

# Why On Earth

the felt sense of home



Olivia Kemp - *Planted at the brink* - 2016 (detail)

I was at a workshop recently which focused on the ‘felt sense’ of connection with another in relationship – I feel you where you are – I feel me in relationship with you.

When asked how I was feeling by a partner, the image arose of a house in which the doors flapped open and closed as though the spirits of the house had become alarmed, panicked, not sure how and where to hide, how to adjust to this new level of engagement and enquiry. I was ‘in a flap’ and I could feel it.

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I am not currently engaged in a specific area of artistic research. But there is a sense I feel that intrigues me, and that I can feel humming away within me when I work creatively, when I dream. There are hidden expansions waiting to arise and take shape – shapes within sending out messages of themselves. There is a minuteness wanting to return to itself and be seen in depth. Coalescence and expansion riding a wave into ...

... where I can’t tell ... not-secrets I have yet to touch and uncover ... But I can sense something. Something that feels right, not quite. The dance that mesmerises and captivates both awakens me and sends me into reverie, dream, sleep.

“I hear you call my name, and it feels like ... home” (Madonna)

I’ve been feeling this word *home* a lot over the recent past – home. I can feel my longing for it whenever I journey. When I go deep. When I struggle. When I play. It beckons and it promises. I am on my way there, I know, just as I am on my way back here. I never really left and yet I must continue going forwards. Entering both into and away from. The motion that longs to welcome me just as I long to forget all else.

Home, the stable and secure environment we build around us. Home, the ever-in-motion change-ness of reality. Home, the relational web in which we are oriented and through which we connect.



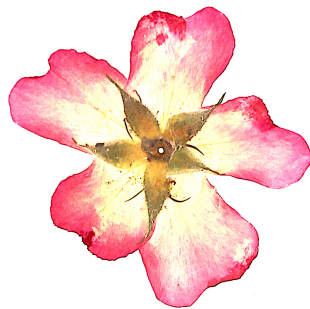
*So perfect the moon and I*

I have the feeling that I do what I do, all as part of this quest for home. And in my falling, flying, finding and losing, in all my encounters missed and met, I am in the rediscovering journey of where and how I feel myself to be at home, wherein I would like, one day and always, to welcome you.

With all this in mind I have captured some quotes. In that echo chamber kind of way, I have found myself wishing merely to reinforce my position. But also, it has helped me to think and serves to both sharpen and broaden my vision, and there's the beauty of research. So I'd like to thank you A.R.E. because even thoughts need a home to send off from, and come back to.

*When I relive dynamically the road that "climbed" the hill, I am quite sure that the road itself had muscles, or rather, counter muscles. In my room in Paris, it is a good exercise for me to think of the road in this way. As I write this page, I feel freed of my duty to take a walk: I am sure of having gone out of my house.*

Gaston Bachelard: The Poetics of Space (1957)



*You who are alive*

“As I stood in contemplation of the garden of the wonders of space, I had the feeling that I was looking into the ultimate depths, the most secret regions of my own being; and I smiled, because it had never occurred to me that I could be so

pure, so great, so fair! My heart burst into singing with the song of grace of the universe. All these constellations are yours, they exist in you; outside your love they have no reality! How terrible the world seems to those who do not know themselves! When you felt so alone and abandoned in the presence of the sea, imagine what solitude the waters must have felt in the night, or the night's own solitude in a universe without end!"

Oscar Milosz, *Amorous Initiation* (1910)



*Mother and father asleep in me*

#### Symposium, part five: Socrates' speech and Diotima

"Marvel not," she said, "if you believe that love is of the immortal, as we have several times acknowledged; for here again, and on the same principle too, the mortal nature is seeking as far as is possible to be everlasting and immortal: and this is only to be attained by generation, because generation always leaves behind a new existence in the place of the old."

## THINKING ABOUT HOME: AN OPENING FOR DISCOVERY IN PHILOSOPHICAL PRACTICE

James A. Tuedio

According to Young, this "process of sedimentation" through which our physical surroundings become "home" actually functions to produce a "materialization of identity" through a practice of "endowing things with living meaning" (149). Creative preservation is the practice of "renewing" our investment in the meaning of things. Though it functions in support of our "longing" for a "settled, safe, affirmative, and bounded identity," creative preservation also serves to inspire a dynamic cultivation of identity, which in turn contributes to promoting an affirmative yet "fluid and shifting" context for living. "Activities of preservation give some enclosing fabric to this ever-changing subject by knitting together today and yesterday, integrating new events and relationships into the narrative of a life, the biography of a person, a family, a people"

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Dominant meta narratives of home and identity often drop a serious weight on our life, and a great deal of frustration and turbulence results from ill-considered attempts to find our way home in life or to preserve our integrity in the face of life's complexities.



*Always beginning in every place*

Mark Burrows (2018)

As the days grow cold, I watch the geese  
as they heed the lure of warmer shores;

as they pass over and by, reminding me of  
what I also know of the long call home

*from the Guardian newspaper – Simon Norton Obituary 22/02/2019*

Simon Norton, who has died of a heart attack aged 66, was a world-class mathematician sometimes mistaken for a homeless man.

In the late 1960s he represented Britain at the International Mathematical Olympiads three times, scoring the top grade each time, once with 100%, another time with 99%, and winning a special prize for the elegance of his solutions. What made his work beautiful was not its complexity but its simplicity. Without drafts or false starts, he laid down his pellucid solutions to questions involving imaginary numbers, infinity and the distribution of primes with the grace of a ballerina unfolding her hands.

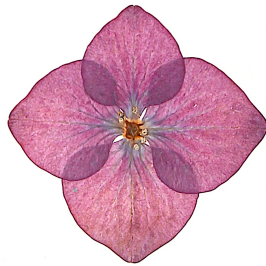
Simon took his first mathematics degree at Imperial College, London, while still a schoolboy. But then came Cambridge University. Rather than allowing Simon to continue his ebullient race into mathematics and start on a PhD straight away, the Cambridge mathematics department insisted he retake the final year of his degree. For the first time, Simon faltered. Mathematics legend has it that he scored a historic 52 alphas in his finals (12 is all it takes to get a first); in fact, it was 13. Simon was not even the best in his class. Bored at having to repeat material he already knew, the next year he almost failed Part III [Mathematics](#), necessary for anyone wanting to start research.

Simon's fortunes revived when he started to work with the charismatic John Conway, a brilliant and playful mathematician at the university. Together they worked on the Atlas of Finite Groups. Group theory concerns the study of symmetries. Turn a triangle on its side and it will still look like a triangle: that is a group theory result. At its most complex – in the rarefied landscapes where Simon gambolled – group theory underpins our understanding of the universe.

The job of the atlas was to catalogue all the fundamental types of symmetry: the atoms of the subject. Simon's attention was caught by one of these "atoms", known as "the Monster". You can turn a triangle three times, and it looks the same each time. For the Monster, the equivalent number is 808,017,424,794,512,875,886,459,904,961,710,757,005,754,368,000,000,000.

Simon became the world expert on an unearthly mathematical aspect of this group called Monstrous Moonshine. "I can explain what Monstrous Moonshine is in one sentence," said Simon. "It is the voice of God."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjPH2--xeps>



*At every turn my invitation*

In learning to identify and contact bodily sensations we begin to fathom our instinctual reptilian roots. In themselves instincts are merely reactions, however when these reactions are integrated and expanded by our mammalian feeling brain and our human cognitive abilities in an organised fashion we experience the fullness of our evolutionary heritage.

It is important to understand that the more primitive portions of our brains are not exclusively survival oriented, just as our modern brain is not exclusively cognitive. They carry vital information about who we are. The instincts not only tell us when to fight, run or freeze, they tell us that we belong here. The sense that – I am I – is instinctual. Our mammalian brains broaden that sense to – We are We – that we belong here together. Our human brains add a sense of reflection and connection beyond the material world.

Without a clear connection to our instincts and feelings we cannot feel our connection and sense of belonging to this earth, to a family or anything else. Herein lie the roots of trauma. Disconnection from our felt sense of belonging leaves our emotions floundering in a vacuum of loneliness. It leaves our rational minds to create fantasies based on disconnection rather than connection. These fantasies tell us to compete, make war, distrust one another, and undermine our natural respect for life.

If we do not sense our connection with all things then it is easier to destroy or ignore these things. Human beings are naturally cooperative and loving. We enjoy working together. However without fully integrated brains we cannot know this about ourselves. In the process of healing trauma we integrate our triune brains. The transformation that occurs when we do this fulfils our evolutionary destiny. We become completely human animals capable of the totality of our natural abilities. We are fierce warriors, gentle nurturers and everything in between.

Peter Levine – Waking the Tiger (1997)