

It seems we may wonder forever what vehicle meaning prefers. The bullet list, jolting and bold? The smooth ride of conjoined prose? I thought I liked connections, landmarks, right directions. Phrases, though, disjunct and rare, force the mind to lace their inevitable story, like the edges of an illusion's phantom shapes: this must be the truest poetry. It stands to reason, because the show loses in the telling, of course. But then-- the telling was the show. And so we pend in the liminal moment, wondering where narrative ends and stories begin.

Then there are words, these thoughts visible with no sound. They traverse pages and the mind but make no passage cross the lips, come to no port by the ear. Letters only complicate matters further as they stand arrayed in rank and file waiting, waiting, for the hand that selects and deploys, repeats and deletes them into enduring sense. And even then we may wonder just how enduring, just how much sense.

Why do I use my paper, ink, and pen,
And call my wits to counsel what to say?
Such memories were made for mortal men.
I speak of saints whose names shall not decay.

Why indeed? Why do we unearth, among the earliest texts of the ancients, commissioned by kings on great granite slabs, etched by shepherds onto sheer mountain rock, (1) abecedaria (2) verses (3) lists? These we treat with care, photographing them, publishing them, disseminating them out in paper copy.

Amidst so many mysteries stands one cautious clear fact: the expressive medium, blocked or tabbed, prose or verse, digital or print, remains ever imbued with an authorial voice, even one forgotten, camouflaged, unknowable, or irrelevant. Heartfelt black and white pages are woven on the threads of circumstance, patterned by grief's or love's or anger's weft. So too are the blank ones, until we again wonder, forever, whether words or their absence speaks better of loss. Both together, perhaps, that neither may pass unnoticed.

Such memories were made for mortal men whose names shall not decay.

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