

**KARL ELDER**

**Ode in the Key of O**

Kudos unto the code and to the mind  
behind the hand that moved not out of need  
but what must be acknowledged as a thought  
nonpareil—stone turned wheel no exception—  
the crude scrawl (in ashes, sand, and soil  
with stick or staff) that which it did not know  
to call symbol, yet would bring to recall  
the awe uttered as O on the rounded  
mouth below the eyes of one fixed upon  
the moon's shape, if not in worship, wonder.

Yea, as if a remnant of gods gone ghost  
gleaned from the air by the hand of a mime,  
like approximation of perfection,  
that diminutive orb wholly without  
substance rolled from the tongue, made corporal  
by yet another eidolon, the line—  
call it divine insight when the pupil  
of the mind's eye eclipses iris to  
highlight, through swift abstraction, the concrete.

Ought it then not be, after the grand span  
of five hundred generations, given  
the cuneiform-like illusion of form  
born of the fact of annularity,  
our alacrity to the degree it  
has not atrophied to hilarity  
at the writ of the clock is—while more  
minute each minute—worthy, too, of praise?

For value in its purest form is less  
a matter of matter than the marriage  
of light and shade, their interdependency  
in the sense, say, male and female were one  
from the beginning—no little arrow  
on the O of that embryo, no foe,  
target, cross, or stickman Atlas below.

Lo, behold: lift like Sol's soul *o* from *god*  
there's no g. d. (or even dad gummed) thing  
to which we cling if not—à la lingua  
franca more so than the thing itself, life  
buoy or lasso—awe, the ineffable  
grasped as we're pulled, gasping, through h. to o.

Thus, as it's said, at the apogee of one's  
gestation there is the crowning; there is  
as well the splash, and there is the circle  
of attendants, the cry, the swaddling,  
the mother's embrace, infant to her breast.

Yet, life is birth's twist: in time time doesn't  
exist, birth flanked by nothing of the past,  
no word of the future when, alas, love's  
orismo's most fierce in fear of life's loss.

O, of the holes in the whole of our knowledge  
we say miracle, though the miracle,  
mother of miracles, is we say it.

As for love's spell—phallic *l*, mellow *o*  
vis-à-vis Eve's cleft *v v*. snake eye *e*—

is it not awe to which we owe our awe?