

THE BEAUTIFUL



AESTHETICS

- *Beauty* has long been central to the history of philosophy
- Kant wrote three critiques for his magnum opus: one on thought, one on ethics, and one on beauty
- Can beauty be objectively measured ($M=O/C$)? Algorithms for hit songs, cat pictures?
- What about other aesthetic categories? Why is *beauty* so privileged? What about the sublime? The ugly? The cute? The zany? The interesting?

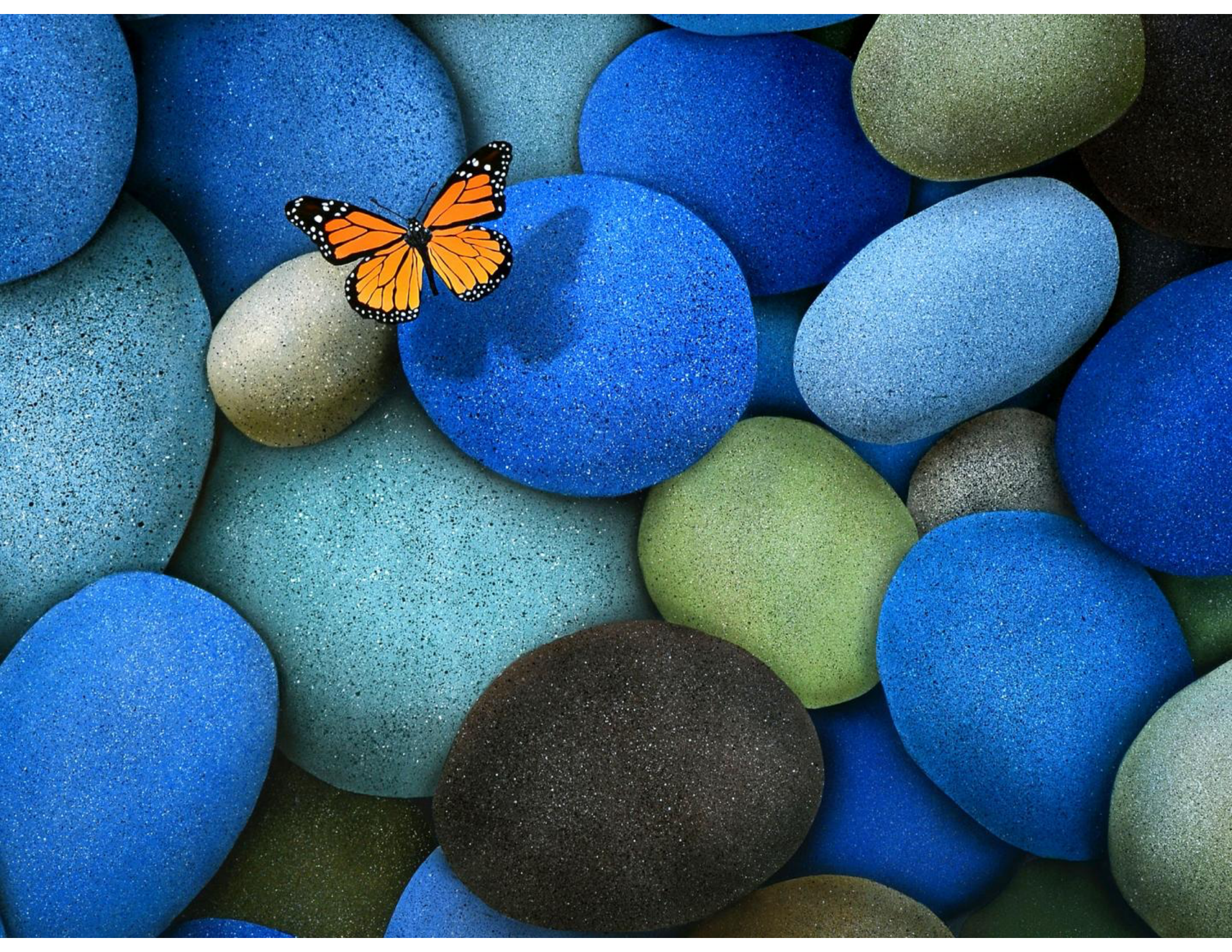
























BURKE: THE BEAUTIFUL

- Beauty is a flower
- Beauty is in the thing itself
- It has certain qualities:
 - small
 - delicate
 - weakly colored
 - smooth
 - well-ordered, harmonious (remember Mozart?); John Dennis, "a delight that is consistent with reason"
- It is, in short, *feminine* (neoclassical, Enlightenment)



BURKE: THE SUBLIME

- A cliff, a chasm, ruins
- It is in the thing, but also *in us*
- It has certain qualities:
 - large
 - obscure
 - powerful, terrifying
 - craggy, disjointed
 - overwhelming
- It is, in short, *masculine* (Romantic)













KANT: THE SUBLIME

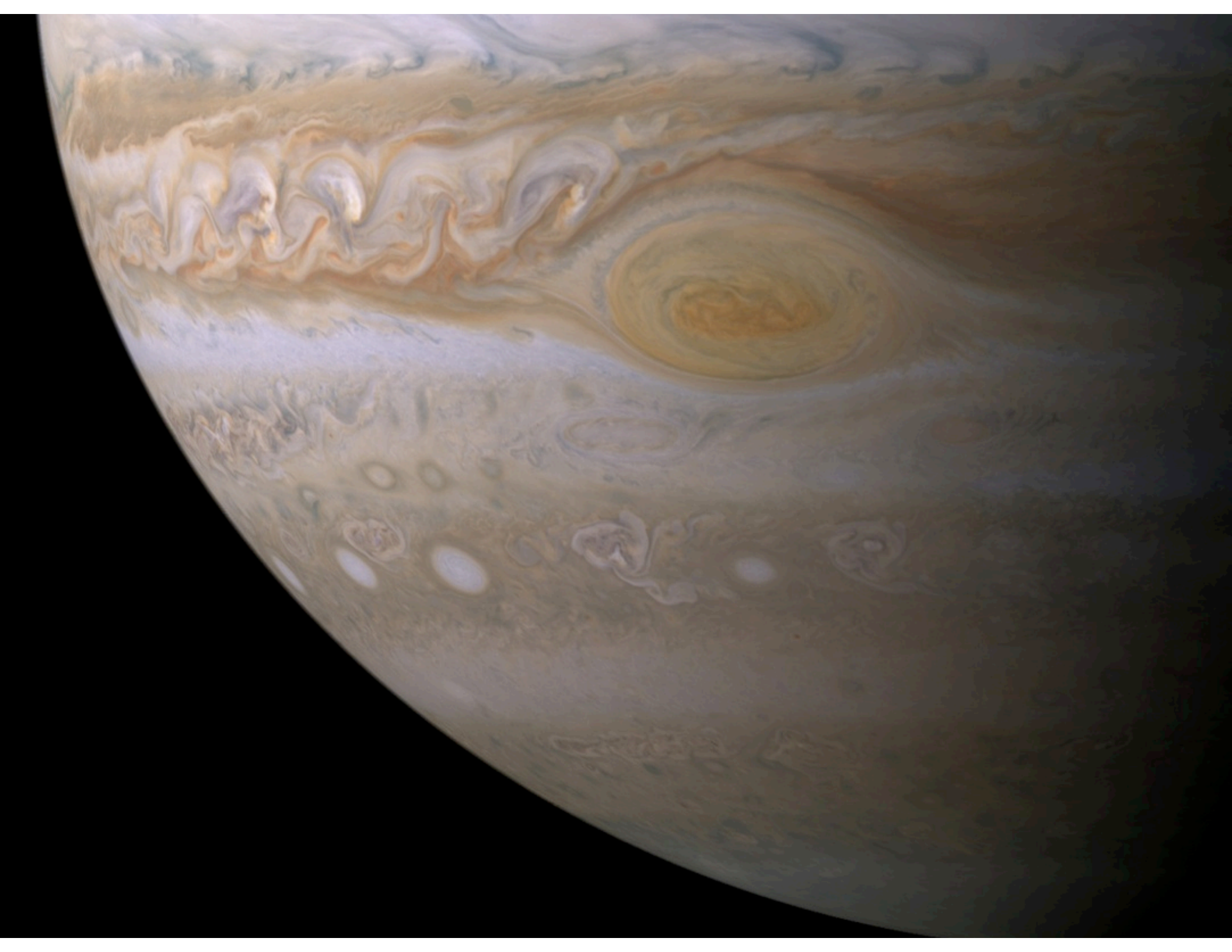
- The sublime is *beyond* us
- It has certain qualities:
 - our imagination can't understand it...
 - but our intellect can.
 - the mismatch of imagination and intellect is the experience of the sublime
- The sublime is effectively a triumph *of* the intellect for Kant
- The sublime is a triumph *over* the intellect for Burke



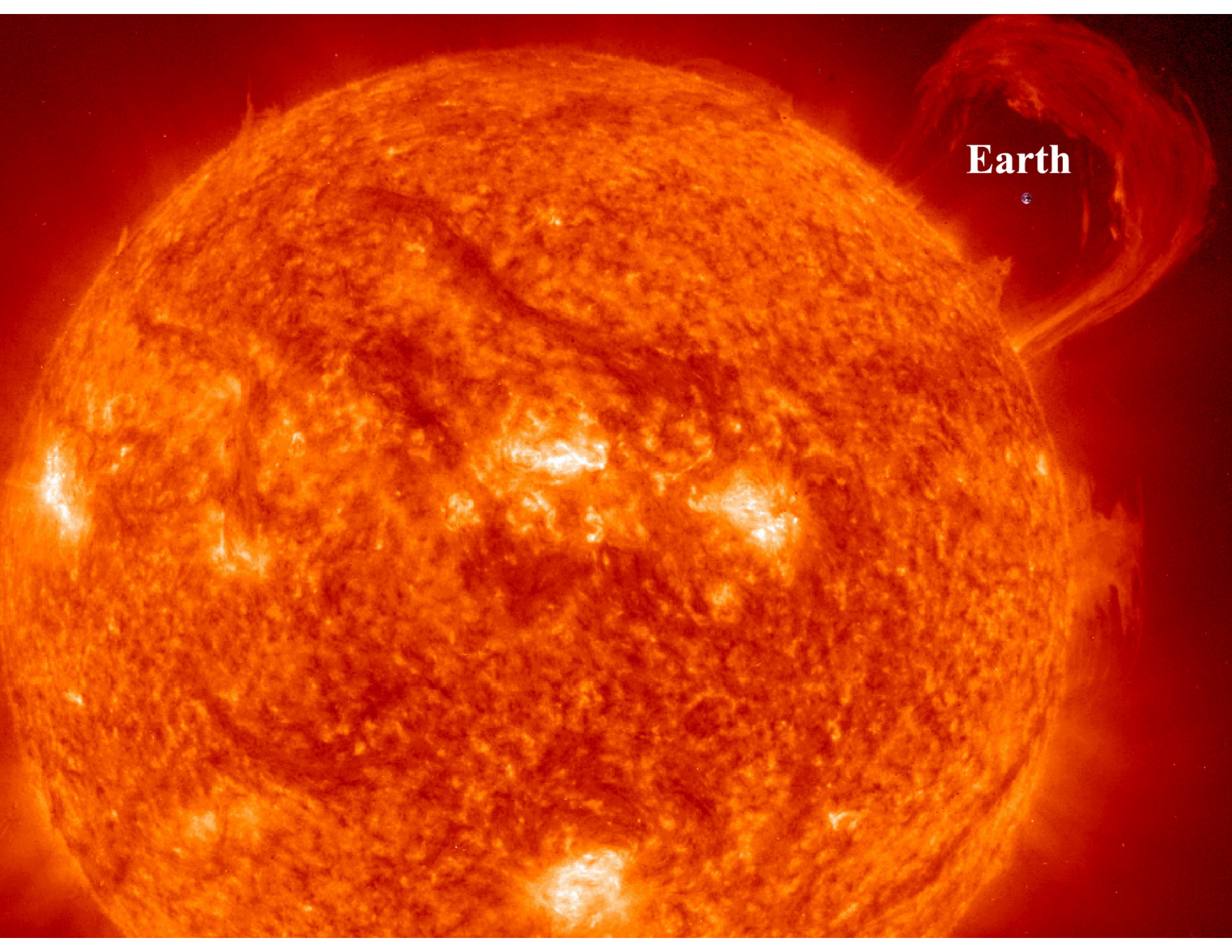


NO
PASSING
ZONE









Earth



Earth

KANT: THE SUBLIME

- The sublime is *beyond* us (so is beauty, by the way)
- It has certain qualities:
 - our imagination can't understand it...
 - but our intellect can.
 - the mismatch of imagination and intellect is the experience of the sublime
- The sublime is effectively a triumph of the intellect for Kant
- The sublime is a triumph over the intellect for Burke



POETRY

- Poetry is rhythmic language intensified by attention to its aesthetic qualities (visual, sonic), and not just meaning
- Rhyme, assonance, alliteration, repetition, metaphor
- English poetry is based on the "metrical foot," minimal rhythmic units of 2 or 3 syllables
 - iamb: ěvěnt, ůndóne, ättäck
 - trochee: plánět, díngbät
 - dactyl: cöntěmpläte, íntěřěst
 - anapest: cömprěhěnd
 - spondee: heärtbéat, bóokcäse

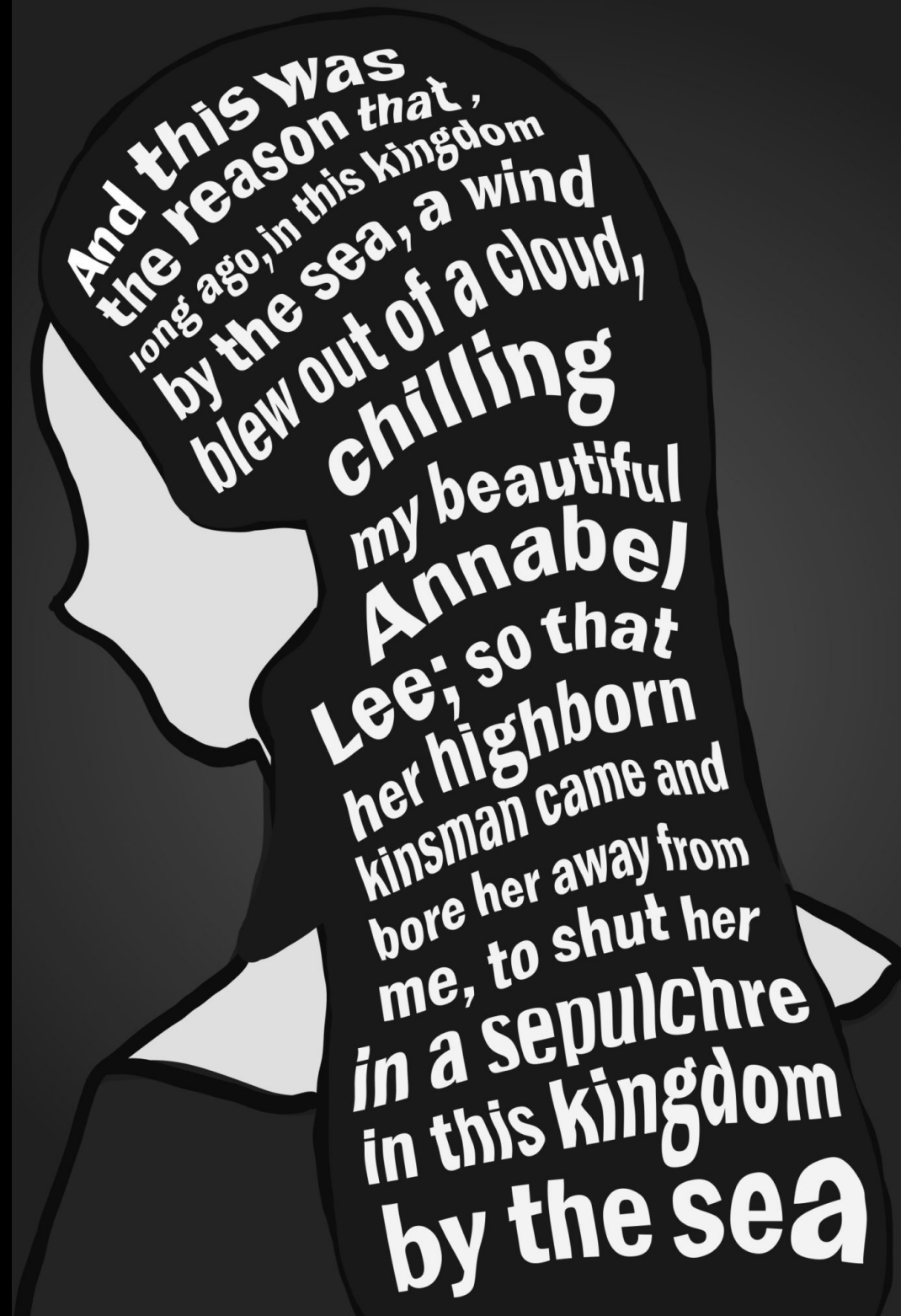
P O

E T

R Y

MEMORY TECHNOLOGY

- Memory is cheap today
- Historically, memory expensive and limited—even after writing, even after printing
- Poetry's origins are oral; repetition, rote learning (includes error correction)
- Poetry loses its dominance as cultural memory becomes cheap
- Represents maximum density of thought (form and content); maximally memorable
- Like most older technologies, won't disappear, even if no longer dominant (radio, books, trains...)



WORDSWORTH: PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

She was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

WORDSWORTH: PHANTOM OF DELIGHT

iambic tetrameter

She was a Phán-tóm of dé-light A
Whén fírst shé gléamed úpón mý síght; A
A lóvely Appáriti-ón, sént B
Tó bé a móment's órnamént; B
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair; C
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair; C
But all things else about her drawn D
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn; D
A dancing Shape, an Image gay, E
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay. E

shift in tone

KEATS: CHAPMAN'S HOMER

- Opposition: "beautiful" previous translations, and "sublime" Chapman
- The Old World
 - The ancients, reason
 - Progress, movement West
 - Discovery of Homer
 - Old form: Petrarchan sonnet
- New Worlds
 - Three are depicted: Homer, the Americas, Uranus
 - Emphasis on masculine exploration by heroic individuals



KEATS: ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He star'd at the Pacific — and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

KEATS: ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,

And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;

Round many western islands have I been

Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.

"bad"
line

"good"
lines

KEATS: ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold, A
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen; B
Round many western islands have I been B
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold: A
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told A
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne; B
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene B
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold: A
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies C
When a new planet swims into his ken; D
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes C
He star'd at the Pacific — and all his men D
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise C
Silent, upon a peak in Darien. D

Octave

enjamb

enjamb.
Sextet
(Strained rhyme)

THE BEAUTIFUL

Much have I travell'd in the **realms of gold**,
And many **goodly states and kingdoms** seen;
Round many **western islands** have I been
Which bards in fealty to **Apollo** hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed **Homer ruled as his demesne**;
Yet did I never breathe its **pure serene**
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Greek,
not
Latin

law
order
peace
the West

Politics

THE SUBLIME

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And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.

Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
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Till I heard Chapman speak out **loud and bold:**

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The shift

1616: Iliad & Odyssey

1781: Herschel discovers Uranus

1513: actually Balboa — Keats' readers told him it was wrong — but he kept it!

KEATS: ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

- Form: Ode (poem of praise), five stanzas of iambic pentameter
- Scenario: figures on urn, suspended in action
- Meaning
 - Themes: memory, time, stasis, permanence, infinity
 - Neoclassical beauty: permanent but sterile; truth=beauty is tautology—unproductive form of logic
 - A “negative” or “positive” poem? Is this ode ironic?



KEATS: ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loath?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

KEATS: ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone.
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal——yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss
Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

KEATS: ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
Forever piping songs forever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
Forever warm and still to be enjoyed,
Forever panting, and forever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

KEATS: ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?

To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands dressed?

What little town by river or sea shore,

Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?

And, little town, thy streets for evermore

Will silent be; and not a soul to tell

Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

KEATS: ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity. Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty"—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

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Thou **foster child** of **silence** and **slow time**, B
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express A
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme: B
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape C
Of deities or mortals, or of both, D
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady? E
What men or gods are these? **What** maidens loath? D
What mad pursuit? **What** struggle to escape? C
What pipes and timbrels? **What** wild ecstasy? E

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near
rhymes
in
modern
English

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are we "forever
above" breathing
passion, or
"forever
panting"?

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beauty →
sublime

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Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty"—that is all

Ye know on earth, and **all ye need to know.**

Contrast "Beauty is really truth!"

WAIT. I SHOULD JOIN THIS HONOR SOCIETY TO SHOW COLLEGES I'M HONORABLE, AND I'M HONORABLE BECAUSE I'M IN AN HONOR SOCIETY?



BASICALLY, YES.

SOUNDS LIKE I COULD SAVE TIME BY JOINING THE TAUTOLOGY CLUB DIRECTLY.

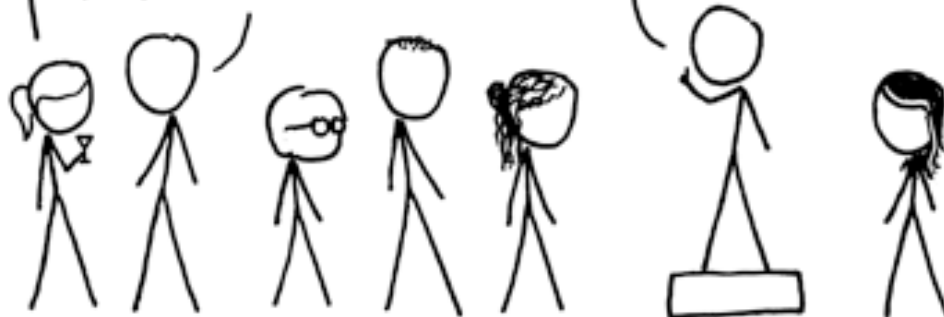


THAT'S NOT A REAL CLUB.

THEN I'M STARTING IT.

TAUTOLOGY CLUB:

SO HOW'D YOU LEARN ABOUT US?
FROM YOUR FACEBOOK GROUP,
"IF 1,000,000 PEOPLE JOIN THIS GROUP, IT WILL HAVE 1,000,000 PEOPLE IN IT."



LISTEN UP! THE FIRST RULE OF TAUTOLOGY CLUB IS THE FIRST RULE OF TAUTOLOGY CLUB.