

**Rich Follett**

ποίηω (poiesis)

words

express least  
what most needs saying:

poesy's heresy.

master?

mendicant?

words  
do not signify –

age after age,  
anguished odists spew  
misanthropic monody.

perhaps  
verisimilitude  
in versification  
is elegiac:

epics echo only to cithara;  
lyrics, to lyre

(for want of barbitos,  
ballads languish).

what if  
Apollo  
(god of prophecy)  
once decreed:

poetasters  
are born  
when pipes do not play?

prosodion  
devolves to dithyramb;  
order to entropy  
for want of  
accompanying airs.

what if,  
in worshipping praxis,  
we deny poiesis?

might  
*ars poetica*  
be not Appolonian –  
but, rather, Dionysian?

tonight. a new *enkōmion*:  
a threnode to Bacchus,  
my paean  
to Pan ...

## desktop thaumaturgy

a paper clip,  
discarded casually;  
casualty  
of routine operations.

processing administrivia:  
removing the woebegone wire, i am  
exchanging inanities with a co-worker  
when (in mid-sentence)  
i blandly cast  
the misbegotten miniature grapnel  
aside.

a graceful arc;  
a glimmer of suspended animation  
and then  
(inconceivably)  
impertinent,  
indomitable,  
insouciant,  
the coquettish coil comes to rest  
*in flagrante delicto* –  
coyly cantilevered  
on its own rounded edge.

time stands still;

drawing in breath,  
dimly aware of divine mystery,  
i, bug-eyed and breathless,  
whisper to my colleague,

“you saw that, right?”

mutual synaptic anarchy:  
*what were the chances?*

in the nanosecond  
between cognition and comprehension  
the higgs boson is confirmed,  
cancer is cured and  
peace pervades the middle east;

for one gleaming arthurian moment,  
anything is possible.

one frame later,  
in epic synchronicity,  
my colleague and i  
(succumbing to  
primordial hunter-gatherer dna and  
envisioning youtube immortality)  
lunge for cell-phone cameras.

stop-action, slow motion danse macabre;  
infinitesimal seismic armageddon ensues –

elbows connect;  
the mythic minimus  
capsizes as

monday's mundane mantle  
once again  
descends ...

## Epic

Three booths down  
at the Chinese buffet  
sat Beowulf.

Hair, flaxen;  
skin, corrugated;  
eyes, cerulean (flecked with brine);  
his essence imposing, burnished, severe and commanding  
(even when hunched over crab legs).

An Anglo-Saxon warrior in t-shirt and jeans;  
out of place and time,  
apparition and archetype all at once –  
corporeal String Theory and living Literature  
materialized in a single skipped heartbeat.

Not so much sculpted as hewn,  
his bulk and heft evinced  
snapping sinew and cataclysmic combat –  
an image borne not of aerobics and Évian  
but by preternatural victories wrenched from the maw of Doom.

His aspect, wholly planes and angles;  
nothing more than straight lines required  
for authentic rendering.

I, not given to staring, stared.

Simultaneously emasculated and vindicated,  
comparatively effete,  
(having fought only to bring words to life),  
with chopsticks breathlessly poised over cooling Chow Fun,  
I vainly sought plausible justifications – social survival strategies -  
should he interrupt his gnawing  
to return my admiring gaze.

After a long while,  
he rose to return to the feast table –  
towering, immutable,  
mythic in his gait;  
striding purposefully across the ages  
to plunder and devour.

As I regarded with awe the fluid sinews  
of a bronzed, scarred forearm –  
as he deftly severed the claws of steamed sea monsters –  
the long-abandoned Herot of my imagination regained its hero  
and I became the anonymous Scylding scop  
heralding Hrothgar's legacy for the ages.

Toying coyly with a limp rice noodle,  
I was pondering immortality when  
azure eyes met mine,  
glowered  
and dismissed my  
envious intelligence.

Time folded, suspended  
as he grunted primordial awareness –  
then resumed  
gorging on Grendel.