

FROM DUST TO DUST

--I am like a slip of comet,
Scarce worth discovery, in some corner seen
Bridging the slender difference of two stars,
Come out of space, or suddenly engender'd
By heady elements, for no man knows:
But when she sights the sun she grows and sizes
And spins her skirts out, while her central star
Shakes its cocooning mists; and so she comes
To fields of light; millions of travelling rays
Pierce her; she hangs upon the flame-cased sun,
And sucks the light as full as Gideon's fleece:
But then her tether calls her; she falls off,
And as she dwindles shreds her smock of gold
Amidst the sisting planets, till she comes
To single Saturn, last and solitary;
And then goes out into the cavernous dark.
So I go out: my little sweet is done:
I have drawn heat from this contagious sun:
To not ungentle death now forth I run.

--GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS, ENGLISH POET AND
JESUIT PRIEST, AFTER OBSERVING TEMPEL'S COMET
IN 1864 (quoted from Levy, Comets: Creators and Destroyers,
nytimes.com site)

WILD PERIHELION PASSAGES

Comets approach the Sun, flicker a few hundred
times, and die like moths around a flame.
But a vast repository of them waits at the periphery
of the Solar System.
When the present configuration of continents is
unrecognizably altered,
when the Earth is engulfed by the expanding Sun,
when, in its dotage, our star feebly illuminates the
charred remains of this planet—
then, even then, the skies will still be brightened
as young comets, newly arrived from the interstellar
dark, make their wild perihelion passages.
When the rest of the solar system is dead, and the
descendants of humans [are] long ago emigrated or
extinct, the comets will still be here.

-- Sagan and Druyvan 1985:372, last paragraph of
Comet



Meaning Often Lurks, XX



*"I maintain that
behind every
'decorative'
layout lies the
hidden visage
of a breathing*

icon giving life (animation) to the design.

**...Perhaps this explains the current
emphasis on cultural syntax or grammars
rather than the decoding of iconography
and symbolism. Shouldn't we**

try to escape this mental
prison of our own ethnotaxonomy of form...?

***Meaning often lurks where we expect it
least*** [emphasis added].

Hence we need to pursue the 'archaeology of
signification,' even in symmetry. Otherwise
symmetry analysis becomes mere[ly]...
theoretically interesting, but of limited cultural
significance...." [Peter G. Roe,

Washburn 2004:98]



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