

# Sara Whitestone

## The Point of the Paradox

“And do not call it fixity, / Where past and future are gathered.  
Neither movement from nor towards, / Neither ascent nor decline.  
Except for the point, the still point, / There would be no dance,  
and there is only the dance.”

What if time is nonlinear—time as a tree whose branches touch each other, moving in and out of moments with the breeze, rather than in a straight and fixed line of history?

Is it a paradox that we must live in linear time while experiencing its turns and reverses? Yesterday is gone, tomorrow is not yet, but do all exist at once in “the still point of the turning world?”

What is life—other than just breathing, laughing, suffering, loving, and dying? How do I make sense of the disparity I feel around me? How can I be at peace with paradoxes without knowing the answers?

Am I still too young, too small, to understand these truths, to see those patterns within what—on the outside—seems random?

If I were as small as an ant—if I could converse with the ants—what could they teach me about the conundrum of freedom and fate, as these tiny creatures make individual choices in their hunts for food, but collectively cover ground with so much efficiency that computer models are based on their productivity?

Is small just as vital as big? Are the interworkings of a cell as important as the orbit of planets? Scientists are now discovering that on the level of the nuclei tiny machines make seemingly random treks across their cell solar systems. But in their randomness they somehow reach their appointed destinations at the right time, bringing life to the cells they serve.

Through scientific observation, through the gut of intuition, I  
grapple with the seeming disparities of being fully myself only  
when I am not conscious of myself,  
of a limitless universe of the stars and a microscopic universe of  
a cell,  
of being outside of time and yet fully in it.

These each are not opposites but part of a whole, because “at the  
point of the paradox, there is truth.”

Small and large, young and old, time and eternity, discovery and  
destiny—all are truth.

And I find—not answers—but a further belief that time in its  
non-fixity,  
ants in their random purposefulness, nuclei machines marching  
on their missions,  
deaths of loved ones, decisions of laughter that overturn anger

—these all matter.  
Because *all* matters.

And I sense that paradoxes are not meant to confound us or  
bear down upon us with the weight of trying to solve their  
truths.

There is balance in just being.  
Living in the joy of it all. Because “joy is the infallible presence  
of God.”

And when I choose to believe truth I cannot see, the urgency for  
answers does not shake me out of joy. Instead, in quiet mo-  
ments, I meditate on the wonder of complexity and on the sim-  
plicity of trust.

And in that meditation—where “time past and time future” be-  
come one—

I join the “Great Dance”

for

“The dance which we dance is at the centre and for the dance all things were made.”

And there, in the dance—at “the still point of the turning world”—

Is joy.

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“And do not call it fixity...,” “time past and time future...,” “still point of the turning world...,” “there is only the dance.” Eliot, T. S. “Burnt Norton.” *The Four Quartets*, 1935.

What if time is nonlinear...,” “Joy is the infallible...” L’Engle, M. *A Ring of Endless Light*, 1980.

“At the point of the paradox...” Gordon, G. personal communication, 1986.

“Great Dance,” “the dance which we dance...” Lewis, C.S., *Peregrandra*, 1944.

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