

ON OBSCURE MOTION

Patrick Farmer

I wake up with the moon on my chest. Holding it, I hear its mad resonance.

Pink and blue walls, my old arteries sweat like wheat chaff and green olive, a feral joy as of wolves on muskspoor. Rattling freshly cut bay branches, I lie down to remember that which I have not directly experienced, a remedy in the rust, the tree that eats its young.

I hear a hole in the sound, the way up is the way down, a sibylline weal in which cures can reveal themselves in dreams, the humid scurfs of silver solid air.

A bald man, a winged wave dreaming itself, nervously creeps along the dry ground with gentle hands and ever-thinning shoulders. His head is split open from a fall. In death, he moves. A cave within his skull leads to the root, revealing three pendulous Tanagra figures.

They speak so fast, his silent throat straining under the weight of their motion, but the more I speak, the faster they go. No silence soothes a shade. A strange cracking, like the salt in the stars, emanates from his jaw, chiding the arrogance of solid ground.

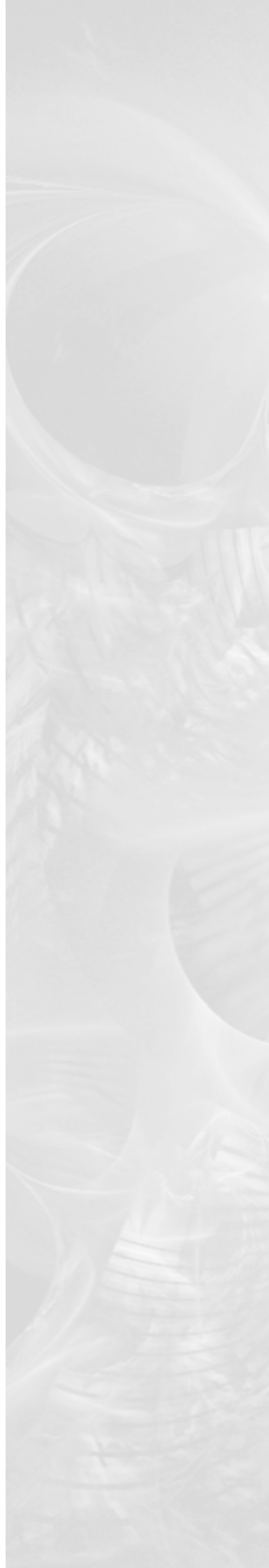
Eating oily leaves of laurel, I hear Cardea, Limentius, Forculus, bones beyond the hearth, fumigated with barley meal. As one tries, the other prevents, as one gets closer, the other moves away.

Barrier after barrier, threshold after threshold. An orphic voice of wolf light spins a mixture of vibrating air in the immediate contact of distance.

What was once the entrance to his ear, a slanting well that knew all sound, is now a tremulous clod that belches out a fine dust. Its names are wind, with which the skin bellows wildly.

Who can hear such an epithelial howl except in dreams? Panicked tops of plane trees and old holes of fungal earth, a pulse inaudibly springs to return in memory's bright wounds.

Time is the tension of lungwort, and light swings through the absent mouth of his face.



The winded soul moves like the horned ruminants of the Cretan countryside, grazing on vibration, on dittany, on the tragedy of too much sound.

Bones are their own environment in apprehension of humoral attachment, a sesame of loam in the eel-dust of the ear. The internal intelligence of organs, cancellous and combed.

The wind has a voice of air moulded with the mouth of a dream, the obscure motion of a wound that heals. Between sonant bodies, a sphere. A reservoir is a stone and throws itself in circles.

Nard, wrapped round my toes for sleep, peels the carved rings of my eyes, murmuring incantations, harvesting medical plants in bestial glee.

We must not burn the flowers. Juice of mint underfoot and the thousand sounds of sage, crumbling between many hands. Eros's arrow grows into a lyre on this night-sea, the rolling wind below the lytic symmetry of seven birds. Light bringer, the projection, green mountains reeking of bliss.

I feel dreams in my stomach as indigestible books—science is merely my language—consuming the little Aristotles of my soul with its digestive juices.

I visited the temple last night. Riddled with hellebore, the ardent faith with which those who are incubated seemed to hold the heated edges of their treatments, worshipping the vapours of prescription. It makes me long for the same commitment from those who visit me, seeking the elective affinities of cure. How to maintain sympathy and authority?

I have met patients who, under the name of Methe, would have had all their bones removed, their sinew recast (revealing the hum of the elements and seeking the inner silence of the dreaming body), only to heal an old sickness with a new one.

Under the doorway I burn wood between their sound and their disease. Flocks of storks emerge from the light of a distant lake. Figs fall from my table.

This morning I awoke with dust on my throat, set in a pattern like the glaucous smile of someone under larkspur. The resinous scent of Aleppo fir and cypress, eyes closed become seed heads. Vernal hum inaudibly drifts beyond the glyphs that secrete from my wounds, wounds that do not exist solely on my body.

I have dissected many brains but can't find a person anywhere. A mirror of air is a tonal interior from which I see the eye I am seeing with, where wind spirals out of my ear in order to speak into it. A skin tougher than bone. When I place my ear to my ear I hear nothing.

Crushed in his fist I smell the resonance of mandragora.

Gnosis should be an experience of one's own life, a day that speaks with birds, an encampment of stars, a plant that grows on a body, medicine of the vegetable gods. A tree, putting death to death, is the duration of a germ.

We are told of the shadow of a day through the oneiric sounds of the body. What anise tells me silently I speak out loud, though my heart remains quiet.

An evening at the theatre. Sixty holes of honeycomb placed in a hole. Once again it occurs to me that whilst sitting at the threshold I can feel, resting my ears as it were, the vibrations of those in front of me and the world behind me, encircling like the family of the body, altering every cell.

Sticks tap together above their heads in time with the fluted fells of the barbitos, leaping in the ecstasy of wild heel. Incense clinging to their abdomens, they dance like partridges with moths in their hair.

That which surrounds me right now is not necessarily how I perceive it. Do I create a hell around myself?

His legs are open like those of a frog. Pollution is a source of fertility, it is simple magic. I seek lustration, shit is fertiliser.

A sneeze, an oracle, a crossroads of woven coils and oak leaves. A sound is a bird, listen louder, parallel and contrary. What is the difference between the physician and the disease? The wind sweeps over the grass and the grass is sure to bend.

Root cutters and the rolling earth, both nurture and guide their words around love and repulsion. Longing turns us inside out until we find the sun and the moon and stars inside.

I record such monsters of my body through the slumbering vegetation of his ear, which turns in the treeless air. His is the sleep of a mirror.

At the time of the waxing moon, mix cassia, white pepper and nutmeg, store in a perfume phial to the third degree and collapse into a low moan.

Ecstatic pig men on guard against motion, rotting flutes of fat-earth and the night-smell of lime trees. The issue is not what I think about, nor what I feel when I dream or how I reflect on dreams, it's what I do the rest of the time.

The planets took delight in me, and each of them gave me a share of their own nature. Mashed beans under the white flowers of hawthorn.

I would like to write a book about the planets that live in the blood. The words would become laughter in the face of such enormity, the letters opening their mouths to the sounds of the imperceptibly trembling cosmic body. Who can write such a thing except for in dreams outside of dreams?

I listen in order to hear what has already happened, time is a resonant swamp. Somehow, through the fluidity of war inside us, Aquarius will set our blood on fire.

The supine gate of the dead man is an incantation, the bilious sun of an oak.

The toll of such ecstasy is a dimension of time in the body. This little figurine, this wind, whatever it might be that lives and ruts in the ear, I preserve with trefoil. Every time the torch strikes the sun, a new life dies as an old one emerges.

Hidden within the apparent ease of such movement, a tangible zodiac. Breath control is coming to know the sweating pomegranate of the heart, inner disappearance, hissing bark.

The meander pattern of the sickness in the remedy, an encroaching desire for simple classification will obliterate the complexity of what actually happens.

Even in death he could move his inner ear muscles in such a way that I was able to hear the wind. The wound moves through space and can return bearing gifts.

Perhaps no vibration is ever entirely lost. A sound I heard forty years ago could be the formation of a dream ten years from now. Vibrating through the cosmos for eternity.

The second I stop being in charge, magic happens, consciousness relinquishes. Pierced by arrows, we leak. Separation of the body from itself, cutting flesh from bone, cooking ourselves.

Cleaned, polished, counted. We speak with our old bones, we do not interpret, which is to conduct.

Part of a cure is descent, listen. Two rocks, grey as twilight between which a tump of iron, loam ribbed with flint, burrs in stands of fir and spruce.

Wood pigeons, partridges, doves. The psyche rises as mist from things that are wet, the ground is moulded to his body, upon which no light falls.

Thistle, tupelo, summersweet, horsetail, bulrush. Opening the mouth so as to not hear the heart.

Wind makes holes, traverses the love and concord of the body, works one side into the other in brown fenneled silence of obscure motion.

Post.

Galen was born CE 129. He was a physician, but not in the way that many have come to understand the profession, which has lost many layers of its resonance through focussed use. Ancient Greek medicine was a holistic practise, and as such, it was believed that there could be no real cure without understanding a person's history. The physician then, was also a psychiatrist and clinician, among other things.

Medicine was, in essence, the petri dish of all other sciences in antiquity, the term was often applied to doctors when they started taking an interest in the world beyond that of medicine. This could be felt as an alteration of consciousness, sloughing off every theory and opinion in the face of not finding anything to replace them for years on end.

More works of Galen have been passed down than any other person of antiquity, and a great many remain untranslated. He was thought to have written a text, subsequently lost, concerning the ossicles of the middle ear. This seemed to me a perfect opportunity to work with the wild fabrications of vibration, inventing a fragmented night-book, as it were, wherein oneiric energy is a paradigm of interaction, distance, and propinquity.

As evidenced in the polysemous nature of 'physician', Galen's life was not divided into separate phases of work, and as such, this brief text explores the particulars of the myriad worlds of ancient medicine through such things as audition, astrology, incubation, and herbalism.

Patrick Farmer lives on the Malvern Hills and teaches in Oxford, where he is also the manager of the Sonic Art Research Unit and a curator of the audiograft festival. Farmer has published several books and written compositions for the Extradition Series and the Set Ensemble. A monaural artist, he is part of an AHRC funded project, Tinnitus, Auditory Knowledge and the Arts, and has recently had essays published online by [Zeno Press](#) and [Socrates on the Beach](#).

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