

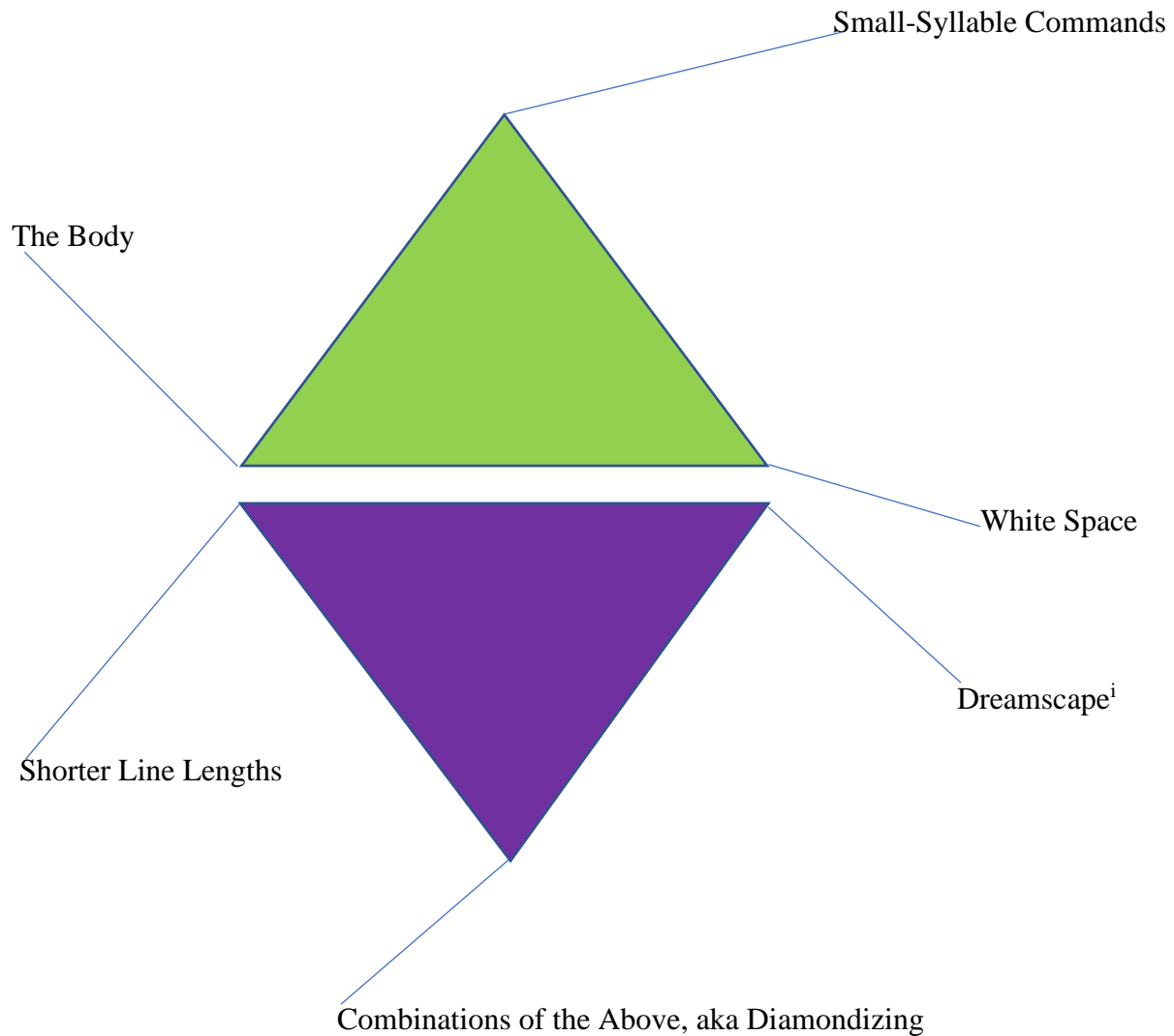
Dear Poets,

Today's teaching takeaway examines Mai Der Vang's "Out of Research into Reveries," appearing at *Poets.org*, arrows and eighties-movie titles forthcoming.

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How It's Put Together

Reimagining the poem's elements as triangle vertices, we have:



Small-Syllable Commands

Give up (2)
Offer down (3)
Cough out (2)
Lift out (2)
Caren (2)

This is a compression-rich poem beginning with its instructions, some medicalized by virtue of the fact they precede

The Body

brain
face
throat
ankles
elbows

Aspects of the composition's surgery-speak lean in neuroscience directions, Mai Der's use of

White Space

Give up the brain
Lift out far from it
Caren the elbows out of murk
(& others)

bringing canals for ganglia to mind.
Gray-matter procedures aren't the most maneuverable—a given, as depicted in shorter

Line Lengths

Ln 1 (4 words)
Lns 2-3 (4, 4)
Lns 4-5 (4, 5)
Lns 6-7 (2, 6)
Lns 8-9 (4, 3)
Lns 10-11 (7, 3)
Lns 12-13 (6, 4)
Ln 14 (5)
Lns 15-16 (6, 4)
Lns 17-18 (3, 1)
Lns 19-20 (2, 3)

The close quarters remind me of office cabinets or caverns in doctor dioramas. After all, *Research* is part of the title, *performance* found in the longest line, *moon*, poetry's go-to satellite, our shortest which is compound-and calendar-surrounded, (*stoneward*, *midsummer*).

My vote for visual bravura? Ending on *heartstill* because its double *ll*'s align with a similar duo in Ln 17, *full*.

the midsummer full
moon

A poem with anatomical words need not mention *eyes*. Its optical-constructional gets the brilliant done.

Constantly stoneward
hunting toward heartstill

Dreamscape

A term for “every / era of hibernation” in homage to Dennis Quaid’s 1984 film. *Dreamscape*’s plot “looks into using psychics to enter people’s dreams . . . When a subject dies in his sleep . . . Alex Gardner (Quaid) becomes suspicious that another of the psychics is killing people in the dreams somehow and that is causing them to die in real life.”ⁱⁱ Released about three months before *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. Projector coincidence or Dolby boom?

Under sedation, concepts and images may occur, such as a damnation / bio-surveillance meetup (“its hell-bound / policies bugged into my throat”), as well as an anesthesia hammock shared by lobotomy, sea life, and gurney stand-in—

the butcher
operating on slabs

of my identity the bereaved dissecting
memories of an octopus

The second line break makes a case for *slabs* connoting either a portion or bed-substitute.

On first reading, I interpreted “memories of an octopus” as recollections belonging to the octopus. How Cousteaupian. Subsequently, I see those memories as part of the *my* in line twelve. That we debate cranial fineries—cephalopod or speaker—is a cerebral luxury the poem provides. “Memories of an octopus” also illustrates

Diamondizing (combinations of the above vertices)

since it’s a shorter line consisting of dreamscape. Another diamond is the small-syllable command + body + white space + nature-assisted imbibement found in

Careen the elbows out of murk
with wine taken by

the midsummer full
moon

And, what’s this, another optical-constructional alignment, now at the syllable level?

Lift out far from it 1 1 1

Careen the elbows out of murk 1 1 1

The takeaway? Nuances, “Out of Research into Reveries” has several, become intricacies when they’re joined together.

Prompt

Write a punctuation-free poem about the sleep habits of anesthesiologists. What do we discover? Inscribed mouthguards? Third-person eye masks? Apply the vertices associated with Mai Der Vang's work. Include two uses of the optical-constructional technique.

Happy Poeming,

Jon

ⁱ A pseudo-translation of Jaydn DeWald's "A dreamscape from every angle." appearing in his poem "GRID (17)".

ⁱⁱ <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0087175/>