

QUARK (or Up, Down, Charm, Strange, Top and Bottom)

Eimear McBride

There now, grapple, and as things stood it was never much harder to get to the tip.

Prong. Spike.

Or its point.

Or its crux.

Or those bits on the side. Or the light round the back.

Or the tiniest suggestion that where it was located might, or indeed might not, be real.

Reel.

Or reeling in.

As if reeling was anything to do with anything - especially not ground. And definitely not air. Particularly when they occupy so much of themselves and without inclination to spin.

Wait.

Rotate.

What?

Weight - unpicking itself from all airier adjacents and endeavouring inaction wherever gravity grips - so sedate and resistant to unintentional slips or the spreading of space somewhat thin. But worth noting how, even casually leant, it lovingly hugs the flections of its own tendons, the corruption of its sinews and wayward of its joints. Impermeable to air and immutable by earth, it minds not one solitary thing.

Alas digression though.

From the point and the crux.

Air and ground - if they're still doing that - being the upside or downside of the majority of stuff.

Components.

Integrants

Leaps of thought.

Backward inclinations when masses maraud
or the clock ticks one then two
- any number in fact.

White face flat and thin hands black.

Although, last I looked, I saw Time looking
back, savouring its imposition and inescapable
matter, which really is no matter at all.

But here is not for that.

Here's for air and ground and what stretches across - all that can, in some way, be conceived.

Tricks of it too - it does them itself. Relishing misadventure when it's least expected. Diversionary tactics are also sometimes in order, depending on the time and place.

And again, once upon a time, I found it making findings from around my spine. Hewing its bones and connectors from the opposite of mine and, from all hallowed hollows, chiselling shapes. Taking its inside from my outside perhaps? Or the other way, the first way, around.

Either way, I spread myself like glass - the better not to be inverted, or everted, for a laugh or for the sake of what I have not yet been informed.

Not that I'm of the mind to wholly object. Not often - or often much - unstinting as I am about being the cast from which all else gets made.

Or is it I doing the moving? Cutting myself from the land and sky?
Those dull lights negative of space and time?
And from the words unspoken?
Images unseen?
From the... yes... from that - what is that anyway?
Substance rubbed between finger and thumb.
Purpose equivocal.
Meaning, none.

Or some.

Or made from a word like
'would' which moves itself round an elliptical world, restless enough not to get pinned.

Down.

Or pinned up.

Nailed to the sticking place of content or context.

Hammered into interpretation and strung out for effect.

Maybe yes

but no

I am not that.

Maybe I won't be encroached upon by extent, expansion, or exertion and its intents.

With their foregone conclusions proudly displayed.

With their every possibility already named, numbered, and placed in the drawer.

A vacuum-packed, perfectly preserved example of knowability. Invariant and fixed.

Who wouldn't like the convenience of it?

Slabs of the unsuggestable and mouthfuls of fine. All durable and balanced as far as the eye can reach forward into time's mess.

And everything contemplable, within touch of the skin, quantifiably curated into the last inch of sanity or the first inkling of bore.

I may not plump for this.

I might instead step around to where connotations rot, with a fervent and somewhat intelligent panache, once absented by the fiery and the sure.

Row row row your row gently up your row.

Merrily merrily merrily merrily it's as far as you will go.

Despite or because or behindhand of all that, on the inmost I think I am munificent to a fault. Free in my giving, as is my wont, of the gift of maybes and the better maybe not.

For if not lovely tangible, I am imaginable at least, although perhaps only in my outmost form.

But I'll tweak on interaction - and outer too - quark and antiquark just the same.

And consequences are fine except when I twist.

- which can make some seals up the sides get split.

- which can mean leaking over.

- which can make melds go to bits and symbiosis flop to the floor.

Get out of that.

Go find your own!

Catastrophe!

But mostly grand whatever about the wailing and gnashing of teeth when an ear fills an eye, or the nose gets the mouth, they can for the most part be unpicked.

And don't we know anyway?

Can't we always tell?

Aren't we very, very sure?

Except in weather.

Or mirrors.

Or standing alone.

Or when the light goes crossways.

Or when the light goes out.

Or when the sky looks funny and the air smells bad.

Or when we are asleep, awake, or become versions of that which will encompass all varieties in the end.

Still, whatever.

I am always just myself. Sometimes in amalgamation. Sometimes isolated.

And as matter makes matter and space makes space, I am
room and bear room just the same whether you are looking or
not.

Whether or not the motor purrs or grinds to a halt.
I am the whole machine, pondering the limits of limits and the
limits of those limits again.

Available both to glue and to unglue.

For model and moulding.

Or separating out too.

For being on my feet of clay with a head stuffed with cumulus.

And I will say this much again:

I never saw a black hole, either inside or out.

But I often saw a river and stepped into it - just the once
though and then never again, as the philosopher said, because
it's never the same

nor labours beneath designs to be.

Never so heavy though.

And never so free.

Never spinning off deflections.

Never more, or less, than potentially.

Never being sometimes.

Or always being - interchangeably.

So, in summation: I myself play my part while also playing not
at all.