

## A Punctuation of Moods

Poetry may, regardless of line breaks, be written in sentences but does not have to be. The only element both a sentence and line of poetry must contain is adherence to the rules of grammar, with the exception that a line of poetry does not need to begin with a capital letter and end with a period. This is the case because prose intends to be understood by a connected progression of related ideas, whereas poetry's range of intention and effect is limitless. Sentences may not be appropriate in a poem since the effect sought may not be an idea. Even though the poet may be exploring something he or she does not understand, the search must still employ proper grammar so the reader sees the same map, feels the same terrain. Grammar is an evolving system of rules that ensures both the writer and reader are in the same place. If a writer does not know how to identify a subject then the verb will not be in agreement with it. A writer may think one thing but state another.

“Sentences are the basic units of grammar. All sentences express complete ideas.”<sup>1</sup> Does grammar apply only to sentences? If the answer is yes, then how can a line of poetry comply with the rules of grammar yet not be a sentence? If we think about the range of mental activity, it becomes apparent feeling precedes thought. Using Kant's epistemology as a model, *intuition* is how the *sensibility* receives and is affected by an object. An impression happens before a *thought* is possible. Yet many intuitions do not become thoughts. They go no further than sensations then fade away. Some, however, affect the mind with enough force to form an unwritten, unspoken sentence in the mind. Perception occurs when the subject describes an object to itself. For example, *I see a mountain*, is the sentence formed in the mind when a mountain impresses the mind enough to name what it sees. Perception is the making of a sentence since it involves a subject recognizing an object. A mountain is not a mountain unless it makes enough of an impression to be named.

Even when we say we are not thinking about anything, what we are actually saying is our consciousness is directed toward the notion of space without an object that paradoxically is itself an object or else we could not think about it. To put it another way, we could not complete the sentence in our mind of the idea of nothing unless nothing itself were an object.

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<sup>1</sup> “English Grammar,” p.1, David Daniels & Barbara Daniels, HarperCollins, 1991.