

Stephanie Strickland

History Of Knowledge

At the Tree

Never again seen garden of animals
unenclosed
except by ice
ibex
mammoth
salmon
trout

Raid a ridicule
buffalo reindeer in herds in hordes in motion in fullness

Stay away from the tree

not divided into fields
divided by rivers

lest you plant it
by mistake
and call it your own

It is not a tree

It is not a garden
It is forest and
moor it is cloud scraping ridges
and piercing
 valley caverns

It is long lone desolate somber moor and causeway

It is little horses
It is leaping lamprey
It is hazel trees springing from a cave roof

It is deeper in the caves
It is looking up
It is the maelstrom pool of stars
slipping
slipping slipping away

It is bell
it is escapement
cerise
apricot
hazelnuts

It is at peace
it is in motion

It is tilted this much it is leaning outward

It is body in a fountain
it is her body reflection and shadow
conformed in water

It is off-center
It is adrift
It is unwinding
It is remarked
barque
kayak
coracle
☞ the trees are smiling

The trees are smiling

the lovers are loving with great
with extreme courtesie
with *speech*

History Of Knowledge

In the Cave

The Cave receptacle of images not shadows
The Cave contains a shaft a pit
 a slower bison

The Bison is cut
The Bison is spilling burst from its side a rope of gut
The Bison is attacking a stick a stick on its back a stick
 with a beak with the head of a bird—a man
 a tiny a too tiny beak a mask of a bird

The Man has fallen on his back
The Man has fallen
The Man is wearing a mask or the man has the head of a bird
The Man has fallen at the bottom of the shaft
The Man on his back before the bison bleeding gut

The Bison is huge and coming at
The Bison is bleeding black red ochre gut not a shadow not
 a shadow no light penetrates
 the Cave much less the shaft

The Bison is coming right at

The Man the figure of the man

No not here this Cave is not a half-cave flooded by light
No the Cave is not a pool a cave plunging only down
No the Cave is not a womb a smooth a tight Boolean enclosure hard
to fall
 far enough from

No the Cave is not Palomar either—nor the Bijou's purring
engines of image and light

The Cave

It is dark It is so dark so damp so riverrun
It is so white the lime sparkle of the ceiling and walls their cream
above the golden

wainscot rock

It is so only part seeable by lamp

It is so

lampless

so mined by the river mined by the pools
in the river bed so high and so open so rotunda right here
so tight low cunningly canaled

Falling in a shaft running off in arcades in outcrop in crypt
holes in the Cave now hold a scaffold a reed a rush
on the open ledge a cup a cupped spoon stone

flickering on the open ledge a flame fed with fat

or

drenched with oil crushed

sesame or flax

History Of Knowledge

Blackboard-Based

trace the Tamil characters in rice
seeds of creation drift on water in a pot
a sacred pot. every rational-number **R**'s personal friend

false starts. time. if you fail (*enough*) you get enough time
connection found between what seems unconnected
could not afford paper. hand to elbow to slate

π marks the ratio 3.14159 π to 39 places can calculate
to within the radius of a hydrogen atom
the circumference / diameter ratio of the whole universe

the (*known*) universe. **R**'s intuition steered him clear
of many obstacles his paltry education had failed to warn
him of. but not all. producing

correct or incorrect with the same aplomb. the same naïve confidence
not really grasping what
was meant by proof. *listen to my questions. answer my questions*

mostly he was right. insight rarer (*by far*) than even formidable
mastery. it generates theories. rigor (*Littlewood said*) not of first-
rate importance beyond undergraduate. can be supplied by any

competent professional. Wranglers pondered . . . thus what must be
taught him without (*causing shame or*) breaking the spell
of his inspiration. judging it impossible

to allow him to go through life supposing
all the Zeta Function zeroes were real. certain complex solution-
zeroes on a line parallel to the imaginary

axis half a unit to its right. Hardy (*listen to my questions*) had proved
an infinite number of them lie on that line
Ramanujan had found it on his own. something like Riemann's

Zeta Function yet fatally flawed. as if complex-zeroes did not
exist. implying a theorem (*a prime number theorem*) that was simply wrong
Ramanujan offered it abundantly. the trove

what he knew. scribbling beautiful identities. yet left so much
in his garden. notebooks. for other
people to discover. to dig up. as they keep on ongoingly doing

Knowledge : Its Foot (*note*)

Wranglers † Littlewood † G.H. Hardy † **Ramanujan**

A Wrangler is one who has taken first-class honors in a
mathematics exam at Cambridge. Throughout the United Kingdom
and the British Empire, university mathematics professors are
often chosen from among the top three. G.H. Hardy, an eminent
mathematician and professor, came in fourth. His longtime
collaborator, John Littlewood, *was* senior wrangler, that is, he came
in first. Hardy considered his "discovery" of Ramanujan his
greatest achievement. To be clear, Ramanujan introduced himself
to Hardy by letter.