

That the man he'd never met in person
whose oriental notebooks he was digesting
was of Harvard Hegelian stock disposed
to assume that language the medium of thought
is also the repository of knowledge
and that after the trials and tribulations

of spirit in throes of philosophical passion
the mind simply discovers itself alone
— that *it* is what was meant by the term *god*
— that *it* is death, that *no throne* awaits
that those who experience such discipline
gain only a conscience reconciled with human

mortality free from false concepts
conceits eschatological illusions,
he knew; and that the notes stood Hegel on his head
so far as the values of intellect and nature
or nouns and verbs went in getting us
to the unnameable presence

the word *is* from the root **es* to breathe
the word *be* from the root **bhu* to grow
myth poetry relation image
all attesting that the primary unit of language
is the verb: *the cherry tree is all that it does*
the interval not the note is the musical atom

the image conveys essence in the sense of potential
to achieve its own perfection, the particular
a body of such potentialities
revealing itself in its relationships,
the concrete particular, the fact
is that in which the universal obtains,

not abstractions signs classifications
intellectual generalities
piled up in grammarian pyramid schemes
each name in touch only with the names
immediately below and the one at the top
(*being* — the copula in apotheosis

the phonetic fantastic transcendental
signified), but concrete images
processes conglomerates of relations

embodying each character's history
transferring energies linguistically
keeping the obscurity visible;

but because they kept it secret outside Japan
he never knew the man was a Buddhist priest
ordained in a sect of an esoteric sort
who tended to read the written characters
through dialectically tinted spectacles
fine-ground in vitalistic flux

inclined to regard the most primitive language
as the most poetic, constructing paradigms
involving decay and disease in life as in language
only poetry can redeem, tending to elide
inductive method intuition common
sense and Emersonian metaphor

whose desire in occidental quest
for satisfaction through logical syntheses
affinities cohesions cleavings picked out
through geologic strata of analogies
(*harmonies too large* as the notes said)
confused emptiness with the absolute.