

Quibbling over details was never
not part of the deal. Witness for instance
the ancient arguments over Iambe —
who she is and where she should laugh

the smirking over parts of speech in metrical
positions obscene as any copulating of genders
engaged in grammatically sound declensions,
syllables juxtaposed *contra naturam*

dactyls inserted where they ought not to be
feet in comparison a minor fetish
in the measure of things proper to man
and that figure the long and short of it;

and over intelligence carried in the sounds,
breath shaped by teeth tongue and lips
thought in words emotion in cadence
intellect in consonants and inflection

articulated in rests and stops;
and over diction that favors possessive case
versus less genitive strategies
that evoke rather than symbolize,

the *mater dolorosa* though mourning her daughter
cajoled into ribaldry by weasel words
of the old midwife mimicking comedies played
right after the goat song dithyrambs.

But in the main from Ecbatan to Rome
Macedon to Alexandria
Scythia to Spain those who thought
much about it tended to agree

the breath that animates the universe
circulates in the arteries untouched
with blood and fertilizes the sperm is the same
breath that in the brain and heart receives

and reforms the phantasms of things we see
imagine dream love that breath
seamlessly intermediary joining

body mind human occult

converting opposites to polarities
polarities to mirror-images
instances of spiritual motion
both object and origin of erotic desire

the lucent wax pulsed up through the spine
from kernels anxious in the testicular sac
spirited into the heart as *eros* and temper
into the eye as beauty an aqueous humor

into the veined and nervous and tentacled
jellyfish of the brain (the skull the vault
of procreative capital) fulfilling
the chemical desire to conceive

in the imagination there suspended
to be informed by memory and wit
intelligence and intelligences
intuitions foreign and domestic

a touch of madness (infernally or divinely)
a curiously and curiously distinction
here in the *phantastikon*) become
in the process incarnations of love

art governance devotion the craft
perceived in all its precarious occasions
from primitivism to decadence made new
through association with one another.