

KARL ELDER

Ode in the Key of O

Kudos unto the code and to the mind
behind the hand that moved not out of need
but what must be acknowledged as a thought
nonpareil—stone turned wheel no exception—
the crude scrawl (in ashes, sand, and soil
with stick or staff) that which it did not know
to call symbol, yet would bring to recall
the awe uttered as O on the rounded
mouth below the eyes of one fixed upon
the moon's shape, if not in worship, wonder.

Yea, as if a remnant of gods gone ghost
gleaned from the air by the hand of a mime,
like approximation of perfection,
that diminutive orb wholly without
substance rolled from the tongue, made corporal
by yet another eidolon, the line—
call it divine insight when the pupil
of the mind's eye eclipses iris to
highlight, through swift abstraction, the concrete.

Ought it then not be, after the grand span
of five hundred generations, given
the cuneiform-like illusion of form
born of the fact of annularity,
our alacrity to the degree it
has not atrophied to hilarity
at the writ of the clock is—while more
minute each minute—worthy, too, of praise?

For value in its purest form is less
a matter of matter than the marriage
of light and shade, their interdependency
in the sense, say, male and female were one
from the beginning—no little arrow
on the O of that embryo, no foe,
target, cross, or stickman Atlas below.

Lo, behold: lift like Sol's soul *o* from *god*
there's no g. d. (or even dad gummed) thing
to which we cling if not—à la lingua
franca more so than the thing itself, life
buoy or lasso—awe, the ineffable
grasped as we're pulled, gasping, through h. to o.

Thus, as it's said, at the apogee of one's
gestation there is the crowning; there is
as well the splash, and there is the circle
of attendants, the cry, the swaddling,
the mother's embrace, infant to her breast.

Yet, life is birth's twist: in time time doesn't
exist, birth flanked by nothing of the past,
no word of the future when, alas, love's
orismo's most fierce in fear of life's loss.

O, of the holes in the whole of our knowledge
we say miracle, though the miracle,
mother of miracles, is we say it.

As for love's spell—phallic *l*, mellow *o*
vis-à-vis Eve's cleft *v v*. snake eye *e*—

is it not awe to which we owe our awe?