
DEAN RADER

Meditation on Mimesis

Cy Twombly, *Poems to the Sea* (1959)

The tree outside

my window

looks exactly

like a tree.

Out the back window,

the ocean

resembles a photograph of a cloudy sky

minutes after rain.

If I close my eyes I can see the ocean

better than if they were open.

Is it possible never to know exactly what we see?

When the dawn-lean light leans

against the limbs

of the dead

boxwood at the end

of the street,

it is easy to imagine.

How deep can one go

into an idea?

The color

of *nature*

is green,

even though so

much is not.

Is any symbol not aspirational?

Is anything ever really empty?

Once the great desert was a great ocean.

Can you see it?

Things, says Kant,

which we see are not by themselves

what we see.

How deep can one swim

into what one is not?

How long does the wind spend

sharpening its knives?

My alien craft has nowhere to land

and so it has set down in the

unexplained . . .

A fisherman will spend an entire

life gazing at what he cannot see,

and yet he is not blind.

The plovers gather

on the sand like a memory,

and yet the waves have not once recalled the grass.

Science, says Plato,

is nothing but perception.

What do we know

of that which is not inside?