

More Than Minds: Relearning Language through Poetry

Deanna Briody, Writing

Project Advisor: Dr. Daniel P. Williams

Are we missing something?

The words we use today—conceptual and immaterial—seem unable to convey the fullness of our lived experiences. Has language always been like this? Or have we, through the pursuit of reason, lost something in our speech?



In the Post-Enlightenment Western world, our bodies are viewed as “non-essential (and rather regrettable) containers for our minds.” ~James K.A. Smith

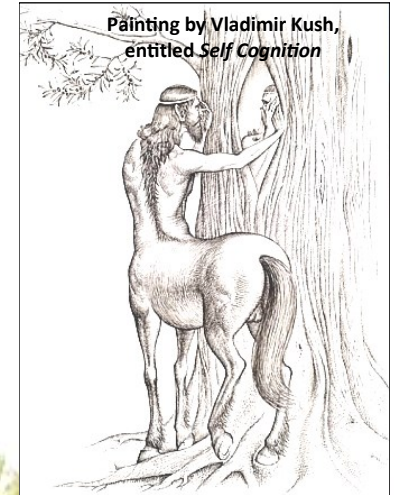
Poetry:

“imaginary gardens with
real toads in them.”

~Marianne Moore

Realms of Study

- The Age of Enlightenment: the role of the senses, the irony of materialism, and the narrowing emphasis on rational observation
- Metaphor: its origin, worth, and decline
- Biblical language: the concrete, the sensory, and the imaginative
- Poetry: its uniqueness and remedial value



Painting by Vladimir Kush,
entitled *Self Cognition*

“Man is placed at the center of beings and a ray of relation passes from every other being to him. And neither can man be understood without these objects, nor objects without man.”
~Ralph Waldo Emerson

Conclusion: Due in part to the Enlightenment, we use language as if we are isolated minds, distant from the world around us and from our own bodies. Poetry, the lexical land where grass is still green and where we can still hear its sway in our souls, can serve as a remedy, reminding us that we are creatures—made to be participants within the created order and lovers of the Creator.



Painting by Risa Tillman;
inspired by the poem “Milos”
by Anis Mojgani



Deanna Briody



The Honors Program at
GENEVA COLLEGE

solī Deo gloria