Afterthoughts - An Abstract

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Stamping and twisting his way back into his sneakers, hand already on the doorknob, he turns back to the room and yells: “my Cheetos!” It is an afterthought and seems to tear him from one trajectory while returning him to another; an interruption that takes things in neither one direction nor the other but both at the same time. We are left with the ‘motionless movement’ of the torsion between the two, making a simple turn an occasion to play with ideas about thinking and time.

One of Blanchot’s characters tells the other: “ . . . act in such a way that I can speak to you.” Visits with patients offer experiences which invite listening in the direction of understanding as well as towards the pure physicality of bodies and things. Each cultivates its own forms of thinking and articulation. Those properties of the tangible that resist translation are made manifest in our sentences. Writing is always also unwriting. The French poet, Francis Ponge, says: “It takes many words, laid out in a new manner to destroy a word, a concept.”

In this piece, ‘Afterthoughts,’ I watch a boy mid-turn at the door and consider the wonderful confusion of directions in being and writing. As always, the concerns are both conceptual and technical: how do I, as a psychotherapist, conduct myself so as to invite the other; then how do I think, listen, and write so as to, in Blanchot’s words, “ . . . in a single language make the double speech heard?” In the realm on this kind of memory there is no before or after and even thinking is not what it was before.