

Time In Science commission *[Italy, Maria Rebecca Ballestra]*

Mario Petrucci
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PRELUDE I

So that's your big Fish –
your wish? Data?
Big Data?

You've laid hungry dishes
along the sand. You are a waiter
wading waist-deep in broiling water

leaning at athletic angles to
your electronic rod. You have cast
your internet by hand – thrown it wide

to incoming tide. The oiled wire pulls
taut. Some vast shape now
darkens your net...

You have caught Shark.

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PRELUDE II

Where is this big wave
without the Water?

What slave to data
doesn't know Duration?

So – who has information
but does not have Time?

To consume this big Fish
tune in to Digestion!

Or – if you must – kiss dust:
stay clear of the Ocean.

Your infinite Net – each
feeding Line – needs this

fearsome tension: Time.

CHRONOS

My waves arrive, close together: shifting strings
on an organic instrument. Squat low on your shore

to watch this data drive in: hurried, relentless, fuelling
itself. Will collecting raw waves measure my Ocean?

Hunker down till the seaward view collapses, to the point
where you lose that more sacred water: those darker strips

between waves that make waves meaningful. Kneel till
knees sting, watching the crests foreshortened stumble

towards you, translucent with hurt: pancakes afroth in
white oil that pile then fritter away top to bottom. Then

see at last how the scientist surfs in, riding one small blurt
of expertise, growing in stature on that weak fade of energy.

Is this all you have of my Water: that sunset parade where
reddish foam fans over sand? Is this how my Ocean spreads,

drains, dies? Will you transcribe then each spindrift note
to orchestrate my swells? Shall you compute unresisting

breves of shale, hoping to decipher the rising, irrefutable
song of the Whale?

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KAIROS

So – you're unconvinced by waves? Even
the child-prince can make waves, right?

Do you sense night's incoming urge, each tide,
does far more to sculpt rock or pulp shoreline?

Breakers are water's moment: but each surge
and crave of tide is data's Deep, wave-obscured.

That neap and spring is just brine's way of testing
what resists it. Canute sought no 'why' in waves

yet thought to arrest a tide. *What* is a wave. *Why*
the tide. Tides are the moon finding a means

to reform Mother. Tides are moons insinuating
the womb. Tainted mirror! Reflected in water

even moons shatter. Tides give Time. Time
for the loon on brain's shore to estimate grains

churned in blue motion, for tides to turn. But
why *moon*? And who, now, other than Ocean

waits for the moon?

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AION

I am Information. I am Ocean.
Even granite succumbs to my walls,

to my grating floors of water. I plumb
your rivers, create your shores. In Sea-Time

stars migrate: your static constellations, for me,
shrug and wink. Beneath, tectonic plates hug,

knit, shift. I blink – and apes lift cities, add a swirl
to climate. You: grit to my Oyster. Data: our pearl.

In the sneeze that is human, it seems I am stasis
while my statistical shoals swim: but I am slow

motion. I move and grow: a Whole that squirms
and evolves – a pitiless immensity of slug. Is it

certain, then, where this is all going? Am I Cause
or Effect? Proof or Question? You wish to measure

Me, but I am the measure of You. Ever youthful,
I store everything that ever happened to water:

and You are water. See – I am fishy Truth. I am
byte-sized Lie. So, study the more my numerous

waves. Monitor my tides. Do these explain me?
Then, under sun's one white coin, falter into me.

Join me.