

Refractions

Alice MacRae

A lesson in science

We all see through lenses
Within the eye,
I,
And everyone else
Is bent out of shape
The projected trajectory
Of waves reflected off of me
Is reworked in the cornea
Received by the retina
Inverted
Interpreted by cerebra
No longer me
but an abstraction

My father did not know he was short-sighted
Despite his struggles to see
Those around him clearly
When his eyes opened
To his own myopia
He saw a richness in the world that
Previously was mystery

Many still see me and my siblings through blurred vision
Our history in revision because they cannot read
The words set before them
The ink made invisible,
Inscrutable
Indecipherable
I decided that I will try my best to refocus
The narrative to show a picture that is true

My past has been hidden in ash black shadow,
Or burnt in pires
The fires blinding the children watching,
and their children yet unborn
The phoenix struggles to breath
in the ashes still warm
Of the destruction of past, present, and future.



A laser will direct all light down one path
Polarised to a point
And sent forth into a world
Rays that betray this order are absorbed leaving only those that align with the others
A laser is praised for its focus,
But it will not light a room
It is narrow in scope
Illuminating little
And potentially destroying that which it lights

Attempting to pin me in place,
Fixed upon a board, a wooden frame
A name, a label
Prescribed
Will collapse me
Out of superposition
A photon is both particle and wave
Existing in multiple
Until obstructed
Or observed

Within the glass that is me
My light is refracted
Prismatic
Colours erratically dancing across
The surfaces of memories
The shell of pāua is coloured not just from birth but from layers accumulated
Iridescence a property of time as well as structure
Like glass I am never quite solid
Never crystallising into a unified whole
Like shell my colours are internal and not always seen
Like glass and like shell my properties my beauty relies on my delicacy
It may break beneath the step of a boot

I am paid to teach science
But silent is my teaching of society
My guidance through light
Shining
lighting a future
A rainbow,
Be it sun during rain
Banner flying in wind
Or simply a spectrum made visible
Is a reflection of our children's lives to come
And in the mirror maybe they can smile