

On Deck in The Empirical Ocean

(All that you know has come to you in a wave. All that you have seen has been light. The photons have traveled in the form of a matter wave to shake particles in the back of your eyeball. All that you have heard has been the compression and decompression of the fluid atmosphere — an ethereal longitudinal wave that vibrates your eardrum — Words, then, are waves to you, and when you think, you think in words that you have heard, and those words are recreations of the waves. All that you feel is pressure. And pressure on nerve ends sends electric waves from your hand, through your arm, up your neck, and into the web of your brain. So, what you feel now, the pressure on your back, on the bottoms of your feet, your tongue in your mouth, is known to you through waves. What you hear now (((slowly, listen around you))) is known to you through waves. What you see now, these words on the page and the colorful things you aren't focusing on (((blurred around the border of the page))) are known to you through waves. What you think now, your registrar of cognition, the free associations, the quick flashes of vision (like when I say “bark” and then “dog” and then “tree”), the dualist conversations with yourself, the side trails of imagination, the sounds of syllables, are all recreations of past waves. And though it's not related to this poem, you should be aware that someday people might be born with several ears, and to them, our “stereo sound” will be dull and possibly lifeless. Some might hear the waves above our sonic threshold and find better music up there. Or some might be born who see the spots on distant stars without using telescopes. (You should know that the light is available to us, traveling trillions of miles, clear and precise (though space is somehow empty).) Or they might see (or is it hear?) colorless images with sonar, radar, or ultrasound. (You should know that all objects are colorless — the trees, a box of crayons, your skin — and that only light has the quality of green or brown or “pacific blue” as it bounces to your retina.) And we don't sense all the waves in the world, ignoring the subsonic and ultraviolet, the X-rays and microwaves. There may be waves that we

haven't learned to decipher, perhaps some elusive spiritual waves that ghosts spin in, or a hundred sophisticated languages that insects use to make fun of us. Prayer could be a wave; heaven on earth could be a batch of new waves and sensory organs. And perhaps you should know that someone might someday be born who hears only light and sees only sound, and he or she might be able to function quite perfectly.)

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\* you are here \*

and your dog is an amplitude