

SIDERIUS NUNCIUS

A DISCOURSE ON METHOD

Talking with her recently, a niece of mine reminded me that humanity has in the past been afflicted by some very destructive diseases, among them plague, pox and tuberculosis. The next big disease, she feared, will be madness.

In what sense madness? I enquired.

Madness in the sense of mental alienation from our deep mind and from how reality is, she replied.

Afterwards, sitting on alone, I wondered what she meant by our deep mind.

I remembered something Yeats said

I know now that revelation is from the self, but from that age-long memoried self, that shapes the elaborate shell of the mollusc and the child in the womb, that teaches the birds to make their nests; and that genius is a crisis that joins that buried self for certain moments to our trivial daily mind.

I remembered something a remembering Inuit said

In the very earliest time when both people and animals lived on earth a person could become an animal if he wanted to and an animal could become a human being. Sometimes they were people and sometimes animals, and there was no difference. All spoke the same language. That was the time when words were like magic. The human mind had mysterious powers. A word spoken by chance might have strange consequences. It would suddenly come alive and what people wanted to happen could happen – all you had to do was say it. Nobody can explain this: that's the way it was.

It is of things as they now are that J.B.S. Haldane speaks when he says

It is my suspicion that the universe isn't only queerer than we suppose, it is queerer than we can suppose.

Maybe it is time for a renaissance. Maybe it is time to reacquaint an old intelligence, waiting for us where we would expect to find it, in folk tales.

Once upon a time a hunter lived by himself in a lonely place, lonely even for owls. Every morning at first light he would leave his hut and set out on a great round checking his snares and nets and traps. Coming home one evening with only a hare hanging from his belt, it surprised him and frightened him to see smoke rising from his chimney. How can it be? he wondered. In a world where he never saw any human footprints but his own? All his senses alert, he pushed open the door, only to see that as well as a great blazing fire on the hearth there was a steaming hot meal on the table. Not sure that it was the right thing to do, he sat down and ate the food and then, not daring to take the tongs to it, he sat by the fire, wondering. Now to night his

house was no longer a refuge from the world. The strangeness and danger and wonder of the world had come indoors. It steamed from his table. It blazed from his hearth. Would he ever again, he wondered, be able to come in out of the world and close his door on it? Would he ever again be able to come in out of the world and close his hunter's mind on it?

Next morning, again at first light, he was on his way. That evening, careful to stay downwind from a boar and her litter, he turned for home and, from a long way off, he saw it, smoke rising from his chimney. His hunter's senses alert, walking as silently as his shadow, he reached his door and, as though anything could happen, he opened it, wincing when it creaked. As he expected it would be, the strangeness and danger and wonder of the world was in his house, blazing from his hearth, steaming from his table.

To night again he ate the danger. Fearing that it might spring at him, he sat beside it, flaming on the hearth.

Next morning, his curiosity overcoming a sense of respect, he turned off his track and, sitting concealed in a clump of bushes, he kept his house in view. It wasn't long till he saw a fox trotting all the way to his door and pushing it open. Soon there was smoke from his chimney, and so, instead of continuing on his round, he retraced his steps, walking now again as noiselessly as his shadow. As much as with a deep, slow breath as with his hand, he opened the door. He saw a woman hanging a pot over the fire and as he closed it he saw a fox pelt hanging from a peg on the back of his door. A woman who was a fox or a fox who had become a woman, he knew that she was aware of him, but she didn't acknowledge him.

Not yet.

Not yet.

Not yet.

In the end, looking at him only for as long as it took her to say it, she said, I have come to live with you.

It was a new life for the hunter.

Every morning he had dry, well-mended clothes to put on.

Every evening, from a long way off, he'd see smoke from his chimney.

It was, though, a difficult blessing.

Impulses he was never aware of he was now aware of, and he didn't know how to handle them.

It was easier to sit at a distance from a woman who could at any moment turn into a fox than it was to sit at a distance from himself who, for no reason at all, could at any moment turn murderous.

It damaged him to think that he was happier leaving the house in the morning than he was returning to it in the evening.

Once his door was an ordinary door, now it was a door with a fox pelt hanging from it. Once it shut out the world, now it opened into the world. It opened into himself.

One year, coming towards the shortest day, the mating season of foxes, he complained of a rank smell of fox in the house.

Saying nothing, she carried on.

Three nights later he said that he couldn't stand it.

On the night after that, his vexation intense, he sat as far off from her as he could.

Saying nothing, she went to the door, she took down the fox pelt. Going out, she draped it over her shoulders and, turning into a fox, she trotted away into the wild world. And so it was that from then on, the only human footprints the hunter ever saw were his own.

It happens, doesn't it?

A day comes when the world pushes open our door against the world.

A day comes when we have to relearn ourselves and the world.

A day comes when, having written it on paper made from wood pulp, we must now rewrite our General Theory of Relativity on the fox pelt, this signifying out incipient allegiance to the suspicion that the universe is queerer than we can suppose.

Think of $E=mc^2$ draping the fox pelt it is written on over its shoulders – whatever it then becomes, that too is even more counter-intuitively true of the universe.

A shepherd he was, and always on May morning he would drive his sheep to higher grazing ground. No different this year than any previous year, he didn't need a dog to urge them on. As though they were glad to be free of the vexations of winter enclosure, they were lambs again, scampering and bounding upwards along old trails, up to new grass, up to what for them was their high home range.

Having nothing else to do, the shepherd sat on a turf covered rock, knitting a winter scarf for himself. Soon he saw a hare and then another hare. Finding each other, they stood on their hind legs and sniffed each other. The better to see them, the shepherd learned so steeply aside that his ball of thread rolled off his lap, down the hillside.

Gone down to retrieve it, he saw to his utter surprise that it had disappeared through a great opening in the hill. For fifty years he had come to this hill, spending all summer long up here, he knew it as well as he knew his own yard, and yet he had never caught sight of this opening. Had it just happened? Or was it that, normally closed to us, reality was now, for its own good reasons, opening up to us? If it was, he wouldn't be found wanting. He walked through and found himself in a great cavern. As though illumined by a light from within himself, he saw a royal, crowned figure lying asleep on an oak bed. How he didn't know, but he knew it was King Arthur. Arthur it was. Bright as his legend. Bright as our memory of him.

Beside the oak bed there was an oak table. On it there was a horn and a sword.

Picking it up, he crashed the sword down on the table, making a sound much louder than he expected.

King Arthur awoke, lifted his head off the pillow, turned toward him and said, had you picked up the trumpet and blown it I The Once and Future King would have shaken off sleep, would have risen up and returned among people, the marvellous world as it used to be returning with me. Now I return to sleep. For centuries maybe. For longer maybe. Till someone finds the opening.

Disappointed and alarmed, the shepherd backed away, picking up his ball of thread as he did so. Back in the customary world he looked round, but, as though it had never been, there was now no opening in reality.

And so we ask, what has happened to Arthur in us? What has happened to what is right royal in us? What has happened to what is regal in us? What has happened to what is sovereign in us?

Peter: Did you see an old woman going down the path?

Patrick: I did not, but I saw a young girl, and she had the walk of a queen

When and how did we lose that walk? How and when will we regain it?

I think of three horn calls: the horn call that will awaken Arthur and his world in us, the horn call that will awaken Morgan La Faye and her world in us, the horn call that will awaken Merlin and his world in us.

Arthur we can be.

Morgan La Faye we can be.

And Merlin, sage of the woods who sometimes comes among us speaking the twelve languages of the wind and the eighteen languages of the rain, him we can be.

Whoever you are, that's who you are; a young girl with the walk of a queen.

Great and renowned warrior that he was, it wasn't something that Bran Mac Feabhail had ever done, but one day, drawn to he didn't know what, he walked out of his fortress, down and away into the wet, wild lands where only snipe and herons and otters lived. Before long, he having always been a man among men, the silence and the solitude were getting to him. A red onslaught between mountains, that he could deal with, but this silence that you couldn't spear, this solitude that you couldn't bring a sword down upon, even the mist that came down, it all unnerved him. Suffering his first defeat, he turned for home. Soon, his walking a trudging, he heard music not of our world behind him. Turning round, he saw a silver branch. It was out of it the music came. Strangest of all, the branch didn't play it. What he heard was the branch being itself. Being itself, it had perils for mortals in it. And it raided him. In the way that he himself would raid a triple-ditched ringfort, it raided him. It raided him, not with spear and torch and sword, with its unearthly sweetness it raided him. Almost, almost to swooning. Then it ceased, and, by the time he came back to himself and opened his eyes, it was gone.

In his hall that night, amidst all the usual goings on, Bran sat silent and alone.

A hard man in battle and in all his dealings with the world, it had never occurred to him that anything either in the world or from beyond it could have so disabled him.

Whatever else, the music had damaged him in his sense of himself.

And his people – when they came to know, it would damage him in their eyes.

He imagined their great concern. Bran Mac Feabhail, the hard man, not foremost in battle. Bran Mac Feabhail, his eyes and his mind not fixed on what he was doing.

Bran Mac Feabhail laid low not by a sword stroke but by longing.

Sensing a sudden silence in the house, he opened his eyes and there she was, a radiant woman, cruel if she needed to be.

Fifty quatrains she sang, singing of the wonders of the land she came from. And he, Bran, him she invited to come to that land.

Next morning, in three ships, in each ship a company of three times nine men, he was on the sea, sailing westward.

After two days and two nights of tough, untoward going, suddenly, instead of sea salt in their eyes and minds, the fragrances, blent and separate, of summer meadows, and there he was, Manannan Mac Lir, god of the sea, riding towards them in his four horse chariot. Singing them out over the manes and heads of his horses, they still trampling, thirty quatrains he sang:

Cáini amra laisin mBran
ina churchán tar muir nglan;
os mé, am charpat do chéin,
is magh sccothach ima-réidh.

A n-us muir glan
don náoi broindig a tá Bran,
is Mag Meall co n-iumat scoth
damsa a carput dá roth.

At-chí Bran
lín tonn tibri tar muir nglan.
At-chíu ca-déin i mMagh Mon
sgotha cennderga gin on.

Taithnit gabra lir a sam
sella roiscc ro sire Bran.
Brunditt sscotha sruaim do mil
a crích Manannáin mic Lir.

Lí na fairge fora taí,
geldod mora imme-roí:
ra sert buidhe oculus glas;
is talam nád écomrass.

Lingit ích bricc ass de brú,
a muir finn forn-aiccisiu;
it láoig it uain co ndath,
co cairde, cin imarbad.

Cé at-chetha áonchairptheach
i mMag Meall co n-immat scoth,
fil mor di echaib ar brú
cen suide, nát aiccisiu

The god telling us how different is the world as he sees it from the world as we see it. The god telling us that what we see as grey, salt sea, rising and falling, he sees as a Plain of Delights over which, even now, he is riding in his four-horse chariot. The god telling us that, if only we had eyes to see, we would see that the silver branch being itself is no more wonderful than any ordinary ash branch or oak branch being itself.

And what the god doesn't tell us in words he tells us in his singing. His singing being the singing of the silver branch, he tells us that, had we eyes to see it, any ordinary bush being itself would put an end to us being our everyday selves.

Signalling to his men to turn their boats round, Bran sailed home to the land he had left, the land to which the radiant lady had invited him. Waiting for him there on the shore, the silver branch sang the song of his ascent into Ireland.

Gods we met on mountains gave us laws.

A God we met at sea would have given us vision. Vision and audition.

How, seeing the sea as Manannán sees it, could we harm it?

How, hearing the singing of the silver branch in every branch of it, in every root and thew of it, could we casually cut down a tree?

How, hearing the silver branch physics of an atom, can we make an atom bomb of it?

Manannán didn't command us to do this, didn't command us to not do that. Knowing what will work and what will not work, he invited us to open our eyes.

I went out to the hazel wood,
Because a fire was in my head,
And cut and peeled a hazel wand,
And hooked a berry to a thread;
And when white moths were on the wing
And moth-like stars were flickering out,
I dropped the berry in the stream
And caught a little silver trout.

When I had laid it on the floor
I went to blow the fire aflame,
But something rustled on the floor,
And someone called me by my name:
It had become a glimmering girl
With apple blossom in her hair
Who called me by my name and ran
And faded through the brightening air.

Though I am old with wandering
Through hollow lands and hilly lands.
I will find out where she has gone
And kiss her lips and take her hands;
And walk among long dappled grass,
And pluck till time and times are done
The silver apples of the moon,
The golden apples of the sun.

The question is: should we take this poem as seriously as we take $E=mc^2$? After all, we do live in a universe in which a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, allowing us to wonder whether what happens to a part of the universe cannot also happen to all of it. Could it be that even now our universe is in a cocoon it has spun for itself, is undergoing complete metamorphosis and will soon emerge as something unpredictably different?

It is like this. A man is getting ready to dissect the trout he caught that morning in the stream under his house. It is lying there dead, its eyes dead, on a marble slab. He turns to go to a grindstone to sharpen his knives but no sooner has he turned his back than he hears her, Trout Girl calling him by his name.

Or it is like this. I am lying anaesthetized on an operating table in the deep interior of a hospital. As though it was a double door the surgeons have opened out my chest. While they are working on me she calls me. Calling out to them to stop, I get up off the table and, heart or no heart, I follow her, along corridors, across the yard, through the streets, out into her world, she as she enters every next wood or every next valley calling me to come out, to keep coming out of the deep anaesthetic of everyday hearing and seeing and knowing, and I do come out – out, out, out- and eventually there I am, back in my own yard, and I know looking at it that I will never get used to the wonder of it, of ass cart, of bucket, of thatch and calf, of my own door opening

into my own floor, my chair by the fire a siege, a Siege Perilous, but bless me, bless my soul, I am worthy.

And if you ask me who that woman who lives with me is, if you ask me where she comes from, I will take down my fiddle from the wall, I will play one of Ireland's great airs for you, My Lagan Love, Roisín Dubh or Eibhlín a Rún, and as I play it I'll say to you, where this great air comes from, that's where she comes from, and it's where you come from, and it's where I come from. Where My Lagan Love comes from, that's where we all come from. Whether we know it or not, it is where all of us always abide.

And if you someday meet me coming out of an oakwood and you think I am Merlin, you will be right. Merlin I am, talking to you only about ordinary things, talking to you about wild duck or deer grass in one of the twelve languages of the wind or, it could be, in one of the eighteen languages of the rain.

Manannán and Trout Girl. Out of the anaesthetic of everyday hearing and seeing and knowing they call us.

Who am I sociologically? Who am I giving an account of myself in a curriculum vitae or answering the questions on a census form?

All of that sense of myself fallen away from me, I go out to find out who I am in the hazel wood, and two hours later there I am following the girl with apple blossom in her hair, or maybe it is that, walking home defeated and disheartened, I will hear it, the

Silver Branch

Singing behind me

The universe continuing to be what it is, I only need to undergo a metamorphosis into what I already am.

That metamorphosis is my

Imram Brain

He was an inshore fisherman. He picked mussels and limpets and periwinkles from the rocks. He dug in the tidal sands for razor fish and cockles. As though led to them by a sixth sense, he harvested oysters and clams. And, rowing himself up and down the inlets, he fished with nets for shrimp when they were in season.

Once, during an autumn sprint-tide the wind was blowing from the land and when it did ebb the sea retreated farther than he had ever seen, out beyond three sea stacks, leaving only a shallow channel, loud with waders, in between. Greedily anticipating the rich pickings he would find, he crossed the channel, the birds taking affrighted flight, and he set to work. So absorbed did he become filling bag after bag, first with mussels and then with winkles, that he lost all sense of time and when, the last bag full, he looked up, he saw that the tide had turned and had cut him off. Having learned the hard way that he had no chance against currents so continuously swirling, he decided there was nothing for it but to sit it out until the next ebbside.

Making his way to it, he sat in the lee of a great ledge of rock. Night came down. At the full coming up and then rising high in the sky, the moon was so bright it was almost like day. In the small hours he got up to work a stiffness and chill out of his

body, out of his mind as well, and it was then he saw them, seals coming ashore, and the wonder of it was that, having struggled up onto the rock ledges, they dropped their seal coats and became human beings. Never had he seen their like for beauty, but what was yet more marvellous, they continually flourished in the wonder of each other. He watched them, entranced by them, till dawn. Till ebbtide. And then, like he was dreaming, like he was doing it in a dream, all thought of shellfish forgotten, he stole around, picked up one of the seal coats and started for home, walking hip deep across the channel.

Since, without her coat, the sealwoman couldn't turn back into a seal and swim away as all the others were now doing, she followed him, across the channel, up the shore, along the small roads, into his house. That night, after she had fallen asleep, he left their bed and went out and, leaning a ladder against it, he hid the seal coat in the thatch.

In time a child was born to them. And then another. And another.

Often, during those years, she would go down to the shore and while she was there, looking seaward, you might as well not talk to her at all or call her, for she wouldn't hear you.

One day, as she was kneading dough at a great board table, a drop of seal oil fell down into it. Getting the smell of it, it all came back to her, her life as a seal in the sea, her sons and her daughters in the sea, her grandmothers in the sea. Aching, knowingly now, to be with them, she crossed the yard to an outhouse, came back with a ladder, leaned it against the thatch, dug in it, and found her seal coat. Reaching the lip of the tide, she draped it over her shoulders, she became a seal, and was gone. Not forever though, for some mornings, looking at each other, her children on land will see that their hair has been combed in the night, her way of telling them that she has been back, and will come back.

With good reason, some of us settle for a little life. Never do we cross a channel at ebbtide. Never do we run the risk of being cut off from an acquired but fixed sense of who we are. Never, coming up out of our culture, do we drop our conditioning, all of it, leaving it behind us, unregarded, on the rocks.

Sometimes it happens though. A drop of seal oil falls down into our fixed sense of ourselves and 'tis as if a spell has been broken.

Where we tend to see fixity the story sees fluency and the day will surely come when we will be happy to flow, not just from one to another identity but from identity as such, back into God.

Tegid Foel and Ceridwen were wed. A year later in a house that looked like a folktale had imagined it a daughter was born to them. Then a son. The son was as ugly as the daughter was fair. Hardly had they washed him and dried him than they called him Morfran, meaning Great Crow. Worse still. He grew every year more ugly and now, so as not to lie about him, they called him Afagdh, meaning Utter Darkness. But Ceridwen, a nature goddess in disguise, so some thought – no, she was determined that her son would not be an outcast because of his ugliness. She would make him all-wise, and this, his wisdom, would ensure that he would be welcome at the tables of chieftains in their ringforts and of kings in their high, never to be conquered castles. A cauldron Ceridwen had, and now, as at its making, she chanted a variety of spells, long and short, all of them in an unknown language, into it, all round inside it, all

round outside it, into its rim. Herbs boiling water wouldn't boil these spells would boil, compelling them to yield up their most secret essences.

Intending to brew a drop of wisdom for Afagdhu, for him alone, Ceridwen charged Mordha, an elderly man, to procure the logs, and Gwion Back, a boy, him she charged to tend the fire, and this they must do every day for a year and a day.

Also, every day for a year and a day, Ceridwen would herself go out into the world seeking the necessary herbs, some of them rare, some of them growing so briefly in places so occult that only someone with second sight would find them.

Things went well.

Sometimes in the night Ceridwen would dream of a herb and off she would go in the morning, her dream having shown her the way.

That's how it was, day after day, Mordha bringing in the logs, Gwion Back tending the ever fervent fire, Ceridwen coming home with the herbs, the cauldron boiling, not boiling itself away, not steaming away, everything kept within, a spell she had spoken having ensured this.

On the last night of the long wait Ceridwen dreamed of yet one more herb growing in an old heron's nest at the top of the tree in a wood far away. Determined to be home early, she set out early.

At the time she expected to be back but wasn't yet back there was thunder in the cauldron. Contained within the cauldron, it was thunder more thunderous than was ever heard among the open mountains. Then there was silence. Still terrified, neither Mordha nor Gwion Back reached in to collect the brewed drop of wisdom. Now again there was thunder, this time snarling, and angry, and as though it has been spat out, out over the rim of the cauldron came the drop of wisdom. It landed on Gwion Back's thumb. It burned him, he licked it and, instantly now, he was all wise, all knowing, all seeing, seeing endlessly into the past, endlessly into the present, endlessly into the future. What had been meant for Afagdhu, was his by accident. Imagining Ceridwen's wrath, he rushed out of doors, only just in time, for with a scream the cauldron burst, its boiling contents burning a path for itself down the hillside into the river below Gwyddno Faranhir's salmon weir. Downstream from there Gwyddno's horses came to drink and, too much for them, the power in the water killed them.

Soon Ceridwen was coming over the brow of the hill. Seeing the still steaming path down to the river, she guessed what had happened and now, as the bursting cauldron had screamed, she screamed. Gwion Back took to flight. Her wrath scorching herself and the grass under her feet, she set off in pursuit. Just as she was about to lay vengeful hands on him, he became a hare. Not to be outdone, she became a hound. Again, just as she was about to close her mouth on him he leaped and became a salmon in the river. Instantly, she was an otter chasing him down. Rising up, he became a bird of the air but there she was, a falcon bearing down on him. Overflying a farm yard with great heaps of winnowed wheat in it, he dropped down, a grain among millions. A match for him whatever he did, she plunged and, shedding her falcon form, there she was, a red-combed black hen eyeing the wheat grains, swallowing the one with a difference.

The bother was, back to herself in her house, she knew she was pregnant with him. She pregnant with defeat. With defeat for herself. With defeat for Afagdhu. And nine months to wait until she could lay hands on him. He taking from her, digesting her. He kicking her. No. No now. Not now. Now, for now, she wasn't a match for him. And one thing she knew: he would go to full term.

Three weeks overdue, she screamed him out into her waiting hands, but no, defeated by him still, she couldn't do it, she couldn't kill him.

Within hours, her strength returned to her, she stitched him into a leather satchel, she walked west to the sea and committed him, to her surprise with prayers, to an outgoing tide. Out, out, out he was carried. Out beyond view. Her anger more hurtful because more useless, she turned for home.

Days and years ran on. It was May morning and always on May morning there would be a first run of salmon in off the sea and up the river, tidal at first and then cascading. Busy with more urgent tasks himself, Gwyddno asked Ellflin, his not so clever son, to go down to the weir and bag the netted salmon.

To Ellflin's dismay, there were no salmon and, turning for home, he could well imagine how angry his father would be when he gave him the news, and worse, known for his stupidity, he as he always was would be to blame. Dreading the encounter, he looked back in the hopeless hope that he might see a gleam of silver ascending the river. What he saw instead was a gleaming something hanging from the near weir pole. Intrigued, in a childlike way, he retraced his steps, the fully risen but still low sun picking out the marvel, whatever it might be. Afraid at first to touch it, it frightened him all the more when he figured that it was a satchel encrusted all over with barnacles and mussels and little flutterings of seaweed. Eventually, in the hope that he'd find something in it that would pacify his father, he lifted it off, down onto the deck, he unstitched it and, looking down into it, he saw a bright-browed wonder child, saw him and heard him, he singing poems, their words, more real than the things they talked about, hawks and mountain avens, salmon and stars.

Now called Bright Brow, now called Taliesin, Gwion Back sings. Still in the satchel he sings:

There is news of the macrocosm in us its microcosm.

The richer we are in ourselves the richer our sense
of the universe.

What we come home to in ourselves we come home to
in the universe.

When we come home to soul in ourselves we come home to soul in the
universe.

Walking away, and growing to full human height, he sings

Purpose in perceiving perverts perceiving.

Self-will in perceiving perverts perceiving.

A perceiver in perceiving perverts perceiving.

Perceiving.

Perceiving these mountains.

Perceiving them beyond the wound of

Someone perceiving and something perceived.

Perceiving is.

Perceiving these mountains in the unwounded

Oneness of God

It is a question that many adults in our culture might ask: what has happened to the wonder child in us?

And how come our culture didn't do for us what Ceridwen did for Gwion Back? How come that it didn't stitch us into a second womb or cocoon and return us into the genius of the universe.

The universe in which a caterpillar becomes a butterfly.

The universe in which Gwion Back becomes a wonder child.

The universe which, for all we know, might already have spun a cocoon for itself.

It is what the story would teach us: better to trust the genius of the universe in us than to trust our trivial daily minds.

Moments there are.

There is the moment when we see something otherwise quite ordinary, such as smoke from our chimney, and we know, seeing it, that the universe is stranger, maybe queerer, than we can suppose.

The moment when reality opens or maybe it is our mind that opens, there being days when mind and reality are one and the same.

The moment when, coming home defeated and disheartened, we hear reality being itself.

The moment when, hearing our name called, our census-form sense of ourselves falls from us.

The moment when a drop of seal oil falls down into our world and we know that our empirical experience of ourselves, whether as seal, woman or whatever, isn't the whole story.

The moment when we come upon the wonder child we might have been or, starting again, could yet be, becoming in time the great remembered bard of a people.

I think of it, the day when Orion stands at our door. Like a postman, he returns to us everything we have said about the universe.

Seeing how dumbfounded we are, he tells us that no, the universe doesn't recognise itself in what we say about it.

Observing our continuing perplexity he says, partial knowledge is nescience, and that is as true of our partial knowledge of ourselves as it is of our partial knowledge of the universe.

I think of it, the day when Prospero buried his book,

I think of it, the day when, just for the day,

Francis Bacon buries his book called *Novum Organum*.

Galileo Galilei buries his book called *Siderius Nuncius*.

Isaac Newton buries his book called *Principia Mathematica*.

Albert Einstein buries his book called *The General Theory of Relativity*.

Day when, night when, the universe shines thoroughly through the impairments of our thinking about it.

Day when, coming home, the Mental Traveller looks up and sees smoke rising from his crumbling chimney. After incarnations of seeking, his own creaking door, opening in and, later, opening out, is the new

Eureka