

# The Universal Particular

by [Justin Wong](#) (December 2023)



A Moonlit Wooded River Landscape– Aert van der Neer, 17th C

**This is the** wisdom beyond the thing,  
The silent word at the end of the world,  
The tree that is a kingdom and a heaven,  
The dust that is our history and our fate,  
To see the eternal in the object,  
To know the hereafter in an afternoon,  
And see love in the light of spring,  
And perceive the meaning after the event.

The poem is a universe composed of  
The decaying matter of words,  
It is an artifact of a language  
Between aspiration and decadence,  
It is the work of a tongue  
Between inheritance and dispersion,  
It is the work of the auteur  
Between conception and judgement.

The poem is sung after the suicide of the state,  
Its sentiments echo through the marketplace,  
Figures of its day are emblazoned in inscription,  
It is all that remains of a world in flux  
To survive the dissolution of its speech,  
The vehicle of perception it uses  
To arrive at the invisible: Truth.

Because I cannot return ... here is it you cannot go?  
Because I cannot return to the days of my youth,  
Because I cannot experience ... What thing can't you experience?  
Because I cannot experience or re-experience first love,  
Because I cannot rekindle ... What flame has turned to ash?  
Because I cannot rekindle the foolish hope of youth,  
I write of that which contains a familiar tone,  
In the particularity of my time, place and tongue,

Because I cannot go to places that I strode,  
Even though they still stand on extant roads,  
Nor can I again even hope to meet,  
The faces that I saw on once known streets,  
The city's not made of brick and grime,  
But an irremeable river of flowing time,  
And time is like the uncaged bird,  
So, the uncapturable is captured in a word.

The universal is the same but always different,  
Like love born of a particular beauty  
The beloved is heir to for a season

Within the seasons of her days.  
An embodiment of a reality always there,  
Yet always transfiguring  
In a cycle of death and rebirth  
Transforming from one generation to another.

She is not beauty, but particularity,  
A symbol-visible representation of the invisible—  
A vessel moving the enamoured to an unseen realm,  
Like the heaven bound chariot from its earthen abyss,  
Beauty transcends the wither of its holder,  
As the flesh the blight of its extirpation,  
A breath of life overlapping between the opposites  
Of new creation and unfinal destruction.

Words survive the death wishes of its civilisation  
That transcends the hunger want seen face of the waif,  
It survives the decadence that move its subjects to sin,  
Its alive beyond the disinterested rule of emperor pimps,  
The aesthetic also transcends the mutiny of the beautiful,  
Its perversions in perceptions debunk what is believed to be  
true,  
Through enlightened social convention that transforms the eye  
To make deformation appear as formation, and the opposite.

Though Diana shall stand on the dust of Philistia,  
As the poem on the ruins of the sacked State,  
Words in the eventuality of time transcend time,  
Can one immateriality go beyond the other?  
Things don't fall apart in the folly of history  
But in the folly of man,  
Logos transcendent of Polis not Chronos,  
Translated in the conception of voices through the epochs.

Beauty is translated through the generations  
That unravel in the eventuality of time,  
Like the same light in different day,  
Arousing a similar devotion particular to impassioned,

The moment immortality intermingles with mortality,  
Object of flesh possessed by subject of beauty,  
Causing object of mind to be inflamed by fire of eros.

Here is the thing that is always with us,  
And that which is constantly falling away,  
It is omnipresence in the seed of insignificance,  
Or the city indistinguishable from the universe,  
It is the royal house that is the earthly model  
Of a kingdom of hidden ethereality,  
The word of truth in the undeciphered tongue,  
The presence of beauty after the decay of the once comely.

## [Table of Contents](#)

**Justin Wong** is originally from Wembley, though is presently based in the West Midlands. He has been passionate about the English language and literature since a young age. Previously, he lived in China working as an English teacher. His novel, *Millie's Dream*, is available [here](#).

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](#)