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Hypotheticals

Posted by [Jay Miller](#) on Jul 4, 2012 | [0 comments](#)

Hypotheticals, which, like her poetry, has philosophical, scientific, and linguistic significance, wherein he says: 'people are too myopic to verify general hypotheticals, and so want to make the fullest use of the limited evidence which they do get.'

Best Foot Forward

Now that dogs can talk they rant
 about non-verbal dogs chasing tail.
 How so-and-so is after so-and-so
 and so on. They call them mutts,
 morons, keep them locked
 outdoors. Smoke clove cigarillos,
 sip cognac, bitch over whining strays.
 They turn their muzzles up at terms
 like *doggie-style*, *doggone it*, *hot dog*
 and *diggity*. Cockeyed, they reminisce
 over their own dog-day brawls,
 dodgy racetrack and junkyard layovers.

Still, these pooches will never lose
 their cool, grow lonely or bow-wow
 their brains out. They'll always be dogs
 of their word. In a dog-eat-dog world,
 straight from the horse's mouth:
 civilized dogs are top dogs.
 Ask the one upstairs.

In Kotsilidis's poetry, the idiomatic expression is like Pears' general hypothetical, such that language becomes a sort of ironic sound against the society which uses them, by loading poetry with phrases which sound familiar, but whose implications seem to lie out of immediate grasp due to the high frequency of them in her poems.

Filled with idiomatic puns, the poem concludes with a synopsis of Nietzsche's philosophy: 'In a dog-eat-dog world, / straight from the horse's mouth: / civilized dogs are top dogs.' The last line is a pun on 'top dog', though

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in the phrases 'cockeyed' and 'straight from the horse's mouth'. They are both puns and contrast to the main subject, the dog, and help to emphasize the dog's sexual importance in the poem.

The themes of intimacy and intellect combat. The origin of the phrase 'from the horse's mouth' is one of the informant's intimacy with the breed of horse. The etymology of 'cockeyed' is obscure, combining the verb form of 'cock', which has taken on a contradictory meaning, in its modern usage as compared to its original usage, and 'eye'. 'Cocken', the original form, used to mean 'to fight', and is totally fitting with the poem and the struggle for a phrase to retain meaning. However, cock as a verb, as used in the adjective 'cockeyed' and cock as a noun are not the same, and it is Kotsilidis's use of a folk etymology—a word meaning which is incorrect but perceived as correct in general knowledge of the speech community—that is ironic here.

Food is a great transporter of language, and Kotsilidis exemplifies this wisdom in several poems. The word 'hot dog' tickles the meaning of the phrase 'dog-eat-dog', which can be traced from the Latin phrase 'canis caninam non est', 'dog doesn't eat dog'. Like the phrase's evolution, since the use of classical language, the world linguistically and philosophically has become the complete opposite. This is perhaps why she is interested in the voices of Pratchett and Plato at once.

If there is one component of her message too subtle or altogether missing, it's her spiritual outlook. Pratchett and Plato, among other authors mentioned in the book, were quite implicit about gnosis and purpose in life. These themes seem to be tactically swept under the rug in the young poetess's premiere.

Her expression is emotionally evident if visually discreet. Idiomatic expressions are interwoven with the weft of emotion, bringing a very Canadian pathetic fallacy and an appeal to Thales of Miletus together. Perhaps the renowned secularity of Thales is her reason for gapping on the religious argument.

House of Cards

We wake to the carcass of cloud cover,
skeletons of lightning –

We hold one another
like the shorter ends of sticks,

as though we are the last of the baskets
for what remains of our eggs;

knowing that, apart, the night
would mistake one of us for its moon,

or when the world returns to water
each of us would be one item shy.

So each couplet seems to be a card of her unstable argument. Why is it unstable? Perhaps it's that her emotion is generally viewed by her as unstable itself, when looking at the final couplet in a poem earlier in the collection: 'Listen, climb in, I'll show you / what I mean by *rock*.'

But the images are firm in whatever tone each couplet voices. The first is mournful, then comes jilted, hopeless, natural loneliness, and then this slightly more difficult to define tone. "Knowing that ... when the world returns to water / each of us would be one item shy" implies that the lover and the beloved are items, too, and in the afterlife, even if metempsychosis or Thales' philosophical view were true, the love couldn't be the same as it is in that moment.

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Tips for Remembering Who You Are

Think of a fruit, your favourite song, ginkgo biloba. Recite it every day. Use pegwords, palaces. Macramé the constellations. Confer with shorebirds. Call your father. Note the fluttering connections. Mix tapes. Take photos. Wear layers. Polish the cerebral corvette. Drink milk. Digest detailed dental records. Sport the subliminal. Go to Harvard. Support the hippocampus, the amygdala. Tie a sling around it. Fish for geneticists, neuroscientists. Cast clairvoyants. Invest in the Neural Impulse Actuator. Take stock in Hitachi. Test-drive your epoch machine. donate and double-bag your organs. Feed your brain 1.9 metres. Wear a lifejacket, helmet or hardhat. Use Oil of Olay, formaldehyde. Exorcise. Observe phantom limbs. Sweep pathways clear. Keep your eyes on past prizes. Pray to your inner anima. Run like hell, you're an elephant. Convince yourself.

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