

The Library as a Poem

I. ORIGIN

[000-099] KNOWLEDGE / GOD

shelves begin here
like an idea misfiled
001.0 – generalities of longing
the index of breath catalogued by silence
"see also: absence"

In the beginning, a word misremembered itself.
From that hesitation, a library grew
– an error flowering into corridors of order.

When I was a child I believed libraries were alive. When I grew up I became aware I was right. A library is a city that dreams it is thinking. A reader is a person who walks those dreams barefoot. When you live in a library, time becomes an open shelf. Yesterday rubs against tomorrow until both go soft at the edges.

II. ARCHITECTURE

[100-199] THOUGHT / SELF

128 – identity studies itself in a mirror
which is a mirror of mirrors, Borges sighs
152.4 – emotion: the decimal for ache

Library walls are made of breath. The shelves, of time's ribs.
Someone wrote a catalogue to explain why knowing feels like hunger. Every volume: a lung filled with dust, exhaling softly.

*The catalogue card has a faint thumbprint, like a lunar phase.
Someone has been here
before me.*

III. TRAVEL

[200-299] RELIGION / MYTH

shelves bend under the weight of prophets
dust of translation / footnotes to gods
292.13: Aphrodite misfiled under Theology
298 – unwritten scriptures, checked out forever

WE ALL HAVE LOOKED
OUT FROM OUR OWN
WINDOWS
AND CONSIDERED THE WORLD
IN MANY NEW WAYS

APRIL
2:45 PM

REPRESENTATION

STATIC HAN

THE SLOW, DULL
RISING TRAFFIC

WHICH APPEAR

A PASSING LORR

ANOTHER VEH

OVER A ROCKING

GENTLE TAPS A

OF CLOSE

A DIALOGUE GROWS BETWEEN

A NEARBY PAST AND A CONSTA

IT ASKS US TO SLOW DOWN

And then the days
darkness of
completely out of sight.

SK
AP
ME
CONSTANT
SCROLLING
NEWS

Each shelf rearranges time around me. A book opens and I fall through centuries with the vertigo of paper folding in on itself. I once found my name filed under *fiction, metaphysical*.

There is no return policy on experience. Only renewal.

IV. CLASSIFICATION

[300–399] SOCIETY / THE HUMAN

a reader leaves fingerprints on civilisation
305.9 – classification of classes
320 – political systems: index cards soaked in ink & hope
398.21 – folktales where truth hides in allegory



Every order fails and in its failure invents a new cosmos.

Knowledge becomes desire's catalogue. Desire becomes an unbound index. Each attempt to arrange the infinite returns you – misfiled, rewritten, alive.

Every shelf is a hypothesis. Every language leaves a different bruise.

If it changes classification, it becomes a mirror. If it becomes a mirror, it reflects the reader. If it reflects the reader, it loses its subject. If it loses its subject, it begins again. If the world is classified, it is known. If it is known, it is lost. If it is lost, it is mine.

V. BODY

[400–499] LANGUAGE / TRANSLATION

401 – what cannot be said but is anyway
418.02 – syntax of forgiveness
499.99 – extinct tongues: the words for fire we no longer use

You read until the ink passes into blood and words calcify into bone. This is how the library enters you – through the eyes and every small act of remembering. Every book is a house of leaves: the living and the dead bound, sunlight pressed into narrative.

If it's mine, it resists naming. Hence, if it resists naming, it resembles God. If it resembles God, it is a shelf. If it is a shelf, it holds absence. If it holds absence, it holds me. Then, if it holds me, it is a system. If it is a system, it is love. If it is love, it cannot be found in the catalogue. If it cannot be found, it is still there.

THE SHIFT FROM HORIZON TO HYPERTEXT ENSURES
WE ARE AEROPLANES
FLOATING THROUGH
THE ABYSS.
THESEUS
DAEDALUS
MINOS
A MAZE IS A COMPLEX BRANCHING
MULTICURSAL PUZZLE WITH CHOICE
OF PATH AND DIRECTION
WE KEEP SEARCHING

IN A MAZE WE CAN GET LOST
IN A LABYRINTH WE FIND Ourselves
404
DATE DUE

THE FARTHEST POINT
VISIBLE IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD
WERE A SINGLE

IN A BILLION VARIETIES
FILLING UP AN

VI. TIME

[500-599] ART / MEMORY

509 – aesthetics of forgetting

570 – photograph of a vanished face

581.1 – music that classifies grief by pitch

0.0

ABOUT

Past and present flickers between stacks.

Time is a borrower who never returns their books.

Therefore, if it is there, it is not. If it is not, it endures. If it endures, it changes classification.

9.4

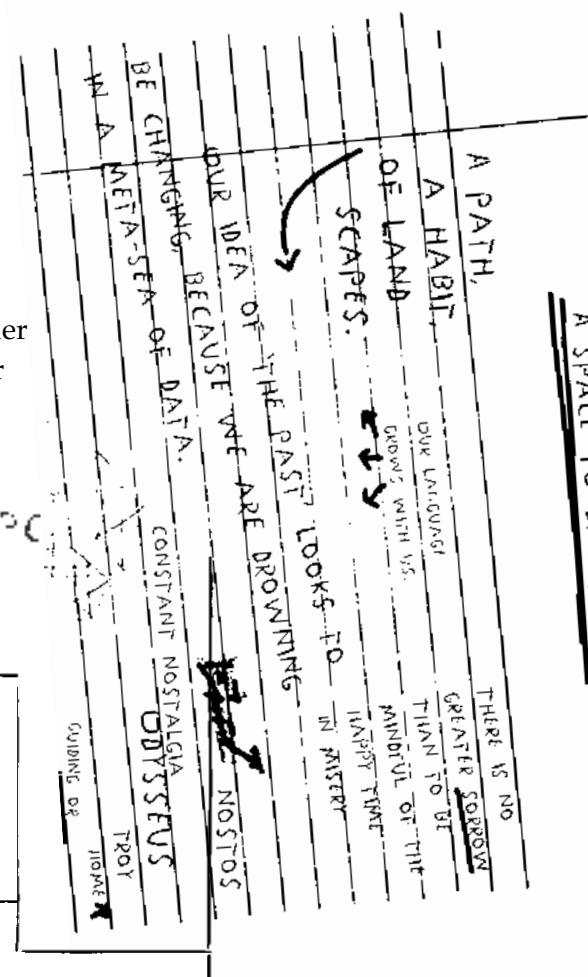
VII. MIRROR

[600-699] LITERATURE / EVERYTHING ELSE

690.1 – untranslatable texts, humming quietly

At the library's centre there is a mirror-shaped index containing all other mirrors. You look in and see a reader who is also a shelf, a shelf that is also a prayer, a prayer that is also a book of instructions.

*Hence, if it changes classification, it becomes a mirror.
If it becomes a mirror, it reflects the reader.*

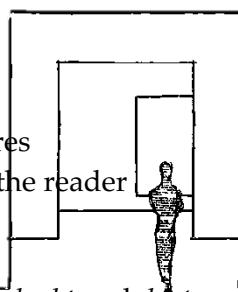


VIII. EXIT

[900-999] HISTORY / ENDINGS

909 – world history: the past written in erasures

999 – final shelf: a mirror, cracked, reflecting the reader



There is no door.

Only the word door, shelved between *doubt* and *dust*.

When you try to leave, the library annotates your silences, underlines your absences, binds your breath in print on paper.

If it reflects the reader, it loses its subject. If it loses its subject, it begins again. To live is to be misfiled repeatedly.

~~PERFECT~~
ALWAYS TAKES SO LONG
BECAUSE WE DON'T EXIST
WE DON'T EXIST

FLYING OR
FALLING

DIS
TANCE