

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

T.R. Hummer: Two Poems

T.R. Hummer · Saturday, June 6th, 2026

Who You Are

— *for my children*

A sliver of starlight wraps itself in flesh
And breathes and screams, and then
The mundane years begin. The mother sings to hush
This demiurge, just arrived from the same pleroma
From which the quarrelsome old Gnostics thought
Spirit *fell* into matter, and that was original sin.
Perhaps. Just one sliver of the faintest light
Among billions. One photon from a distant sun.
Did it fall, or leap headlong? That's the question.
White dwarf or supernova? Out the hospital window
This midnight, there are as many blazing
Above the parking lot as anyone
Could wish for. Or on.

*

Detachment

1. Apologia

Sometimes I can't help living the unexamined life,
Since examinations are stressful. In my last one,
The ophthalmologist said *Yes, you have a little detachment
Of the retina there. A black hole in the eye,*
My personal eclipse. I thought nonattachment
Was where you go for enlightenment. It's true I hadn't studied
The possibility of blindness, and it's true the surgeons
Restored me with their microscopes and lasers.
But I admit I was attracted to the absence
That appeared to me, if only for the paradox
Of absence appearing. I thought it was the gateway
To Bardo that eventually we all step through.

My fantasy, I realize, and I apologize for it.
But I don't renounce it. If nothing else,
It keeps me here yet awhile, among the unexamined.

2. Memo to Emerson

After retinal surgery, the gas bubble in my eye,
Injected there to hold the visible world in place,
Is a translucent sphere of distortion, fascinating
And annoying, like a disco ball or a pulsar,
Bending light and disturbing the firmament.
Sadly, Waldo, a transparent eyeball would be
Not stone blind, but sightless as air or water
Soughing in its current, babbling
In its stony bed—or an unfocused pillar of fire
By day, a smoky blues in the night.

(Featured image from [Pexels](#))

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