

**Poetry in
Superposition:
An Essay-Poem in
Quantum Poetics**

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Abstract: This essay-poem, which seeks to establish a relationship between open questions in poetry, physics, and philosophy, is offered as an alternative to the normative academic paper or poem. It arranges the critical and the creative within a quantum superposition of both, where thinking and the literary are interactive properties of quantum states that can be detected as paragraphs or stanzas. It explores the present of poetry through the linguistic innovation of poetry and subjects such as uncertainty and wave-particle duality in quantum physics, dark energy in astrophysics, dynamic complex systems, orientation and disorientation, simultaneity, and the ontology of spacetime.

Keywords: poetry, poetics, *poiesis*, quantum theory, astrophysics, dark energy, *immarginable*, dynamic complex systems, wave-particle duality, quantum superposition

Poetry, like the mathematical formalisms of quantum systems that capture what can be potentially actualized through observation, moves outside of the scope of normative language, which assumes that it constitutes the “actual”: today, for instance, is both strata and subspace. Which spiral arm? Your arrow of time is all or nothing. Yet the unnamed sky keeps arriving without limit. Stop us if you can.

Poetry can be treated as a dynamic complex system that increases in complexity as its interactive elements increase, though not toward fundamental synthesis, narrative, and ethics or spatial, temporal, and conceptual direction. As each element becomes more interactive, a poem becomes less chiral, more multiversal, more *immarginable* (Joyce). Even at rest, our wings spread against a hazy horizon, we fly.

Poetry is not a lighthouse that guides ships through disorienting water; poetry is the water, which can be dangerous, as Plato knew. When water is not dangerous it is density and delirium. When poetry is not water, it is the indeterminate line where water and the ocean floor meet. Sometimes poetry is the bathysphere that travels here. Matter compresses in the gravity underwater. Without gravity, a poem breaks apart.

Poetry is a galaxy mediating strong and weak gravity. Outside of each galaxy, gravity is altered by a dark energy that transforms gravity into a repulsive force that moves matter from matter, which makes spacetime expand between galaxy clusters, growing the universe faster and faster. Like a poem, the universe is a dynamic complex system that becomes more complex in spacetime as its interactive elements increase.

Poetry at the boundary of gravity is a galaxy that compresses and expands. Since the spacetime between galaxy clusters is expanding at an accelerating rate due to dark energy, which alters how gravity behaves at cosmological scales outside of galactic systems, the boundary near

a galaxy where gravity compresses and expands deviates, too, binding matter inside the galaxy while unbinding matter beyond it.

Poetry is not only *the nature of things* (Lucretius) but the things of nature, including nature at quantum and cosmological scales of physical reality, where wilderness is simultaneously its elemental parts and the effects it produces outside of local ecologies. Poetry and quantum gravity are entanglements of quantum and relativistic states. Like the spin of a subatomic particle, entanglement is an intrinsic property of matter.

Poetry in quantum superposition is without direction, moving by quantum jump, subverting the law of deterministic causality. Poetry in superposition is not entropic, declining into disorder, but endemic to its everywhere and everywhen. A state beyond the emergence of the “actual,” quantum superposition defeats the dogma of the ideal, the power of the primordial. Constellated in superposition, we radiate, we burst.

Poetry as light is both a wave and a particle, energy and matter, before its wavefunction collapses when written and read. While the literary artform of poetry may appear to be capable of shapeshifting in any direction within spacetime, it is each direction and spacetime that shapeshift. Some choreographies in a poem seem clear: the rocket lifts off. But once past the heliopause *we laugh into our green beards* (Jarry).

Poetry is not only entangled with the inner and outer limits of its elemental parts, where it is capable of communicating with other quantum states instantaneously across distances, it is also entangled with the conditions of its own inception and cessation. *Poiesis* in spacetime is an activity where beginning and ending meet and release, release and meet, a river we travel that flows each way at once.

Poetry is as incomplete as an x-ray, as polished as a prism. Like the geography of grooves and ridges in a human neocortex, the folds of a poem increase its surface area. Oscillating at all scales by extending and collapsing spacetimes between them, a poem is an expanding universe that is a poem that is a portal, quickening travel among the distances it grows. Transdimensional, hydroelectric, our currents carry.