

The Hollow Mirror

A Collection of Works by The Architect (2005)



Foreword

There exists a space between perception and reality – an intangible territory where fragments of consciousness gather like leaves in autumn wind. It is within this space that I have constructed these reflections, these hollow mirrors that return our gaze altered, transformed by the very act of seeing.

Since the creation of "The Pamphlet" a decade ago, our movement has evolved through the collective exploration of psychological depths, surrealist imagery, and romantic sensibility. This collection represents my continuing journey through these territories, informed by mathematical precision yet surrendering to emotional currents that defy calculation.

As always, it's about a girl.

- The Architect, Winter 2004

Interlude: Writer's Block Café, Winter 2004

The Dreamer stirs honey into her tea, watching steam rise in spirals toward the dim café lighting.

The Dreamer: "He's done it again. Another collection where he refuses to name her."

The Wanderer: *Sketching absently on a napkin* "Does it matter? The mathematics of his emotions are precise even without identification."

The Dreamer: "Of course it matters. This is the third work where she appears as negative space—defined only by her absence. I've analyzed the patterns in his imagery and I'm certain it's Elaine from his graduate seminar."

The Wanderer: *Looks up from his sketch* "You're applying empirical methods to emotional phenomena. Some things resist classification."

The Dreamer: "Say the psychologist who just published a paper on the neurochemistry of artistic inspiration."

The Wanderer: *Smiles* "Touché. But I maintain there's something beautiful in how he transforms specific pain into universal experience. Does identifying the catalyst diminish the reaction?"

The Dreamer: *Sighs* "I suppose not. Still... I wonder if she knows she's become the central equation in his creative algorithm."

I. Reflective Surfaces

Negative Space

Where she used to sit by the tree reading Keats

The absence defines the presence –
this is elementary topology,
the mathematics of shapes and their boundaries.

You are defined by where you are not,
a silhouette against morning light,
the hollow your body leaves in unmade sheets.

I trace the contours of this negative space,
unerasing your presence
from the vacuum left behind.

Wordsworth sought divinity in nature's reflection;
I find it in the precise geometry
of your absence.

Silver Nitrate

In the darkroom of my mind,
your face emerges,
reading Keats by the tree –
features materializing in solution,

sometimes overexposed,
sometimes underexposed.

Memories develop like photographs –
chemical reactions fixing light to substrate,
preserving visions that were,
altering the feelings in preservation.

The imperfect process:
images degrade with handling
(hallucinations),
colors shift over time
(distortion),
edges blur with repeated viewing
(fading).

Yet the original moment remains
captured,
a quantum state
observed,
changed.
Preserved in its transformation.

Like Hamlet contemplating Yorick's skull,
I hold these fragile negatives
(reading Keats by the tree)
to the light,

studying what was
to understand
what is.

Display Glass

The digital image of a tree,
“On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer”^{*}
Unburdened from the limits of paper –

Pixels float
(above nothing)
On screens so thin –

digital images suspended in potential space.

Our reflection superimposed over
what we choose to view –
a palimpsest of perception.

I see myself
seeing you
seeing yourself
seeing me –

recursive mirrors trapping light
in endless corridors of reflection.

Tiny speakers say
"Any Major Dude Will Tell You"^{**} –

compressed songs,
compressed emotions.

Calibrate and recalibrate,
adjusting brightness, contrast, saturation,
searching for true representation
in media that only approximates.

^{*}John Keats, *On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer*

^{**}Steely Dan, *Any Major Dude Will Tell You*

Interlude: Wanderer's Studio, Late Autumn 2004

The Wanderer adjusts a collage of fragmented photographs while The Dreamer examines the manuscript pages.

The Dreamer: "These 'Interior Landscapes' are getting darker. I'm concerned about him."

The Wanderer: *Steps back to view his work* "He's processing loss through abstraction. It's healthier than how I handled my divorce."

The Dreamer: "Did you know she returned his letters? All of them, unread, in a manila envelope."

The Wanderer: *Raises an eyebrow* "Another discovery from your ongoing study?"

The Dreamer: *Shrugs* "Writer's Block Café is an excellent observation post. She came in last Tuesday, left the envelope with Marco behind the counter."

The Wanderer: "Does she understand what she represents in his work?"

The Dreamer: "I doubt it. She majored in Economics, not Psychosurrealromanticism. But I think she senses the weight of it. Why else return letters unread unless you fear what they contain?"

The Wanderer: *Nods toward the manuscript* "And these empty rooms he describes?"

The Dreamer: "Her apartment after she moved out. He went there in September, apparently. The landlord let him in, thinking he was helping her relocate."

The Wanderer: "You know entirely too much."

The Dreamer: *Smiling slightly* "Knowledge is my artistic medium. Just as negative space is his."

II. Interior Landscapes

The Empty Room

Your apartment stands empty,
Faded white walls bearing
Geometric ghosts

Where shelves once stood,
Where frames once hung.

“Bright Star, Would I Were Steadfast as Thou Art.”

We construct interiors to reflect ourselves –
Arrange furniture like variables in equations,
Order books to spell out importance,
Hang art to mirror internal states.

Hamlet's castle after the tragedy –
Haunted spaces
Of what has been
Removed.

I stand in the center of vacant rooms,
Calculating volumes of emptiness,
Mapping the manifolds
Of abandonment,

Reading “Lines Composed a Few Miles above...”

Echo location:
I whisper your name
To measure dimensions by returning waves.
The acoustics have changed
Without your possessions,
Without you.

Calculus of Forgetting

... the angle of your wrist turning pages,
the timbre of your morning voice,
the cadence of your footsteps approaching ...

Memory fades at a rate
That can be explicitly modeled:
Exponential decay modified by
Emotional valence,
Traumatic reinforcement,
Looping feedback.

... your wrist turning pages,
your morning voice,
your footsteps approaching ...

Half-life of distinct memories are
Data points plotted against time,
A decreasing curve, never crossing zero –
asymptotic forgetting.

... you turning pages,
your voice,
your footsteps ...

The calculations are elegant on paper.
In practice, they fail to predict

... turning pages,
a voice,
footsteps ...

The sudden resurgence of memory
triggered by unexpected stimuli:
a stranger's perfume,
a song on café speakers,
the particular blue of winter twilight.

... the angle of your wrist turning pages,
the timbre of your morning voice,
the cadence of your footsteps approaching ...

Library of Echoes

Whispers persist among the trees
And between the words on pages
Long after speakers have departed –
(aural residue),
(acoustic shadows),
Phantom frequencies straddling
The threshold of perception.

The physics is well-documented:
Sound waves rebounding from hard surfaces,
Attenuating, not disappearing completely.

The whispers are collected
Like a rare first edition of Keats,
Catalogued by time, emotion, intensity –

A personal library of dissipating echoes.

In the stacks of this curious collection,
Uncatalogued volumes are occasionally discovered
I didn't know were there –

Your voice saying things
I never heard you say,

Conversations we might have had
In parallel universes
Where different choices were made.

The Wanderer would call this imagination.
The Dreamer, subconscious reconfiguration.

It's called quantum listening –
Tuning to frequencies that exist
In possibility only.

Interlude: The University Courtyard, Winter 2004

The Dreamer and The Wanderer share a bench beneath bare trees, breath visible in the cold air.

The Wanderer: "Have you seen him lately?"

The Dreamer: *Adjusting her scarf* "Three days ago. He was calculating the Mandelbrot set using parameters derived from their relationship timeline."

The Wanderer: *Laughs softly* "Of course he was."

The Dreamer: "He's found what he calls 'self-similarity across emotional scales.' Apparently heartbreak has fractal properties."

The Wanderer: "He's not wrong. The pattern of loss repeats at different magnifications—from momentary disappointments to life-altering abandonments."

The Dreamer: "Did you know she's been reading his work? The girl."

The Wanderer: *Turns to her with surprise* "How did you discover that?"

The Dreamer: "Department secretary. Apparently she requested copies of all his publications last month."

The Wanderer: "Interesting. So she's trying to decode herself as his undefined variable."

The Dreamer: "Perhaps. Though I wonder if she'll recognize herself in these mathematical abstractions."

The Wanderer: "Would you? If someone transformed you into complex equations and recursive algorithms?"

The Dreamer: *Smiles enigmatically* "Someone already has. Check the acknowledgments in 'Fractal Thoughts.' I'm the unnamed 'mathematical muse' referenced in the third paragraph."

The Wanderer: *Raises eyebrows* "The plot complexifies."

The Dreamer: "Our movement has always thrived on intersecting emotional geometries."

III. Fractal Emotions

Self-Similarity Scale

The fleeting sting of a paper cut
From turning the page while reading The Prelude
Sitting in the shade of tree
Mirrors a less superficial, unspoken wound.

Feelings-examined-close-enough – patterns emerge.
Recursive structures replicating across scales:

Morning fog thinning along the lake
(relationship clarity arriving too late);
Steady rhythm of rainfall on leaves
(keeping time with the heart's persistent questions).

Correlating the correspondences
Like Mandelbrot plotting his set,
Finding emotional topography congruent
To coastlines,
To cloud formations,
To fern fronds.

Expiscations and explorations
Reveal complex paradoxical non-explanations –
Precise measures elongating boundaries,
Infinite details in finite spaces.

Yeah, I still love her,
But what does it matter to her?

Strange Attractors

The way she looked at me, unsmiling,
That night of the summer solstice,
Before closing time at Writer's Block café,
Unread Keats clutched close to her side
While she waited for her order –
The initial condition.

Points move towards patterns,
Intricate orbits around invisible centers,
Evolving, never quite repeating –
chaos.

My thoughts circle what isn't there
(her absence),
Tracing a complex gravity
(of what we were).

Variations
In beginnings yield
Unique trajectories:

what if I had arrived ten minutes later?
what if rain had prevented your arrival?
what if you had chosen Wordsworth?

Running mental simulations of alternate pasts,
Noting the small perturbations
Amplifying across time's dimension,
The movement of a butterfly cascading through
Emotional weather forecasts

That ultimately find the same strange attractor –
A longing mathematics may model
But never fully explain –

Yeah, I still love her.

Boundary Conditions

Her apartment.
My office.
Writer's Block Café.
The pages of a Keats book.
Physical boundaries of our shared spaces,

Constraints on how we function,
Required by specific equations –
The limits that shape potential infinities.

x years.
y months.
z days.
and a handful of late night hours.
Temporal restrictions of our intersections.

Solutions for the values of these conditions,
The gradients and flows
For how energy transfers between bodies.

The emotional boundaries
Established,
Reinforced,
Occasionally transgressed.

Like the Wanderer in his nomadic phase,
The cartographer of hypothetical spaces

Charts hills between presence and absence,
Maps valleys between memory and imagination,
Plots deserts between what was and might have been.

The boundaries are permeable,
Osmosis in both directions.
She still influences variables –
Keats is never the same –
On my side of the equation.

But what does it matter to her?

Interlude: Writer's Block Café, January 2005

The Dreamer grades papers while The Wanderer sketches patrons from a corner table.

The Wanderer: *Without looking up from his sketchbook* "She was here yesterday."

The Dreamer: *Pauses, red pen hovering over an essay* "The girl?"

The Wanderer: "Three tables over, by the window. Reading his manuscript."

The Dreamer: "How did she get that? It's not published yet."

The Wanderer: *Continues sketching* "The universe finds ways to collapse possibilities into specific realities."

The Dreamer: *Sets down her pen* "Did you give it to her?"

The Wanderer: *Meets her eyes* "Would that violate the movement's ethical framework?"

The Dreamer: "That depends on your intentions. Are you accelerating entropy or creating new order?"

The Wanderer: *Returns to sketching* "Perhaps both. She sat here for three hours, reading his quantum metaphors about her absence. Her presence while reading about her absence created an interesting temporal paradox."

The Dreamer: "Did she say anything? About the work?"

The Wanderer: "Only one question: 'Has he always been this way?' I told her he has always observed multiple realities simultaneously."

The Dreamer: *Sighs* "You're interfering with his wave function."

The Wanderer: "All observation requires interference. Even yours, Professor."

The Dreamer: *Picks up her red pen again* "Touché."

IV. Quantum Reflections

Wave Function Collapse

Before meeting her gaze that first night
Through the wisps of smoke in the café,
She existed, unobserved by me,
In a superposition of states –
There/not there,
Sipping/not sipping coffee,
Floating in all possibilities.

(
What if
unseen, unheard, unknown
I exist
as clouds of
what may be,
becoming a
particular version
of me
only when met
by the gaze
of another?

)(
Did I exist
differently
in your gaze,
than I did prior,
or with the Wanderer,
or students,
or strangers?

)(
Did your
departure
leave
certain states
of me
forever
out there,
uncollapsed,
unrealized?
)

A simple, measured gesture –
Not turning her gaze away –
Collapsed the wave of possibilities
Into a single, definite moment –
Potential became reality.

Entangled Particles

A wave from across the street.
A playful roll of your eyes.
A yawn late at night.

After our first interactions
Our systems were entangled –
One state instantly affecting the other,
Regardless of proximity.

“Spooky action at a distance,”
Is what Einstein may have called it.

It was evidence –
 What I felt across the night,
 alone, in the empty room, while
 seeing a reflection of your smile
 in the face of the full moon’s light.

When I recall specific moments –
 Walking to the bookstore in the rain,
 Sharing lunch beneath the tree,
 Laughing at inopportune times –
Do they resonate within you?

Quantum mechanics suggests
That we may appear separate,
There remain fundamental levels
Of connection,
Where feelings transfer through channels
That cannot yet be measured
Or comprehended.

The mathematics – sound.
The implications – profound.
The comfort –
minimal.

Observer Effect

At the staging of Much Ado
During the first snow of winter,
There were three chairs between us;
By the spring equinox,
At the café after the concert,
There were none.

Measuring alters
What is being measured –
From the subatomic
To the distance between us.

Listening to her speak of her day –
Attention changes what is attended to.
Hearing the soft rhythm of her heart.

Following her across the lawn –
Gazes alter what is seen.
Watching her doze in the summer shade.

Imagining her –
Memory transforms what is remembered.
The closeness of sitting next to her.

What is changed by perceiving,
The object and subject transformed,
A reflection in the Hollow Mirror.

Interlude: The Dreamer's Office, February 2005

The Wanderer examines the physics books on The Dreamer's shelves while she reviews printer proofs of the manuscript.

The Dreamer: "His black hole metaphors have become more precise. He's been consulting with the astrophysics department."

The Wanderer: *Pulls out a book on relativity* "Seeking scientific validation for emotional phenomena. Classic Architect."

The Dreamer: "Did you know his mystery girl is getting married in three weeks?"

The Wanderer: *Turns from the bookshelf* "That timing cannot be coincidental."

The Dreamer: "No. The publication date is set for one week before her wedding. He's planning to send her a signed copy."

The Wanderer: "Quantum entanglement at its most literal. Even separated by circumstance, they remain connected through his art."

The Dreamer: "I saw them together last week. At the campus coffee shop."

The Wanderer: *Surprised* "Together? Actually speaking?"

The Dreamer: *Nods* "She approached his table. They talked for exactly seventeen minutes. I timed it."

The Wanderer: "Your observational rigor is both impressive and slightly disturbing."

The Dreamer: *Smiles* "Professional interest. The gravity of past relationships creates fascinating behavioral patterns."

The Wanderer: "And what did you observe in their interaction?"

The Dreamer: "She returned something to him. Something small in a blue envelope. He didn't open it while she was there."

The Wanderer: "The event horizon of their relationship. Some information crosses the boundary, some doesn't."

The Dreamer: "Precisely. And he's mapped it all in these pages."

V. Event Horizons

Gravity Wells

Standing barefoot in the water
A moment before sunset,
She waits for me to get wet,
Softly smiling, hand motioning,
Small waves bending around her ankles –
Attraction drew me closer.

The gravity of memories,
Dense with meaning
Distort the fabric of consciousness.

The lightness of her hand in mine,
While we walked, along the shore,
Beneath the late-night sky,
Leaving footprints
To trace our path in time.

A sufficient mass creates a well
That even feelings may not escape.

Circling black holes
Of remembrance,
Cognizant of their pull,
I derive the safe distances
That allow me to spiral
Closer to the event horizons.

Einstein showed that gravity
Is just curvature of space-time –
A warped emotional space
Requiring new mathematics
For navigating our walks
Toward the sunrise.

Information Paradox

Writing in a weathered notebook
With the pen borrowed from my desk,
She stops at the end of a line,
Quickly shares her frustration with a glance,
And scribbles over the sentence.

Eliminated messages fall into a black hole –
What happens to the feelings they contain?

The evening talks around the park,
In the twilight and the falling rain,
Were erased as the distance expanded
With more glances of frustration
And the stoic silence of lonely nights.

Does the history of a past relationship
Persist or dissipate in a singularity?

Is the choreography of unscripted conversations
Truly lost?
Are the unwritten words in long-lost letters
Somehow preserved?

Conservation dictates
Emotions cannot be destroyed,
only transformed.

I search for the evidence –
Traces of what we knew
Encoded in new configurations,
Preserved in the ambient radiation
Of what remains.

The Clock Paradox

Sunset,
Moonlight,
Sunrise –
Time passed
Independent of the conversations
Those first few nights.

The mass of emotions
Can soften the rhythm of heart,
Can make hours into minutes.

Summer,
Fall,
Winter,
Spring.
Viewed from afar
We never seemed to move apart
As the seasons cycled.

The fading of feelings decelerates
A once quickening pulse,
Leaving bodies drifting.

Some days, your absence feels fresh as yesterday.

Interlude: University Library, Late February 2005

The Wanderer and The Dreamer sit at a back table surrounded by mathematics textbooks.

The Wanderer: "He's moved from physics to pure mathematics. These Gödel references are getting complex."

The Dreamer: *Marking passages in the manuscript* "It's his way of accepting the fundamental incompleteness of understanding. Some questions about her will remain unanswerable within his current framework."

The Wanderer: "Have you noticed how he's stopped using temporal markers? Earlier sections precisely dated their encounters. Now time has become fluid, non-linear."

The Dreamer: "A defense mechanism. Linear time forces confrontation with her upcoming wedding."

The Wanderer: *Leaning back in his chair* "Speaking of which, I received an invitation."

The Dreamer: *Looks up sharply* "To her wedding? How? Why?"

The Wanderer: "Remember that series of landscapes I exhibited last fall? Her fiancé purchased two of them. Apparently I'm now in their social circle."

The Dreamer: "Are you going?"

The Wanderer: "Would that be a betrayal of our movement's internal loyalties?"

The Dreamer: "That depends. Are you attending as an observer or participant?"

The Wanderer: "Is there a difference? Observation changes the observed system."

The Dreamer: "Have you told him?"

The Wanderer: "About the invitation? No. That would introduce an unresolvable variable into his equations."

The Dreamer: *Nodding at the manuscript* "This section is his attempt to prove that some truths exist but cannot be derived from his existing knowledge. He's closer to acceptance than we thought."

The Wanderer: "Or further from it. Mathematical abstraction can be the ultimate escape."

The Dreamer: "Either way, his unnamed variable is becoming a defined constant. Time will tell if his equations stabilize."

VI. Mathematical Proofs

Incompleteness Theorems

Talking over coffee at sunrise.
Sharing ice cream in the afternoon.
Strolling home after Shakespeare in the park.
The summation of memories
Congruent to the product of our meetings.

An axiom of the formal system
Of experiences we shared,
The arithmetic of a relationship.

I try to derive the theorems
Of what happened between us.

I miss the innocence
Of the summer days when
Exchanging glances plus holding hands
Implied walking into the sunset,
Happiness everlasting.

Gödel showed
There are truths that cannot be proven
By the rules of a formal system.

Our connection is incomplete.
Questions survive that cannot be answered.

My options:
Expand the axiom set (gather more information)
Change formal systems (adopt new perspectives)
Accept the limitations of formalizing human experience.

The Wanderer would choose acceptance.
The Dreamer, change.
I oscillate between the three,
Restless in my search for
Completion.

Transfinite Numbers

The number of steps we took
Walking to and from the café,
Pretending to count the shadows
Of falling leaves at sunrise –
Finite in number,
Moment everlasting,
... *infinite* ...

We mapped the shapes of clouds,
Imagining details of dimensions,
Self-similar and more complex
Objects in the heavens
Then dreamed in philosophies,
... *infinite* ...

Even though boundless,
Not all infinities are equal –
Cantor showed some are larger than others.

The infinity of numbers we can count
Is smaller than those we cannot count.

The infinity of possibilities
Is smaller than the impossibilities.

words left unspoken
paths not explored
moments never shared

The infinity of what can never be –
Uncountable,
Transcendent,
Beyond enumeration.

In this hierarchy of limitlessness,
Exists our specific case –
Finite in duration,
Infinite in implication,
Aleph-null in memory,
Aleph-one in loss.

Fermat's Enigma

The perfect penmanship
Of the margin notes
In your copy of Keats' works,
Written in shorthand –
Snapshots of your ideas
I could not decipher.

It took generations before Wiles
Would write the lines
That were not contained in
Fermat's margins.

Some puzzles take centuries to solve,
Some require tools not yet invented.

Perhaps some notes were not meant for me to read.

Interlude: The Wanderer's Apartment, Early March 2005

The Dreamer examines album covers while The Wanderer prepares tea in the kitchen.

The Dreamer: *Holding up a Steely Dan record* "The musical references are getting denser. This entire section is structured like 'Countdown to Ecstasy'."

The Wanderer: *Returning with two mugs* "Music provides mathematical structure with emotional resonance. Perfect for his current state."

The Dreamer: "Did I tell you? She called me yesterday."

The Wanderer: *Nearly drops the mugs* "The girl? Called you? Why?"

The Dreamer: "Professional consultation. She's writing her thesis on cognitive dissonance in romantic relationships."

The Wanderer: *Sits down slowly* "That cannot be coincidental."

The Dreamer: "Of course not. She's processing their relationship through academic frameworks, just as he is through artistic ones."

The Wanderer: "What did she ask about?"

The Dreamer: "My research on memory reconstruction following relationship dissolution. And then, rather transparently, about whether creative work can serve as effective emotional processing."

The Wanderer: "And you responded?"

The Dreamer: *Sipping her tea* "With appropriate academic detachment and precisely cited research. Until she asked specifically about him."

The Wanderer: "And then?"

The Dreamer: "I told her that some artists transform specific experiences into universal explorations, and that perhaps she should ask him directly about his process."

The Wanderer: "Will she?"

The Dreamer: "Her wedding is in eleven days. The book publishes in four. The timeframe for direct communication is mathematically constrained."

The Wanderer: "Like Becker and Fagen's lyrics—seemingly straightforward on surface, deeply complex underneath."

The Dreamer: "Exactly. A steely façade concealing vulnerable emotion. Much like our Architect."

VII. Steely Reflections

Pretzel Logic

On cloudless afternoons during
The coolest days of summer,
She returned my waves
From the shade of the tree
Where she liked to read.

“They say the times are changing
but I just don’t know.”*

Walking across the courtyard,
“It’s beautiful tonight,” she said,
The softness of her voice slicing through
Still winter air beneath starlight –
One of many spots in time.

Vivid fragments,
Improvisations,
A relationship revealed retrospectively.

Listening to Steely Dan
Elevate the memory of a previous spring,
Enabling us to dream
Of future autumn leaves.

Entropy increases locally,
Yet patterns remain at larger scales.
Pretzels don’t have logic
And ice cream has no bones.

I follow the progression in reverse,
Seeking the original key of our composition
To find the tonic that will resolve
Our suspended cadence.

"those days are gone forever,
over a long time ago."*

*Steely Dan, *Pretzel Logic*

The Royal Scam

I followed the directions –
Left at the empty lot past the third tree,
Second right past the group of bushes,
Straight ahead forever –
And never found the key.

I followed the instructions –
Open the book to page seven,
Read the fifth paragraph,
Find the answer to the question –
And never learned my lesson.

Expectations vs. reality –
Fundamental tension
In relationships,
In existence itself.

What joys was I promised? (unrealized)
What bliss did I promise? (unfulfilled)
“glory of the royal scam”*
Perpetuated.

Imagined futures
minus
Actual outcomes
equals
The need to resolve
Cognitive dissonance
Through narrative.

Adjusting variables,
reassigning values,
Constructing,
Reconstructing,

Searching for the story
To make everything balance –
A calculus of reconciliation,
Step by step to resolution.

*Steely Dan, *The Royal Scam*

Interlude: The Library After Hours, Fall 2004

The Wanderer shelves books while The Dreamer sits cross-legged on the floor, pages of manuscript spread around her.

The Wanderer: "He's calling it 'The Royal Scam' now. Still refusing to admit who inspired it."

The Dreamer: *Without looking up* "Did you know she's engaged? The mystery girl. Getting married in the spring to some corporate attorney."

The Wanderer: *Pauses mid-shelf* "How do you know it's her?"

The Dreamer: "The temporal markers in his symbolism align perfectly with their relationship timeline. Also, I saw them arguing outside the philosophy department exactly seven days before he started this section."

The Wanderer: *Sits beside her* "You're monitoring his romantic life with scientific precision."

The Dreamer: *Smiles* "Professional curiosity. The catalysts of creativity fascinate me."

The Wanderer: "And as his friends?"

The Dreamer: *Gathering the pages* "As his friends, we should probably tell him we know exactly who 'the girl' is and have known since the beginning."

The Wanderer: "Would that help him?"

The Dreamer: "No. His mathematics requires the undefined variable to function. Let him keep his elegant equation."

Deacon Blues

An hour after midnight,
Jazz-tinged riffs still ringing
In the chain-smoke filled air,
Bottle of Scotch whiskey
Next to a full ashtray
On the unbalanced coffee table
Fuel for a daydream –

Working a saxophone,
Romanticizing loss,
Christening a new ego,
Doing what I feel.

No more constructing identities for consumption.
No more playing instruments to impress.
No more sentimentalizing defeats.

“This is for me
The essence of true romance.”*

An elixir of analytic perspective –
Participation and observation,
Standing within, hovering outside
Emotional transformation.

Repeating the songs,
Risking playing them wrong,
Engaging and detaching,
Until the distinction blurs
As the smoke clears and the bottle empties –

A Hollow Mirror
Reflecting
What might be seen.

*Steely Dan, *Deacon Blues*

Interlude: University Theater, Mid-March 2005

The Wanderer and The Dreamer sit in empty seats after a student production of Hamlet.

The Wanderer: "These Shakespeare sections are his most personally revealing. The quantum Hamlet especially."

The Dreamer: "The paralysis of potentiality. To act collapses all other possibilities."

The Wanderer: "Did you attend?"

The Dreamer: *Looks confused* "This production? We just watched it together."

The Wanderer: "No. Her wedding. Yesterday."

The Dreamer: *Startled* "You actually went?"

The Wanderer: *Nods* "As an observer. Collecting data points."

The Dreamer: "And?"

The Wanderer: "She looked happy. Genuinely so. But she kept the book on a side table at the reception. His book."

The Dreamer: "He sent it?"

The Wanderer: "Three days ago. Inscribed with a single line from Hamlet: 'The rest is silence.'"

The Dreamer: *Sits back* "That's... surprisingly concise for him."

The Wanderer: "Sometimes mathematical precision requires minimalism."

The Dreamer: "Did she mention him? Or the book?"

The Wanderer: "Not directly. But during the toast, she spoke about 'alternate universes where different choices lead to different conclusions.' The influence of his quantum metaphors was evident."

The Dreamer: "Should we tell him?"

The Wanderer: "That his unnamed variable has officially become a constant in someone else's equation? That would introduce chaos into his carefully constructed system."

The Dreamer: "Or perhaps provide the resolution his Hamlet-like hesitation requires."

The Wanderer: "Even Hamlet eventually acted, once circumstances eliminated alternatives."

The Dreamer: "Yes, and then everyone died, including him. Perhaps not the best model for emotional closure."

The Wanderer: *Smiles* "Point taken, Professor. Let his quantum Hamlet remain suspended in possibility a while longer."

VIII. The Shakespeare Variations

Hamlet's Reflection

By the tree. In the forest.
By the sea. In the ocean.
By the moon. In the night.

I can exist
Simultaneously
In all three
Between
My sleep
And daydreams.

To be
and
Not to be,
Superposition complicates
Hamlet's dichotomy.

Analysis
to
Paralysis,
A measurement conundrum
Eliminating what could be.

He is
or
He isn't
When he observes the wave
On which he sails.

Infinite potentialities
to
A single state –
Every decision erases
Infinite alternatives.

“The undiscover'd country”*
Haunts not only what comes after,
But every moment before.

The mirror I hold reflects
A forest and a sea,
Not just what is,
But moonlit overlays
Of what might have been.

*William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene I

Prospero's Books

Rainfall was not predicted
On the summer night in the park
When *The Tempest* was postponed.

Coincidence? Magic?

The shower lasted only a few drops,
Never hiding the crescent moon
Or soaking the pages of the text,

Where the wizardry of words
Construct reality with language,
Conjure spirits through incantation,
Manipulate perception.

Artistry? Creativity?

Relationships,
Connections,
Fade like waning rain,
The “revels now are ended.”*

After the pageant dissolves
And the dream awakens,
A modified consciousness remains,
Imprinted by art and love.

Collecting these revisions
Like Prospero collected his books –
Sources of power,
Repositories of knowledge,
An atlas of manifolds.

Real? Imagined?

The magic of transforming perception –
Seeing the Hollow Mirror as potential,
A space for creation.

Recognizing the fullness
Of empty spaces
In raindrops
Between moonlight
And sunrise.

*William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act IV, Scene I

Sonnet Algorithms (Lexical Alchemy)

The Bard, a lexical alchemist,
Transmuted words into wonder,
Sunsets into eternity.

The elixir, an algorithm –
Fourteen lines, feet and meter,
Three quatrains plus a couplet –
A structure, mathematical in measure,
Endless emotional expression.

“Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?”*

Programs generate sonnets in this style:

If [beloved] = [natural image]
Then [comparison of qualities]
Else [assertion of beloved's superiority]

Iambic variables with pentameter.
Rhyme scheme calculation.
The volta position.

OUTPUT: Should I compare you to a winter night?

Perfect technical constructions,
Lacking the linguistic wizardry
Of human inadequacy,
The imperfections
That yield the beauty of creativity.

As a hollow mirror reflects
Image and absence,
The negative space
That gives meaning
To what is present.

*William Shakespeare, *Sonnet 18*.

Interlude: Writer's Block Café, Late March 2005

The book launch party winds down. The Dreamer and The Wanderer sit in a quiet corner.

The Dreamer: "He's finally finished. The recursive loop has found its termination condition."

The Wanderer: *Swirling his glass* "Has it? Or has it simply adopted a new iteration algorithm?"

The Dreamer: "You're becoming as mathematically metaphorical as he is."

The Wanderer: *Smiles* "Occupational hazard of our movement."

The Dreamer: "Did you notice? He thanked her in the acknowledgments. Not by name, but as 'the catalyst who taught me that absence has dimension.'"

The Wanderer: "She knows. She sent flowers for the launch."

The Dreamer: *Surprised* "How do you know?"

The Wanderer: "The card had a quantum physics equation on it. Schrödinger's wave function. Only she would send that."

The Dreamer: "So their entanglement continues across space-time."

The Wanderer: "In reduced but persistent form. The mathematics of human connection are complex."

The Dreamer: "Did he understand the significance of the equation?"

The Wanderer: "He's keeping the card in his copy of Hamlet. I believe that answers your question."

The Dreamer: "This final section—about information preservation beyond black hole boundaries—it's not just about her anymore, is it?"

The Wanderer: "It never was. She was the entry point to his exploration of much larger questions. The hollow mirror reflecting not just personal loss but existential meaning."

The Dreamer: "So the girl..."

The Wanderer: "Was both exactly who we thought and something more. A specific person and a universal variable. The mathematics required both."

The Dreamer: "As he always says..."

The Wanderer: *Together with her* "'It's always about a girl.'"

The Dreamer: "But never only about a girl."

The Wanderer: "Precisely. And therein lies the elegance of his equation."

IX. The Final Reflection

Infinite Recursion

Studying what I wrote –
When she was reading Keats by the tree
To recall the feeling of our sunset walks
That reflected the thoughts of morning talks
Where we shared silent laughs
Spiraling between memories –
Sliding into a labyrinth of recursion.

*Recursive functions
Require termination conditions
To prevent infinite loops,
Stack overflows,
System crashes.*

What memory parameters
Should be adjusted to mollify
The recurring emotional algorithm
And return serene values
To free the system resources,
To escape the labyrinth?

*The Dreamer suggests
Psychological integration,
Recompiling for transformation.*

*The Wanderer recommends
Embracing impermanence,
Accepting transience as a natural state.*

My solution:
Calculating probabilities,
Generating simulations,
Testing hypotheses,
To answer fundamental questions:

When does
Absence
Become a form of
Presence?

When does a hollow mirror
Fracture,
Allowing an image
To be independent

Of what it once reflected?

When will reading Keats
Be about analyzing lines
And not my past?

Event Horizon

On a hot summer night
Did Pythagoras dream about
Sampling flavors of ice cream
Or dancing to synthesized sounds?

Forgotten fantasies
Unable to escape
The gravity of the past.

The future I imagined,
Moments we'll never share.

Memory etches thin inscriptions
At the boundary of a black hole,
A quantum whisper of disappearance,
The radiation of the vanished.

Approaching this horizon,
(Beyond which
she can no longer
be perceived)
I collect final faint traces,
Ghost signals of what was,
Emotional echoes of collapsed states.

Is this information lost (destroyed), or
Transformed into an unperceivable form?

Mathematics allows for both interpretations.
The formulas remain stylish either way.

Standing at this edge, amassing equations –
Hamlet's reflections,
Prospero's spells,
Wordsworth's nature,
Steely Dan's irony –
Constructing frameworks to discern
What may be fundamentally unknowable,
Like the favorite song of Pythagoras
Or his preferred ice cream flavor.

The Hollow Mirror

Observations...

Sunset, moonlight, sunrise;
Glances, dances, chances;
Her red sundress in the summer.

Reflections...

Not of surfaces, but depths;
Not appearances, but essences;
Not presence, but absence.

The mirror performs curious calculations –
Multiplying by nothing
To produce everything
Unmanifested.

Observations...

The watcher makes the watched,
Measurement manifests reality,
Her white scarf in the fall.

Reflections...

Not her, not me;
A relationship, independently existing,
Beyond shared embraces.

The mirror reveals strange designs –
Absence has substance,
Negation has form,
Loss creates a peculiar geometry.

Observations...

Zero is a necessary variable
For any complete equation.
Her purple gloves in the winter.

Reflections...

It's always about a girl,
But also math, Shakespeare,
Wordsworth and Steely Dan.

The mirror reveals frameworks,
Fundamental structures
Used to understand
What cannot be fully understood.

Observations/Reflections...

The hollow mirror reflects
Better questions (not answers),
Continuation (not closure),
Transformations of variables
Across infinite functions –
Always returning to zero,
Always beginning again.

Her blue eyes in the spring.



- The Architect, Winter 2004