p. 397). We do not all have to write poems, but we all need to live poetically.
“Pretend we haven’t been here before. Pretend we don’t know.”
—Sue Sinclair (2003, p. 60)

alternate grammars

walk off the asphalt into the grammar of this acreage.

into the tenses of wild grasses as high as your thigh.

and into the scattered light of trees. no step here is defined.

in the tension between shadow and sun lit spots the wind

shifts the boarders of my nouns teeming with the small life of prepositions.

in the definite article of this place knowledge is always (being revised.

and the trees are not lost in the punctuation. their leaves

such yellow they could be their own source of light. step into the present

tense of ghost logs and grow dumb while your ears search for new words.

in the conditionals of storms lightning and drought (a fact is

a dead bird (a crack in the earth
(a perfectly charred tree.
boulders marked by the past tenses of

35 Elza (2010e, p. 53)
ancient moss. its delicate new tendrils
embrace white skulls and bones.

wade through the under brush pushing up
and closing in on once hacked out paths.

what breaks the light here is not what
stands in its way. what breaks the light

is that I walk here (thinking I know

this place like my own name
in the perfect tense of having learned.

yet every step questions where I stop
where the sky begins.

* the asphalt still only runs two ways.
from there the trees are points of reference—
a stylized calligraphy.

I have come to learn how the wind can
whisper no-words
and the boughs listen with trepidation.

how the rain can tap out a message on
my bare skin. I have come to learn

how the grass rises after I have sat here
straightening each letter (each curve

of my name until (I am

only eleven stalks of grass.)
Poems were taught to me fragmented, dissected, the excitement drained out of them. Somewhere along the clinical hallways of school they had lost their soul. They were broken down into metaphors, arguments, meter, simile, themes, names, enjambments, summaries etc.. This type of breaking down is reminiscent of what Michael Pollan (2008) observes we do with food: break it down into nutrients. Instead of a carrot we need carotenoids in our diet. Once we render food into invisible nutrients, we need an expert to tell us what to eat. Despite all the efforts to understand food by breaking it down, he says, we still cannot understand what goes on deep down in the soul of a carrot. Pollan (2008) goes on to say: “You don’t need to fathom a carrot’s complexity in order to reap its benefits” (p. 66). Likewise, it may be difficult to understand what goes on deep down in the soul of a poem, but we do not need to fathom a poem’s complexity in order to reap its benefits.

“If the cosmos is infinitely complex, and there is no reason to assume that it isn’t, the mind does not have the capacity to deal with that complexity. Thus it must simplify—in order to comprehend” (Skolimowski, 1994, p. xvii). The critical analysis of a poem is first and foremost owned by the expert. It is an attempt through explication to harness, contain, and simplify a complex phenomenon. It
is a way of controlling the phenomenon. It also takes away the right for any other (less trained) to experience it. It is the taking away of a freedom. Carl Leggo (2010) narrates the experience and outcome of such engagement:

As a student of English literature in the 1970s, I was taught by professors who had imbibed the gospel of the New Critics. Texts were to be read with a single-minded attention to rhetoric or construction. There was no allowance for discussing how you responded to the text, how it made you feel, how it triggered memories and emotions. This kind of reading promoted the notion that the text held a secret message that just needed to be decoded. So, as a reader I was like a spy who sought to eviscerate texts with a skilful scalpel. In effect, I could not address my emotions, I could not investigate my heart. Instead, I pretended that the whole world was constructed in clear and logical and coherent ways. My feelings and experiences were always outlawed. (p. 73)

I painfully relate to this experience. In a recent interview when asked What would you suggest to teachers to get students writing poetry?, eleven year old poet Sophie Hillcoat (2010) says: “I would suggest not to make too many restrictions because that would keep other children from showing their creativity and freedom in making the poems, the freedom is what makes it better and what really makes it something special” (p. 41). I am glad Sophie mentions the freedom that writing gives her. Sophie tells us she writes at recess time (which appears to be the only time that is hers).
“To speak of a poem in itself, judge a poem in itself has no real and precise meaning. It is to speak only of a possibility. The poem is an abstraction, a piece of writing that is waiting…”
—Paul Valéry (1971, p. 156)

“the imagination is never wrong.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. 152)

**how to**

(forget)

teacher asks: do you get it?

how we for-get.
how to re-member that
the imagination is never wrong?
you wouldn’t think of it

but to forget is to remember
something new. to forge
to dream without this memory of
teacher asking: did you get it?

I said elated: yes.
she wants to know more. I speak

with such enthusiasm.

I am on tip-toe.
teacher leans back
to make space for me to lean into

this poem about
a black cat and a moon.

her eyes get stern. she asks:

*did* you for-get?
she wants to know what the black cat
stood for. (stood under?)
under-stood?
how can it be wrong? I feel I’ve got it?

which over time I forgot.

36 Elza (2009a, p. 43)
“The problem is to reveal an intelligence to itself. Anything can be used.”
—Jacques Rancière (1999, p. 28)

“Poets will always imagine faster than those who watch them imagining.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1969, p. 25)

school.s$^{37}$

in the nurse.ry                  pond
below the  For Sale  sign
next to                        the fertilize.r

the artificial               water plants
in neatly lined tubs         flicker

the butterfly    koi –

alexandrian flame.s         under
the water                    consuming all

we know.  they swirl        through
a transparency of            fins
flesh     fluid—              each one

an idea                     trying
to take form.               restless
with an under.current      fear

that soon  each             will be
scooped    into              a void

without  clarity.           under vaults
without papyrus.

and a geo.metry             so familiar
it leaves                   nothing

to be  imagined.

$^{37}$ Elza (2009a, p. 49)
“Intelligence is not a power of understanding based on comparing knowledge with its object. It is the power to make oneself understood through another’s verification.”
—Jacques Rancière (1999, p. 72)

"The average Ph.D. thesis is nothing but the transference of bones from one graveyard to another.”
—J. Frank Dobie (1945, p. 26)

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\textsuperscript{38} Elza (2009a, p. 51)
Bringhurst (2007) reminds us: “Poetry is knowing, but verse is a form, a technique, a device. At worst it is merely a grate through which language is pushed” (p. 28). The practice of yoga appears to be about the poses and shapes the body moves into, but if we remain on this superficial level we are likely missing the essence of yoga. This essence is in the movement of breath, in the unmediated, direct experience that should be savoured, sipped as nourishment. Poetry can be that. *Philo-poesis* is that.

Despite my experiences at school that put me off both poetry and philosophy, my fascination with imaginative and concise language, big questions, and deep thoughts remained. But they remained separate. When the two were brought together in the forms of narrative, poetry, and philosophy the combination startled me and awed me with its complexity and beauty. In 2005/6 I had steeped myself in a couple of semesters of readings on philosophy. I was particularly interested in metaphor, and as I read, I kept noticing the philosophers returning me to metaphorical/poetic language. “Metaphor, for Ricoeur, is rather like a linguistic version of a magic eye picture. What is needed in order to understand it is not instruction, but intuition and imagination. Poetic language is the richest kind of language in this respect” (Simms, 2003, p. 74). “Metaphor is more that a special effect in language, it is the very essence of language” (Simms, 2003, 76). I felt this sentiment most acutely expressed by Bachelard (1964, 1969) whose prose I found very poetic. Considering that poetry was my other love I decided to listen to these calls and perhaps give poetry a chance in my philosophical explorations. In hind sight, I see this as healing
decades-long gap in my life. The time came when, in order to be true to myself, I had to overcome this separation. I was either going to reconcile these two sides of myself, or I was going to quit the whole enterprise of writing paper after paper trying to keep poetry out. Dividing myself between them was not only exhausting, but crippling. Ruth Behar (2008) says: “You will reach a point, as I did, where there is no choice but to work from your poetic self” (p. 67). I had reached that point. Glesne (2010) relates how after her masters, her PhD, and her tenure she was left depleted rather than feeling accomplished. Desperate to integrate creativity in her life, she turned to poetry and started using it in her research. Glesne (2010) says:

> Writing poetry was as difficult as writing academic papers, but the process rewarded me with energy and excitement as it probed unexplored parts of myself, engaged my imagination, and constantly surprised me when I would begin with a word or image, lose myself in writing, and emerge in some unpredictable place. (p. 29)

I am aware this is nothing new for the world. Like the Pre-Socratics, I feel “free to seek the common root of poetry, philosophy and science, and to honour it as best we can” (Bringhurst, 2007, p. 104). “In fact,” Bringhurst (2007) goes on, “the moment we leave the conceptual jail where philosophy and poetry are confined to separate cells, we find ourselves in plenty of good company as well as fresh air” (p. 104).

We do think of poetry as mysterious, but we have misplaced the source of the mystery. We have wrapped it up with the psychology and history of the person, not placed it at the heart of a genuine desire to know the world intimately,
to see with courtesy, to engage with our whole being. “Poetry is a life cherishing force.... For poems are not words, after all, but fires for the cold, ropes let down for the lost, something as necessary as bread in the pockets of the hungry” (Oliver, 1994, p. 122).

At the heart of genuine philosophy is also wonder, and the continuous I don’t know. A state that is not threatened by uncertainty, and the unknown. A receptive and open state. According to Skolimowski (1994) to recognize the human being’s creative nature is to recognize that the universe is open and mysterious. “And conversely: the open-ended, evolving universe requires and demands the recognition of man’s creative nature,” (p. xvii). Robinson (2009) invites us to rethink radically our view of intelligence. It is diverse, tremendously dynamic, and entirely distinctive (Robinson, 2009, p. 46). This view of intelligence entails a wider, more organic conception of the human being. “Understanding the dynamic elements of human growth is as essential to sustaining human cultures into the future as the need to understand the ecosystems of the natural world on which we ultimately depend” (Robinson, 2009, p. 258).

The philosophy, or poetry, that tries to make a point is less interesting to me than the one that is the point from which image/thought opens up. Philopoiesis is a place from which things open up. Where the other becomes itself in the excitement of the seeker’s consciousness. Isn’t that what we want to do with our children? Place them on thresholds from which they can explore the tendencies in themselves, within the relationships they form in the world.
“In any case, harmony in reading is inseparable from admiration. We can admire more or less, but a sincere impulse, a little impulse toward admiration is always necessary if we are to receive the phenomenological benefit of a poetic image. The slightest critical consideration arrests this impulse by putting the mind in second position, destroying the primitivity of the imagination.”

—Gaston Bachelard (1994, p. xxvi)

“Meaning is the work of the will.”

—Jacques Rancière (1999, p. 56)

ode to the critic  (or what was I trying to say?)

his eyebrows raised for lack of commas.

his punctual gaze piercing the spaces I have left (here. the breath cannot be steady as the hands of clocks or accurate as dials. (this gap this pause is for the reader. is where we walk and our footprints will not leave a trace.

yet if we are to trace what thought moves here—a rugged mountainous landscape the mind endlessly explores to find a quiet temple where the silence gathers so big it cannot leave the mouth.

* here ambiguity proliferates what a comma clarifies

39 Elza (2009a, p. 46)
and shuts the door I have left (on purpose)
open.

a clarity that does not raise eyebrows
does not take your breath away.

what informs the words is the gap
through which we come to a place

of wor(d)ship

settle down and rise through its paper thin silence

where thought grows deep.
and then this (dream

we are both dreaming
on the page. is it the cause or
is it the result? the left out comma is

a door
*

through which you do not walk inside
my head but inside yourself
(seeking. in an image

or a word apart from others (finding

(losing yourself
in such needed reverie
in such a state of emergence

that you should never fear (you are
misreading me.
Erazim Kohák (1984) writes: “Though philosophy must do much else as well, it must initially see and, thereafter, ground its speculations ever anew in seeing” (xii). As educators it is in those moments when we step in tune with being, hear and echo the music and the heartbeat of being that we are educators at our best. Rancière (1999) reminds: “The problem is to reveal an intelligence to itself. Anything can be used” (p. 28).

How can one become such an educator? First, you (I) need to be practising this dance for yourself/myself, know the good of it. Know what it is like to let yourself get lost in reverie, to live the life of a dreamer, to experience this place of deep repose and happiness, the self-sufficiency and freedom, the renewed energy, the intrinsic rewards, not to mention the growth and transformation that accompany such engagement. Also to know that you (I) can trust such intrinsic drives. How else can we hold the space for another? How else can we value this enterprise unless we ourselves are convinced of the benefits it brings, unless we too have found renewal and nourishment there. I was happy to find confirmation in Jane Hirshfield’s three keys to opening the gate to poetry to young writers (2010):

The first key to teaching poetry writing is the teacher’s own passion. As a practicing poet, I came into the classroom filled with joy in the art and its possibilities. Many classroom teachers feel this as well, of course—it doesn’t matter if a person is a “published poet”; what
matters is that they have known for themselves the exhilaration of words. The yeast of passion is what lets imagination rise. (p. 44)

The second key is in tune with what this work has been exploring: freedom of mind for both the teacher and student, where writing is an open field, where the point of language, written or spoken, is, quite simply, to express, to understand, and to be understood (Hirshfield, 2010). Compare that to what Rancière (1999) says:

Essentially what an emancipated person can do is be an emancipator: to give not the key to knowledge, but the consciousness of what an intelligence can do when it considers itself equal to any other and considers any other equal to itself. Emancipation is the consciousness of that equality, of that reciprocity that alone permits intelligence to be realized by verification. (p.139)

*Equality and intelligence* are synonymous words for Rancière. The very structure of our school is antithetical to the creative and moral being. The institution needs the poetic consciousness. Bringhurst (2007) says that “the very existence of a set of rules ... is always evidence of the failure of morality” (p. 193). He also quotes Friedrich Schleiermacher: “Morality starts from the consciousness of freedom” (p. 193).

And the third key is the invitation to write (Hirshfield, 2010). When I close my classroom door, the classroom becomes an open field. When I face the blank page the editor has to leave. In reverie one is a free being. In reverie we begin our apprenticeship to freedom. What a wonderful place to start incubating the imaginative, creative, intelligent, moral being.
"And in the shadows of our human dream of falling human voices are Creation’s most recent flowers, mere buds of fire nodding on their stalks."
—Li-Young Lee (2008, p. 103)

We actively participate in changing our children's/student's world, yet we are not quite clear what it is we are intent on altering. Often we recognize that the most rewarding teaching is when we learn from each other. The everyday task of care-taker, mother, teacher, can blossom into a reverence for young intellect. Once we enter this relationship with such reverence the experience can be transformative, and not just for the child. Listening is critical to philo-poiesis as a practice, as an attunement to one’s resonance with/in the world. A child creates her own philo-poiesis to explore and speak to her world. Listening to my children I am learning how to engage and be present in order to allow for their world to unfold and thrive, which in turn nourishes our being.

Teacher: What are you drawing?
Child: I am drawing god.
Teacher: But, no one knows what god looks like.
Child: They will, in a minute.
—Sir Ken Robinson (2006)
we have to (talk

my toddler needs to talk
all the time I am more concerned
with someone listening.

lonelier than we appear
driftwood of the mind seeks
the company of streams

the tentative encouragement
of the banks
that bear us.

I go around the water clock
explaining to her
the possibility of tributaries.

in their flow
our streams of mind
wrap around each other
for a sense of permanence.

( so when my daughter talks
I listen. because
I don't know when
she will need me to

or when her words will
flood my banks
to seek
new depths.
we walk through the neighbourhood art studio. she is drawn to the walls where the paintings are still. she sits and listens. each one—a seashell to her ear.

we eat kiwis. she explains how they taste like something else. how when you close your eyes and you sink your teeth into the fruit “it is like a dream coming to your mouth.”

self-portrait

her face was green and blue like earth no ears no eyes no mouth.

she knows she is a child protected only by the paper skin of light.
burning trees

she drew a picture of ...
I could not tell what.
I thought: seashell?

she corrects:
tree stumps mama.
see the trees have burned.

indeed two red glowing dots
the eyes of tree or root.
underneath a mouth
as if the earth was hurt.

the third stump had wispy lines
coming up from it faint
like the memory of something gone

look
and this is the spirit of the tree
that has burned.


Journal41 (age 5):

D42: Guess which hand the little world is in?
Mama: The left hand. [she shows the right one] I said the left, not the right. [Then she shows an empty left.] That isn’t fair. You moved it. You are not playing by the rules. You do not know the rules of the game.
D: Yes, I do.
Mama: What are they?
D: The rules are that you never guess which hand the world is in.

41 Entries from a journal I kept of my children
42 D stands for daughter, S stands for son.
can we not imagine?

it took us seven songs to get there.
we drove in rain
I do not remember traffic.

the bookmark she made on the trip
is a scribble drawing.

mommy doesn’t all this make sense?
she said looking at the outcome.

there could be a ghost there
there could be a girl there right?

there could be a truck here
and there could be a fish over here
she points to the bottom of the bookmark.

there could be a crow in the tree
her finger moves upward.

there could be a sun under the tree
and can we not see a spiral in the sun?

Can we not imagine things?

★

D (age 5): Mama, don’t you get scared when you see pretty things?
Mama: No, I get excited.
D: I get scared when I see pretty things that it makes me so surprised, I get scared out of my eyes.
Journal: (age 4)
Mama: How come when you were two you got up to go to the potty by yourself, but now at four you are scared to get up?
D: Because small don’t know. Then you get bigger, you know, and you are scared.
Then you get even bigger and you are not scared again. So it’s like that change.

Journal: (age 5)
There is no Six
She made a paper fortune teller. Wrote numbers on the inside. Decorated it with mosquitoes and ticks (the blood sucking insects) and the other one with good insects (tarantulas and spiders). Then she decorated one with dinosaurs. When we got to the numbers on the inside, she wanted to write the little fortunes hidden under the numbers.
She opened the flap under the 6 and said: Papa, how do you spell: There is no six.

Meeting the tooth fairy (age 6)
After the excitement of losing her first tooth I heard the following exchange at bath time:
D: Papa, will you tell mama something? When I put the tooth tonight under my pillow, promise you will not take anything out, or put anything under it. It’s a science experiment. I have to find out if the tooth fairy exists. [pause] I have to know.
Dad: And what happens if she doesn’t? What if she isn’t real and you don’t get a quarter.
D: (Big sigh) Then I will let you help her ... tomorrow night.
My son, almost one, puts his head between the covers of a cardboard book. His body—an instrument which fearlessly explores his four degrees of freedom, tests my body—an instrument for measuring what fear hides in knowing.

The difference between soul (dushá) and suffocate (dúsha) in Bulgarian is only a matter of emphasis. A fine line to walk. A tight rope. Balancing on a gesture, a face, pitch, a phrase, the close knitting of words.

In the midst of washing dishes, or cooking, I am bombarded with questions from my four-year-old daughter. "And how did life begin anyways?" she asks. I misunderstand, and explain the seed. "I mean the first person on earth?" she corrects. On her brother’s first birthday she says: "The earth went once around the sun for him." And then assures him: "The first birthday is the longest. Then they come faster.” Her answers and observations are like rainbows through sometimes very grey days. She tells me: "The spider turned into a living spiral and lived in space forever." That, "Bread has two heels, just like us.” Or that: "Continents are islands too, you know."

How to claim my answers are more real than hers? More true? There are so many degrees of separation in these "truths" that are not mine. These hand-me-downs, worn thin, I have to clothe my children in. Rags she sees through, doesn’t feel the duty to pretend.

Opening the parenthesis, she invites the world into the equation. My eyes turn, not to say too much, too soon. Ellipses left hanging, footsteps, walking... away.

"Look, mom, he has his head in the mouth of a crocodile," she comments on her brother’s struggle to fit his head between the covers of a book. We laugh, she twirls in her dress. "Mom, what do you think?"

I say, "very pretty."

She corrects, "not very, fairy pretty."

Much later she said: "Maybe the reason there’s no such thing as fairies is that no one cared to take care of fairy eggs."

---

43 Elza (2010c, p. 16)

44 Bringhurst (2007) writes: "Faërie comes from feral, ferocious, and fierce. Faërie is, or was once, not a playground filled with diminutive amusements for young minds but the mythworld itself, which is everything outside our control" (p. 248).
in the child footsteps of light

through regular windows on regular days
this century-old house stands
perfecting the art of light.

still invites the day into itself
as if it were sustenance.

beveled glass edges turn playground
for even a little bit of sun.
draw music out of the language of shadows.

in this house rainbows are born.

she captures them in an old straw basket
plucks blooms off white walls
transfers them onto pieces of paper.

the light disguised into the blue furniture
is still a mystery to her. child eyes
capture. refine. distill.

a rare brew I drink from.

she will later learn light gives
colour and light takes colour away.
that rainbows are light’s willingness to be known.

that each day there comes a slant—
the moment when light reveals
the flaws in a house

those even the builders gave up on.

intimacy begins with this revelation—
with the smell of burnt milk
over spilled rainbows.
the big snow of the year

we stomp up the hill to daycare.
in his third winter
face the colour of sunrise
maroon hat turning white
shoulders easy under snow.

he makes the sound of someone crying.
“who’s crying,” I ask.
snow crying.

“why?”
because we step on snow’s face.
snow has so many faces.

❖

after his bath he ate
mandarins. naked
just him and the fruit

separated by his three-year-old curious skin.

he sits on his heels gracefully
peels orange skin with
fingernails a whole fist.

separating himself from shadow.

his eyes—a mirror
entering light.

( I try to trap this moment
with a butterfly net.
like a kid I believe I can.)
at four he said:
mama, do you know why
dandelions will never die?

why?
because they are in my head.

Are children poets? Are they philosophers? As a parent, educator, philosopher and poet, I think of the child’s world as a natural place, where “nature is not merely the collection of undomesticated biomass. Nature is the tendency in things to be what they are, and in that tendency to present themselves as both distinct and connected” (Zwicky, 2008, p. 90). A place resonant, and coherent.

I cannot help but notice the qualities that come naturally to them. I cherish these same qualities in myself as a poet. I have to jealously guard them. Both in myself and my children. Even more so, as they get older.

“When we become truly ourselves, we just become a swinging door, and we are purely independent of, and at the same time dependent upon, everything else.”
—Shunryn Suzuki (1992, p. 31)
Journal: (Son 5, Daughter 9)

D and S are playing an adventure game where they are exploring The Pits of Doom.
Dad: Why are they always the Pits of Doom and Despair. Why not the pits of joy and happiness.
D: Really, it’s happy and fun, but if we call it that... it will be boring.

the flower girl

While I wait for my 12 ounce latte, the girl at the flower shop on Granville Island fills a whole garbage can with flowers. Stuffs them in a grey cracked bin, rubber gloves on, an expression of tedium on her face. When it appears full, puts her foot in, steps hard.

A stubborn pink flower keeps rearing its blossom out. My daughter next to me restrains the urge to run and pick up the rest of the buds and blooms on the ground.

An elderly woman catches my eye, her eyes wide moons of disbelief. When the bin is truly full, a muscular young man carries it off to the organics dumpster. My daughter follows.

He dumps it. Walks away without a second look and, perhaps, thought. Without a second thought, or look, my daughter climbs on the bench next to the dark green dumpster, reaches in and pulls out two yellow edged with orange and one wine red.

She holds them so tenderly, I am embarrassed. She brings them close to her chest. I am embarrassed for feeling embarrassed. She holds them so lovingly, I look around uncomfortable.

She shows me, still standing on the bench, how the big bud looks like it has little teeth. I am pulled into her world so quickly I forget to care what others think. I get closer, marvel, while the flower girl keeps her hourly job filling the bin.
My children’s thought is fueled by curiosity, wonder, the virtue of naïveté, and a fresh way of bringing the world into the word. Like a good poem, they pierce me with their observations. Perhaps, any true and honest inquiry into the world begins with poetry. Can we sustain this state of mind throughout life?

For Bachelard (1969) childhood is a state of mind. “A potential childhood is within us” (p. 101) and “reverie puts us in the state of a soul being born” (p. 15). Linda Barry (2008) encourages us to think of childhood as a place, not a time. “A place that already exists like an unplayed-with play set, needing only one thing to set all things in motion (put your name here)” (p. 159).

Furthermore, this childhood continues to be receptive to any opening upon life and makes it possible for us to understand and love children as if we were their equals in original life. (Bachelard, 1969, p. 101)

Are we open to the discovery of this place? Are we willing to step into the wild meadow a child can offer us? Are we ready to explore it? If not, what stops us? “The poet can call us back to that place. Poets will help us find this living childhood within us, this permanent durable immobile world” (Bachelard, 1969, p. 20).

I take my apprenticeship seriously.
of jewels

I pluck dandelions show my daughter how to make
a wreath)

(underground the mine works overtime digging up diamonds

she dances in the grass dreaming of (the earth is nursing to perfection.

what she will become.

a ring)

my son already learning to be tough with tiny daisies in his hands

a bracelet)

“To the extent that we remain in the egoic consciousness that externalizes nature/life and world, and draws a boundary around the self and sees the world as otherness, to that extent ecology is a failed lesson, even if we are tracking in wilderness and know a million bits of important ecological facts.”

(Bai et al., 2010, p. 360)

45 Elza (2010e, p. 51)
My son went to kindergarten a full being, came back half. He was a boy. It is not that he did not know he is a boy before, but now the girls will not play with him because of that.

I had no comfort for him, no explanation that would make sense.

If he was not polite, I could say: *If you are more polite they might play with you.*
If he did not know how to share, I could say: *If you share better they might play with you.*

The same year he is told he has five senses, he counted them on the fingers of one hand.
And to top it all up: The world is divided into animate and inanimate things.

"Physiologists largely agree that in addition to the five [senses][46] we all know about, there are four more:

- *sense of temperature* (thermoception)
- *sense of pain* (inside and outside) (nociception)
- *kinesthetic sense* (proprioception)
- *sense of balance* vestibular sense/equilibrioception

less common one: *synesthesia*

"The sense of intuition doesn't seem to make the cut with most physiologists."
—Ken Robinson (2009, p. 32)
the rooms in which we dream

I remember childhood— clean sheets flapping in the wind. snapping a tune.

we laughed vertically through ourselves. thought ourselves tangential to everything dying.

(being with you makes me again known to myself.)

most days the mind is a sharp blade that cuts through my morning. squeaks rusty. somedays it is still a bird flying north.

the rooms in which we dream have fragile walls.

words become slippery fish in the hands of ghosts as they argue over their lost names as they sit over my shoulder so many eyes fastened to the night.

on days when the shadows creep up our forgetting I squeeze out the backyard through a loose slat in the fence (which partitions the meadow into strips of light).

I am swallowed whole by the tall yellow grass. remember through my hands and knees.

my body— a flock of starlings rising up into the sky as if they are one.

hoping I will not be found yet. hoping I’ll be missed.
We have been at the beach for hours. 
As we get in the car my son (seven) begins:

\textit{it feels like life is a system}  
(I pull pen and paper out and begin to write) 
\textit{when god is dreaming he dreams about all this} 
\textit{then he tries to make it when he is awake}

\textit{and this time the finish of the dream would be}  
\textit{the sun does a supernova}  
\textit{and it will be dark}

\textit{and when god’s up}  
\textit{he tries to make things and he fails.}
(I am puzzled of where all this god talk comes from.
We do not talk much about god.)

Why does he fail? I ask.

\textit{because it is pure dark for a long long time}

Does he succeed when there is light? 
\textit{well, there is light all around him}  
\textit{but when he dreams...}  
\textit{or it could be the other way around}  
\textit{his dreams are all dark and nothing}  
\textit{and when he is awake he invents different things}  
\textit{and they become real}

What made you think of god dreaming? 
\textit{I don’t know,}  
(shrugs his shoulders)  
\textit{maybe I dreamt of it.}

mommy \textit{ why aren’t you starting the car?}

two years later I find a quote by Li-Young Lee (2008, p. 20):  
\textit{“Maybe this isn’t the news.}  
\textit{Maybe this is a dream God is having}  
\textit{and somebody should wake him.”}
Brighurst (2007) says it is not the versification that makes poetry out of language, but the texture and shapeliness of the thought. “When you think intensely and beautifully, something happens. That something is called poetry” (Brighurst, 2008, p. 143). In this sense poetry rolls off the tongues of children with the certainty of a dewdrop rolling off a blade of grass. When it has reached a fullness, that is too much for a grass blade to bear, it spills forth into the world.

“In his reverie the child realizes the unity of poetry” (Bachelard, 1969, p. 125). This condensation of observations, imagination, and memory seems to come out of thin air, but when reverie settles on the cool blade of the world this condensation is inevitable. What drives it is a state of wonder, a willful seeking, an unconditional curiosity, an active hunger. “We need lessons so badly from a life which is beginning, from a soul which is blossoming, from a mind which is opening!” (Bachelard, 1969, p. 132). It is up to us to listen. It is up to us what metaphors we will live by. Can we perceive the child’s world as interconnected and complex the way a wild meadow is, or a forest? The teacher as one who walks into this wild place? How does one walk into such a place? I hope at least willing to be changed by it as much as they are intent on changing it.
the shape of questions\footnote{Elza (2009d, p. 12)}

• daughter

trees sleep quietly on my chest.
the years grow deep. distracting.
their branches search for the turn of veins.
questions hang (like moss)
on the limbs of my child. I keep her
small (y)ears all to myself
sometimes even
pressed between the pages of books.

• son

the debris on the beach lie
like questions that have never been
asked. (we get closer the crunch
of pebbles) they fill the palms of
my now three-year-old son.
his eyes filled with blue wonder
his footprints full of
ocean. his warm hands
already altering

the questions.
Brinhurst (2007) begins his book with, “I don’t know how poetry knows” (p. 15). He goes on a few lines later to say that this kind of knowing is maybe knowing in the purest form we know. “Knowing freed from the agenda of possession and control—knowing in the sense of stepping in tune with being, hearing and echoing the music and heartbeat of being—is what we mean by poetry” (p. 15).

Poetry is thinking,” says Brinhurst (2002), it is “a quality or aspect of existence,” and “poems are the tips of the iceberg afloat on the ocean of poetry” (p. 155). Brinhurst (2002) looks at poetry as a way of finding out, and composing a poem as, “a way of leaving the self behind and getting involved in something larger” (p. 162). For Brinhurst, “long before our species was born, the books had been written. The library was here before we were. We live in it” (p. 160).

The poetic consciousness is a stance, a way of thinking, and approaching. The self is grown in attending and in awareness. Awe, wonder and love are its method. A place where perhaps all authentic knowledge begins before it is run through the circuits of human management, and institutions. The place where philosophy and poetry meet, greet each other as siblings. Where we think with all
our faculties and senses, which are more than we can enumerate. The place where knowledge is intuited, springs from the world, while at the same time connecting us to it. Glesne (2010) acknowledges the benefit of poetic attention in doing our research:

Poets listen carefully to what is said and how it is said—to rhythms, refrains, and internal rhymes. They hear spaces between the words, pick up on words unsaid, and find meanings beneath the words. With such a mindset, poetry appears everywhere. (p. 33)

Lamott’s (1994) echoes that, “One of the things that happens when you give yourself the permission to start writing is that you start thinking like a writer” (p. 136). Poetic attention opens a space where multiple layers and levels can be presented in their tensions, paradoxes, unresolved contradictions. The outcome acquires not only a complexity, but also defies the mind’s need to make it all make sense in linear ways. Poetic attention, the poetic mindset is aware that the world cannot be named. Rancière (1999) says:

Poetic language that knows itself as such doesn’t contradict reason. On the contrary, it reminds each speaking subject not to take the narrative of his mind’s adventures for the voice of truth. Every speaking subject is the poet of himself and of things. (p. 84)

Felix Guattari (2007) says: “Poetic utterance can anticipate scientific advances by decades” (p. 12). Bachelard (1969) says: “It is meaningful, we believe, to speak of a poetic analysis of man. The psychologists do not know everything. Poets have other insights into man” (p. 125). In Proust was a Neuroscientist (2007), Lehrer documents examples of different instances of
artistic expression intuiting truths into human nature and memory decades before scientific investigation into these areas.

At the heart of poetry is wonder. “Wonder,” Evernden (1985) says, “is the absence of interpretation” (p. 139). “To achieve a sense of wonder is to be continually surprised. It is tantamount to suspending all assumptions. It is to start over again” (p. 141). Here is our beginning. Our children constantly remind us of the amazing things worth wondering about. Their questions, and the answers to their wonders are, many times, something I can only call poetry and philosophy all wrapped up in one.

In her Nobel lecture poet Wislawa Szymborska (1996) says:

Inspiration is not the exclusive privilege of poets or artists generally. There is, has been, and will always be a certain group of people whom inspiration visits. It's made up of all those who've consciously chosen their calling and do their job with love and imagination. It may include doctors, teachers, gardeners—and I could list a hundred more professions. Their work becomes one continuous adventure as long as they manage to keep discovering new challenges in it. Difficulties and setbacks never quell their curiosity. A swarm of new questions emerges from every problem they solve. Whatever inspiration is, it's born from a continuous "I don't know.”(para. 10)

Philo-poiesis is in everything we do when we do it with passion, compassion, care, love, awe, joy, reverence, humility. It is a journey of/through discovery, journey of/within/through the soul; journey of/within/through inspiration and transformation.
a walk d.own apostrophe lane

could have no doubt of an apostrophe
that is until last monday when you threw

epistemological uncertainty in the very name of the place
I claim to live in. with an off the cuff simple observation.

I surely had seen it before. the sign at the end of my street.
had I chosen to ignore it? did I start this chain reaction?

I send an apostrophe out into the world
it comes back to me— a convenient echo confirming possession

affirming place of dwelling re-affirming a permanence that is
too comforting to question. so seeking existential security

I went after (what at first sight now seemed) a chimeric apostrophe.

the street sign didn’t have one. my neighbours ( in friendly chats)
expressed their confusion. is there or is there not an apostrophe?

they shared ways they have managed to cope with this uncertainty.
y they used it then they stopped using it after they noticed the sign

at the end of the street. I felt dispossessed of a logos I had
embodied and reproduced over and over numinous times.

constantly got in the mail the echo of confirmation.
checking the co-op books and its maps of the enclaves was no help:

it all pointed to a missing punctuation for the possessive.
after the nagging feeling for a few days I could not bear it anymore.

I had to know. I stopped by the post office
checked the zipcode book. (it is a big book). and there it was

SAWYER’S LANE. so it was not that imagined.
now do I take their word for it?
The form of the poems (as they appear on the page) has grown overtime along side with me. The spaces between words are reminders, interferences, disruptions, invitations. They are gaps in our knowledge, they are silences, they are efforts to bridge, to connect, as well as doors for the reader to come in. Of course, they are also breath. I’d like to think of this form as one that allows me to question language, while at the same time allowing it to express itself fully, to highlight its playful and ever changing creative nature.

This form is also helps me loosen my grip on the narrative. The fragmentation and meandering through words harkens back, evokes the way words shape in my mind before they are written down. They are not linear. It is a potential at the mercy of linearity. The form as an organic, permeable membrane through which the reader can flow in and out. Exchange ideas, thoughts, feelings, images like nutrients that feed being. And these can change with each reading and with different readers’ readings. A form that allows me to layer meanings, senses, and echoes like the paint on a canvas. I like to think of the form as Bringhurst (2008) thinks of it: “as a kind of catapult: an articulating skeleton that allows meaning to leap or dance or glide amazing distances, taking us along” (p. 208).
In this turn of the kaleidoscope I play with the idea of *concrete* as a building material, and *concrete* as opposed to *abstract*. The ten-page poem that follows explores memory, history, story, theory, academy, community, the material and immaterial, and the body as it engages with these. Part of the impetus for the poem was the sign I kept passing each day on one of the towers of the cement plant on Granville Island which reads: *Concrete thinking for a sustainable future*. The ingredients used in making cement also became part of the poem.

As the city paves with concrete places where we used to leave footprints in the dirt, it makes paths that erase what came before. Where “walks are limited to precisely those spaces where no trace of the walk can be left” (Simons, 2005, p. 155). How to dwell and inhabit our home better between the *calcification* and the *fluidity* of knowing? Between being and becoming? Between the institution, and the personal pursuit? Bachelard (1964) reminds us: “For instance, certain theories which were once thought to be scientific are, in reality, vast, boundless daydreams” (p. 112).

The poems here take the form of triptychs that are invitations to read both across and down, even randomly. I have been surprised on many occasions how the same words evoke differently depending on which direction I read. Bachelard (1964) talks about how “linear reading deprives us of countless daydreams.” He goes on to say: “Daydreams of this sort are invitations to verticality, pauses in the narrative during which the reader is invited to dream. They are very pure, since they have no use” (p. 162). I break the grip on the narrative and the reader (including myself) is free to experience the fluidity of words as they meta-morph
through different locations and interpretations. Even though the columns are straight as streets or tall as buildings, as we meander down the page we may be surprised by the shifting light of the words. The different perspectives as they dim, or brighten from room to room, building to building, influenced by the company they keep, where “inhabited space transcends geometric space” (Bachelard, 1964, p. 47).

What does it then mean to have a home or to be homeless? Thought (and from that our actions within the world) are shaped and revitalized by the imagination, by our words, by the spaces we dwell in. Being meanders across through down in(words. And word creates being.
and walking is thinking

“The public realm has to inform us not only where we are geographically, but it has to inform us where we are in our culture: where we come from what kind of people we are, and by doing that it needs to afford us a glimpse to where we are going, in order to allow us to dwell in a hopeful present.”

“The imagination ceaselessly revives and illustrates the memory.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1969, p. 20)

“Ultimately, also, the story is probably about me, as I become more and more myself during a long journey through a world that confronted me but was not mine.”
—Bert Teunissen (2007)

48 Elza (in press-a)
For instance, certain theories which were once thought to be scientific are, in reality, vast, boundless daydreams.”

—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. 112)
“at times, our words think for us.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. xxxix)

:water:

the space as is

at times our words. think for us.

the mind that isn’t occupied

(becomes congealed as if it were

a noun.

the space as (water flowing (as

stories the mind tells.

to tell the mind

occupies space.

and another story

(the same space)

but this mind was absent for the telling.

*

history—

an absence that won’t go away

in (the mind

that wants more.

“Man lives by images.

... Even verbs become congealed as if they were nouns.

Only images can set verbs in motion.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. 109-110)
“to exclude always leaves a trace, a threshold on which the ghost can linger”
—Claudia Ruitenber (2007)

With a sense of loss Bert Teunissen seeks the light and atmosphere of his childhood home. He missed the atmosphere of the old house with its hidden nooks and crannies, where previous generations had left traces of their presence.”
—Saskia Asser (2007)
“Inhabited space transcends geometric space.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. 47)

“Our need for home is cast in the language of loss; indeed, to have that need at all you have to be already homeless. Belonging now is retrospective rather than actual, remembered rather than experienced, imagined rather than felt.”
—Michael Ignatieff (1997)
“Space calls for action, and before action, the imagination is at work. It mows and ploughs.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. 12)

a foot leaves no prints. on concrete

leaf imprints notice. prints of
crow feet taking off. a child

wandering over drying
pavement. space calls for action

and before action the imagination
is at work. it mows and ploughs.

concrete façades. blind
walls. our streets—phantom
limbs. past expressions. solid.

immutable.

show us the way
to the next step without a trace of

the one before. the space
we live in informs who we are.

the ethics of concrete—dismissive.

depressive—a story written
and erased at the same time.

“Our ability to create places that are meaningful and places of quality and character depends entirely on our ability to define space with buildings, and to employ the vocabularies, grammars, syntaxes, rhythms and patterns of architecture in order to inform us who we are.”
“The space we love is unwilling to remain permanently enclosed. It deploys and appears to move elsewhere without difficulty; into other times, and on different planes of dream and memory.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. 53)

—an overwhelming present is offered.

the common space is a place of many histories. here concrete space fails. the past neatly sealed off in moral time. our hospital- ity—

the space we love. unwilling to remain permanently enclosed. clinical. concrete space is already a given answer (before it is questioned. the space we love appears to move elsewhere without difficulty. into other times and dreams and memories. we imagine walking there.

“In the new development the past is neatly sealed off. In the place of the past an overwhelming present is offered.”
—Derek Simons (2005, p. 149)
“Walks are limited to precisely those spaces where no trace of the walk can be left.”
—Derek Simons (2005, p. 155)

memory dreams and reverie remembers.

presences

drift out of the past— now streets and glass.

walks limited to precisely those spaces where no trace of (memory

precisely the walk can be left

turns gravel and sand.

at times memory thinks

for us. and walking is thinking.

the way to re-inventing

(as it were) before forgetting.

space as it were (before

it turned concrete. thoughts—

limited to precisely those spaces

where no trace of the thought can be left. now watched.

“the memory dreams, and reverie remembers.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1969, p. 20)
“Alone, as we are at the origin of all real action that we are not ‘obliged’ to perform.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. 71)

“History becomes a word with no meaning.”
—Pamuk Orhan (2007)
“Because every universe is enclosed in curves, every universe is concentrated in a nucleus, a spore, a dynamized center. And this center is powerful because it is an imagined center.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. 157)

:the body:

as space within the occupied is.

imagining.

because every universe is enclosed

paved with images.

mutable words. not the same as

a poetry of ideas.

a philosophy of ideas.

these :maps:

—reduced places. and I am

(becoming less and less able to read them.

yet I remember the light and how it fell in

each room. evoking. because

every universe is concentrated in

a nucleus. a spore. a dynamized center. within our concrete walls we have object ified—

this center is powerful center. because it is

haunting a grey fiction.

(a trace).
lived

without

“But a poetry of ideas is not the same as philosophy of ideas.”
—Harold Rhenisch (personal correspondence)

“I particularly remember the light and how it fell in each room evoking different atmospheres.”
—Bert Teunissen (2007)
“Among the most difficult memories, well beyond any geometry that can be drawn, we must recapture the quality of the light.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. 60)

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“Inheritance is not a given. It is an engagement with the past, without knowing how one can be unsettled.”
—Claudia Ruitenbergen (2007)
~turn 21~
:enchantment::awakening spiritual presences in material things:

“You must talk with things in their own fragile tongue.
Don’t fancy that they understand yours.”

“... a trace of truth resembling a mark of wing upon the sky.”
—Lyubomir Levchev (2006, p. 88)

Another turn of the kaleidoscope and I find myself with *The Druid Magic Handbook: Ritual Magic Rooted in the Living Earth* (2007), by John Michael Greer\(^{49}\). The book showed up in my house (my husband had ordered it from the library). I got curious. I opened it. Coincidentally, I found parallels to poetry and ecology, to threads that have been weaving themselves through my work. The first quote comes from the introduction by David Spangler, who nicely sums things up. As you read the quote, substitute *poetry* for *magic*, and *poet* for *magician*. That makes it a nice summary of what I am alluding to here by poetry, the poet, and *philo-poiesis*. Perhaps Abram and Bringhurst will agree as well.

Spangler (2007) says:

Magic, as John Michael eloquently points out in this book, is not some glamorous supernatural power apart from life. It is the energies and processes of life itself. It is rooted in our connectedness with the life of the world around us, and its greatest effect is to root us and connect us even more fully. In fact one could say that magic is the expression of our connectedness. A magician we come to see, is not someone who stands apart and wields vast forces in some impersonal manner from a lonely mountain top.

\(^{49}\) Greer is the Grand Archdruid of the Ancient Order of Druids in America and the author of more than twenty books.
Rather he or she is a person who is immersed in the world, a participant, part of the life of nature, part of the life of humanity, at home in forests and in cities, where ever life is. To “do magic” is to serve life. It is to enhance the capacity of life, in whatever form, to be fully what it is and to become perhaps more than it might expect. (Greer, 2007, p. ix)

Are you still holding those words parallel in your mind? Two more key words mentioned in the book and which relate to our topic here are enchantment and imagination. Listen to what Greer (2007) has to say about those:

Enchantment is the art of awakening spiritual presences in material things. The word literally means "putting a song in something" enchant-ment—a turn of phrase that reflects the living experience of a world in which every part of the landscape and every turn of the seasonal cycle sings its meaning to the awakened mind. (p. 4)

I hear Lilburn’s possibility for Thing/Us consciousness. I hear Bringhurst’s poetry as a brief ecstatic dance. In this enchantment I am also hearing wonder and awe. I hear philo-poiesis. And now let's bring in what Greer (2007) says about imagination. “Imagination, in fact, is the human mind’s way of experiencing patterns in the life force. When you imagine something that image takes shape in the life force" (p. 13). The life force is close to the surface of awareness, so simple exercises can make most people conscious of it. Ritual magic approaches the life force through the imagination (Greer, 2007).

I was beginning to get quite excited about magic at this point. Even willing to try some of the exercises, one of which is discursive meditation. To my surprise I discover that it is very much what I do when I write. I have on many occasions alluded to it as my way of meditating.
Discursive meditation takes the form of inner discourse or dialogue as the mind works with the subject matter given by the theme. This sort of meditation has the same benefits as any other method of meditation—clears the centres of your mind, relaxes and heals your body, and teaches you to shape your own inner life rather than being pushed around passively by it. . . .The best way to harvest themes for meditation is to note down ideas and images that catch your attention, because they suggest interesting possibilities to you or because you can’t figure them out at all. The minor themes are often just as important as the big ones. (Greer, 2007, p. 89)

What discursive meditation above describes is my writing process. My rub with meditation was that I kept being told to silence my mind, disregard the conversation my mind keeps trying to have with me. Discursive meditation appealed to me intimately and immediately as the thing I do, naturally. That is where my poetry comes from. That is the nature of my practice. Not to mention here the parallels with Bachelard’s reverie (poetic reverie that is with the intention of being written). Or that “a psychology of the imagination must make note of everything, since the most minor interests can prepare the way for major ones” (Bachelard, 1964, 121). Or the freedom inherent in this process of shaping your inner life. Or how poetry has the potential to form the dreamer and his world at the same time?

I am not suggesting that we all sign up for Druid magic courses, but we can all benefit from such explorations regardless of what we choose to name them. As I am thinking all this I come across Greer (2007) himself making the connection between magic and poetry:

Another way to say the same thing is to suggest that the logic of magical symbolism is closely related to the logic of poetry. In a well written poem, each turn of phrase and choice of imagery takes its meaning from its context. ... Some poems use only stock images
and phrases that already have a rich context of meaning. Others use images and phrases nobody else has used before. Very often though, the best poetry combines the familiar and the new in creative ways. Magical symbolism most often works the same way as this third type. (p. 38)

The creative act is an act of freedom. Within its pedagogy of the uncertain and the coincidental there is active learning, active connecting, active meaning making. And it is powerful because the individual is allowed to perform/express him/herself to the fullest potential.

“A child’s gift of (re) imagining the universe begins with release of ownership by those in authority and empowering the creative action and interaction between.” (Fels, 1999, p. 71)

One of the benefits of describing this encounter with magic is that it gives an insight into pedagogy of the imagination. Remember this was a kind of pedagogy we can only practice upon ourselves, with methods invented for the occasion, with unpredictable results. Greer also says: “and indeed magic could almost be defined as the art of causing coincidence in accordance with intention” (Greer, 2007, p. 17). What appears random and coincidental is perhaps a deeper alignment of this hunger, of passion and intention, of intrinsic schedules we are not rationally privy to, or have not rationalized yet. These are not easily comprehended but faithfully guide us to places that surprise us, places in which we are happy to dwell, and which eventually propel us into unexplored territories. Pedagogy of the imagination has been the way I have done this (re)search, from one red lantern to the other. From one turn of the kaleidoscope to the other, loosening my grip, shedding my certainty. Throwing my net of words and pulling it
back in. Poem after poem attending with care, delight, and curiosity, attending with love to my subjectivity, my inter-subjectivity, the ecology of my being. There is always the hope that that might transfer into language, and into the environment: to the delicate balance that needs to be preserved for it too to be creative and explore endless possibilities. This helps me better see my world as home, and myself as a being at home in the *word* and in the *world*. 


“Contemporary poetry, however, has introduced freedom in the very body of language. As a result, poetry appears as a phenomenon of freedom.”
—Gaston Bachelard (1964, p. xxvii)

if bachelard were in verse I

how word phrase image
creates.

(being

hangs on the tenuous thread
of the sentence.

the fleeting life
of an expression.

by experiencing living re-living
the life of the poem

the reader is

the writer’s ghost in the salutary experience

of emerging not through the pragmatic-

language or language-as-an-instrument

---

50 Elza (2008b) Note: Except for the first two lines, this found poem is created entirely from stitching together phrases and sentences from Bachelard. As I read these fragments kept jumping out from the text and demanding more attention.
but language-as-reality.

the poetic image

a sort of differential

of this evolution.

a great verse

influences the soul

of a language.

and the language

in turn becomes

an expression creating

being.

such is the unpredictable nature

of poetry

and if we render speech un for see able

is this not an apprenticeship to freedom?
Presence is this poem as you leave out the door.

is both you and not you
across the blue threshold of (not.

knowing)
is to remember and is to forget:
the moments—
extinct species.
you ask:

who is here? who is
and who isn’t? perhaps knowing

that true or absolute blue cannot exist
and a flock of crows marks the sky

with seconds as if tossed
from your absent hands.

* feet firmly planted in salt
water feel sand slipping

between
your thoughts into the poem’s throat
where we are physically tangential to stone.
it murmurs
gurgles
in foamy whispers reaches out
(as if trying to give you
something in between
the pull and the push
the is and the isn’t
the breath in breath out.

51 Elza (2009a, p. 55)
52 The phrases perhaps knowing that true or absolute blue cannot exist and we are physically tangential to stone come from Banack (2004)
“Poetry aims to express by means of language precisely that which language is powerless to express.”
—Paul Valéry (1971, p. 429)

“It tries to tell you/like a mirror: look,/see, the sky/under your feet. Elusive,/a dare, an inch/of water enough/to drown in. Everything/that happened to you/
begins here/and you could fall through it.”
—Sue Sinclair (2003, p.52)

in the eye (of contemplation)

it tries to tell you like a mirror
how to listen past the edge

of drying up puddles. past the edge of
an autumn maple leaf. past the edge

of a word fresh

with fallen rain—
in the eye of the mind pooling.

look see the sky under your feet

elusive (a whisper of syllables)
in need of attention

shriveled around the edges: last night’s
words.

is poetry a pathology? a dare

an inch of water

enough to drown in?

53 Elza (2009a, p. 44) & Elza (2010a)
see the way rain teaches
of its depressions.

turns them into eyes
full of shifting clouds

(inside memories’ splashing feet.)

and you wade through.

everything that happened to you

begins here—the way
pavement embraces sky

the way you are drawn to this moment

of not-pavement

and you could fall through it.
:conclusion:

“We need to find our own way to take this place into our mouth; we must re-say our past in such a way that it will gather us here. —Tim Lilburn (2002, p.175)

“Without poetic attention the world could become too clear—it’s dangerous.” —Tim Lilburn (1997, p. 140).

I think of myself, and the reader, as poets. The poet as a mapmaker: a kind of poesis-cartographer. “Writing begins with the making of footprints, the leaving of signs” (Brighurst, 2005, p. 18). It is a map I first lay out for myself. Yet, this making, forming, and transforming is double. At the same time it is an offer to another as a testimony for a place I have attempted/sought to explore. A testimony for what can be ascertained only through the footprints left by poems. A place that constantly changes with our participation. The reader is invited onto this map, to wonder among, and through its thought-marks. Not too well guided, I hope. Yet, not too lost. But enough to discover something new. Poetry as “a way of standing in relation to the limits of knowing,” as it “exists at the limits of thinking—that very moment when we are open to the other” (Dickinson, 2007, p. 15).

The poem becomes the witnessing of a soul in its becoming, where it explores its world on the edge of the breath of another. Be this other a person, rock, or tree. “Then the thing becomes itself in the excitement of human consciousness”(Lilburn, 1997, p.140). That perfect moment where as an explorer, dreamer, and maker I can hold the breath of an other being. Where in
turn, the reader is invited in as the dreamer, the explorer, and the maker, and I become the reader. That perfect moment when you let me breathe for you.

And yet, I will never know how you read my poem, how my poem is reading you. That is the beauty of it. *Philo-poesis* as the love of writing, where “language is not only a source of meaning, it is a source of being. The opening of the world by *logos* is at the same time the creation of the world” (Bachelard, 1988, p. xx) That is a freedom we are entitled to as explorers of unexplored places. Where, with pure linguistic delight, the poet draws landscapes of mind with a cartographer’s passion within and beyond the boundaries of our knowing. “We have to go, as Han Shan says, together in different directions” (Brinthurst, 1987, p. 121).
“So what if the gods of these poems no longer come to visit me? /
This book is where they make their home, flying to and fro in its pages/
depending on whose eyes are near.”
—Pain not Bread (2000, p. 116)

santa.crows

it is not like we have ever been able to talk
but here eye to eye we exist
in this — our crowsmos.
where we turn our heads
after each other at (tension
and cannot say why.
where we hold each other in the eye
as if we are lovers. have something to give.
each look drops a star in my lap.

* 
So what if the [crows] of these poems
no longer come to visit me?

my words are lumps of coal
come alive spread their wings
and fly off into the night

leaving something small and shiny
in the mind. for now

this book is where they make their home
flying to and fro in its pages.

celestial shivers in which
the maple leaves are hands

54 This poem is at the end of a manuscript of poems in which I am thinking with crows. The poems revolve around crows or the images and ideas around crows. Hence the words crowsmos and santa.crows
the stone—living breathing tissue.

* 
in these pages we exist

* 

because we strongly believe we can

* 
even though

we

no longer

remember

how

*

to go home.


Lilburn, T. (1999). *Living in the world as if it were home*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Cormorant Books.


