

Eyeglasses (Dark Lenses, Western Culture)

Afraid of falling into priestly arrogance, Pope Julius II had his eyeglasses tinted black as a reminder that all on Earth see as through a glass darkly.

Hearing Aid

The world owes the modern hearing aid, which fits neatly into the ear, to Dr. Luis de Cordoba, a Chilean specialist, who was suddenly inspired by the sight of his six-year-old son holding a seashell to his ear in the family's Santiago apartment and claiming that the Pacific was particularly loud that day.

— Mark Cunningham

Opelika AL

PROSE POEM, JUNE 22, 1994, 4:53 PM, ROOSEVELT AVE.,
CITYBOUND F TRAIN

across the tracks, waiting for the outbound train, a woman, 30 or 35, dark hair, dark glasses, beige colored net shirt, staring into the window before me, eating a green apple. I stare back, she stares into my eyes. she looks away, turning her head to the far wall, twists her body, pivoting on hips, shifting feet, arching her back so her breasts stand straight out, highlighted, turns so that her right breast, small, braless, is pushed forward, isolated, as if staring at me, as if she were naked there, offering. she moves her legs apart, moves her hips, rotating. as my train starts to move, she turns back, grins with her lips tight, seeming to ask how I liked it. I smile with lips closed, nod my head slowly. she pushes her tongue out and licks her lips.

THE THEORY OF TRANSPORTATION

statement of the problem

the problem has always been found in the question of how to get from here to there.

schematic

you are here at the start. mark this spot and note well. in the future, you intend to be at some other spot off in the distance.

caveat

it is no solution merely to plan to mark that other spot and, having done that, to pronounce the deed accomplished.

history

walking has been, for as long as human memory, an outline of an approach to the fundamentals of the problem. the simple motion of alternate feet in similar directions can be an adequate solution for certain of the shorter distances. rolling over is not practical.

a complication

walking permits a person to travel accompanied by only the smallest of objects. this is called carrying.

the first solution

sleds and domestic animals permit the movement of baggage.

the literature

the literature of transportation is varied and extensive and never fails to address the problem, complete with citations and an adequate intellectual apparatus. the subject can be approached from a multitude of directions. there are various approaches. the literature approaches voluminousness, shining like a clear light on the entire subject. this approach is not entirely fatuous, because transportation is the practical study of approaching. the list of approaches may be uncovered at will.

the uses of subways

a fine method of transportation. without travelling anywhere at all, one can ride the subway for years without moving or leaving or getting anywhere. despite slow changes of equipment, nothing changes at all, unless you travel to a double fare zone. double fare zones fall out of the subway category entirely. all subway lines are interlinked and it is possible to have races which require travelling every inch of track. this field is best left to obsessives.

the transportation of commodities

car, train, ship. there are cargo airplanes, long distance trucking facilities. there is also the transportation of intangible commodities, such as information. we have telephones. this is something entirely different. so is information. transportation makes it possible to imagine the exchange of goods and messages.

the commodity of transportation

it leads to the exchange of cash and credit. it suggests the circulation of money. we therefore travel in circles, looking for money and other commodities. this is not as obvious as walking in circles. telepathy doesn't count.

philosophical interlude

can there be transportation if nothing is moving? the impossibility of motion has already been proved. this causes serious difficulty for those who believe in communication.

a romantic byway

even the most primitive mode of transportation makes human intercourse possible. once possible, we may soon believe it necessary. reproduction may occur even if people sleep in separate beds. before this, reproduction was impossible except by random accident. a doubtful improvement for the race.

intermediate summary

we have seen so far how a limited idea of transportation can slow the discussion and slow down the serious consideration of alternatives. the imagination of serious alternatives must not be limited by the existing modes of transportation. let us not ask of transportation more than it can deliver, nor accept less motion than we deserve.

the political economy of transportation

a hard subject which has been inadequately exploited and explored. not entirely suitable for poetry. consider the federal highway system. chrysler. the mann act.

the law of transportation

the mann act. public facilities. civil rights. why men pay more for auto insurance. this is why I no longer give women my seat on buses and subways.

transportation and erotic life

it is difficult to have sexual intercourse in a car with bucket seats. this is no coincidence. we are better for it. airplanes and the mile high club. autoeroticism. if you have a sleeper, the motion of a train improves the sex act. sleeping cars have never been given a fair chance on subways. transportation makes it meaningful to say come to me, darling, I love you.

my secret fear

that there are forms and modes of transport I've never heard of. why has no one told me of these?

the other fear

the sum of transportation related deaths and injuries has never been calculated. it is incalculable. this is a serious fear. many of these deaths are suicides.

a third fear

the correlate of come to me, darling, is I'm leaving you, dear. transportation makes this possible. it is small solace that transportation makes the phrase "I'm coming" meaningful. where is she coming from? this may not be true in other languages.

inadequate summary

the slightest motion from one point to another raises all sorts of difficulties and unforeseen complications. the function of inadequate complaint departments for all organized modes of transportation is to prevent complaining by the slyest means.

apology and conclusions

I am very sorry. I am truly sorry. this is the end of the line. all passengers must disembark. we are grateful for your patronage, we really are. I mean it. this is freighted with deep meaning. we have reached the terminal.

— Jesse Weiner

Little Neck NY

DAD WOULD BE LAUGHING

I'm pumping gas into my car Sunday morning looking down at the hot ground see the shadow of an airplane hear the cars speeding by and someone washing a car and someone else getting directions to Route 2 and the gasoline fumes smell so strong so familiar reminding me of Dad who fixed cars for a living and came home every day smelling like he'd been bathing in gasoline and I thought about death robbing him of life when he was so young and how he deserves to be around still today would've really enjoyed being around still today perhaps sitting here in my car watching me pump the gas laughing trying not to make too much fun of me but not being able to help himself because he knows I'm annoyed as hell about having to have that damn gasoline smell on my hands all day long.