

Ingrid de Kok / FOUR POEMS

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of understanding the cultural context of the research. It highlights the need for researchers to be sensitive to the values and beliefs of the communities they are studying. This is particularly important in the field of education, where cultural differences can significantly impact learning outcomes. The paper then moves on to discuss the challenges of conducting research in culturally diverse settings. It notes that researchers often face difficulties in establishing rapport with participants and in interpreting their responses. To address these challenges, the paper suggests several strategies, including the use of local informants and the development of culturally appropriate research instruments. The final part of the paper discusses the importance of ethical considerations in cross-cultural research. It emphasizes the need for researchers to obtain informed consent from participants and to ensure that their research does not cause harm to the communities they are studying.

Pilgrimage

Take a trip, take a tour.
Go to newly bombed cities
to see what remains in the rubble,
scorched fragments or things saved whole.
Statues, courtyards, a wash of painting,
piazzas where people burned or still stroll,
mosaics, reliquaries in crypts,
holy sites, libraries, illuminated scrolls.

Visit Baghdad to scan what's left
of the beginnings of civilization,
Bamiyan to reassemble in your mind
giant sandstone Buddhas
from whose empty cocoons
flew the butterflies of the spirit.
See Madrid where Goya still accuses,
view the flattened towers of New York City,
ravaged Mogadishu and Beirut.

Then if you have time make a backward journey
to ancient Byzantium and Alexandria.
Traverse Bushman deserts and Aztec mounds
where memories hum in the sun.
Closer and closer, while some still remember the detail,
travel to Coventry, Warsaw, Dresden,
Hamburg and Hiroshima,
place your feet in the prints of the dead.

And then fast forward with your guide book
to cities undestroyed.

Go now. To still breathing
places of accumulated love and power,
where the line of a drawing,
an angle of light on a building,
a word's gravid pressure on a page
the sound of a ribbed instrument,
things made by hand, remade by eye or ear,
have not yet been forgotten, razed.

Body maps

Take the body trace its outline
map its armature
tendons viscera scar tissue
fractures swellings
promises and wishes.
Map age genes place of origin
and love's lineaments.

For mapped onto each body is love.

Cartography of one's own country
or the contours of a foreign land.

A journey through forests
over cataracts
turbulent rivers peaks
ravines rift valleys
grasslands wetlands
oceans sand.
Down mine shafts.
Through truck stops.
In towns and cities.
On tarred roads dirt tracks.

At the shoreline is a flare
where pain's fire
consumes itself
with its earth-hunger
unquenched thirst
burning wings.

It lights the way
back to touch
soft or violent
stretched or shortened
above below
where there are sounds
soft calls moans
fright resistance silence
movements
towards or away
where there is rupture or seeping
where openings are buds
that shrink or blossom
where the spine buckles
or uncurls
where nails draw blood
or declawed fingers
touch tip to tip
and palms dance.

Mapped onto each body is
that first launch into love:
parachute drop of our begetters
and then each body's own
open or closed arms and legs.

And onto the bodies of those
who die of love's lesions
we map our love too
guilty shadow tracings
lucky escape routes
provisional survival.

Take your own body
or the leached body
of your mother your father
your brother your sister.
Transparent body
of glass of leaves
of encoded messages
to the past and the future
unique thumbprint maze
ubiquitous death mask.

Take it trace it map it remember.

Things we know

They come and they go
The things that we know

The things we once knew
And the ones learned in lieu

Of the things we once felt
Being lost in the veld

Smell of rain on dirt
First word first hurt

Last smile night fright
What caused the fall

From love and grace
The meaning of your mother's face

The rhymes of a verse
Exact words of a curse

Suddenly needed, and then
That injunction again

About the mote in the eye
And the other one — was it a lie —

about the other cheek?
And what was the inheritance of the meek?

Did they get the earth? Or was it heaven?
Was the sign of the beast three sixes or sevens?

They come and they go
The things that we know

The things halflost
Glossed in shadow and light

The sound of a word
The shape of a sign

The edges of pleasure
The outlines of pain

from *Sketches from a Summer Notebook*

Sunflowers

In case you think
the sunflowers in the field
are always on summer holiday,
florid fools raising
oil-stained cheeks
like drunks in a bar,
you are wrong.

Believe me:
that yellow and the deep furry eye
is Apollo's camouflage, aka God.
They're allies of the sun,
timepieces on the landscape's wrist
and van Gogh and Blake are visiting this afternoon
to tell us what they mean
and how we too should grow and live.