[Carol Dorf: Two Poems](#) [1]

March 28, 2016   [Math Poetry](#) [2]

Action Potential

Neurons fire before
we make any decision at all.

Do I dare to eat the plums?
Have I been dared to eat the plums?

Mind and body, let alone soul.
Quantum space between thought and action.

But they were delicious.
So ripe, so cold.

Like other mammals,
I'm programmed for sweet.
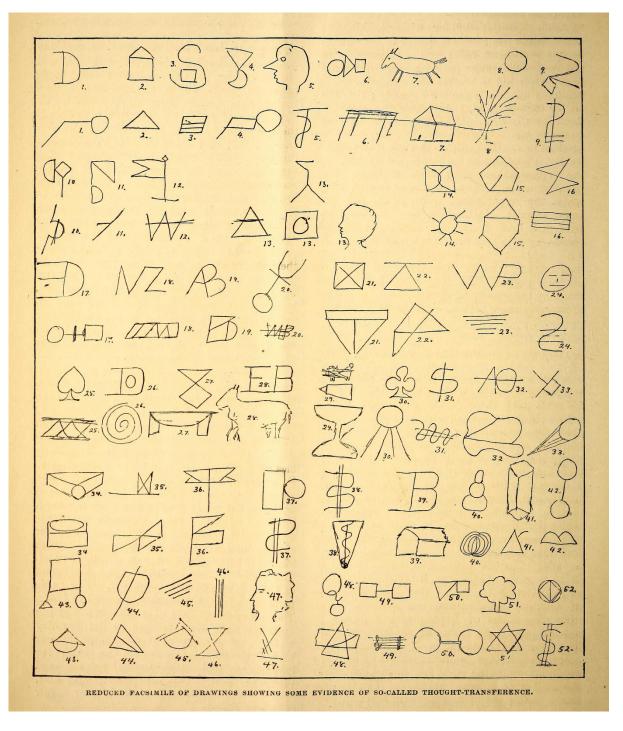
Here's my account.
Will you hold me to it?

e

Yes to this base. Differentiate e^x.
Not that kind of ex, though then differentiating
is a damn good idea. Not much of a plan,
because no function holds its shape like e^x.
To be one's self over and over through however
many years. Is that horrifying? We've watched
as her hats have grown more elaborate, always
maintaining their purple identity. One self.

I'm too much water, adjusting to the shape
of my container, then waking during the night
struggling for breath. When, how did that happen?
Why does the nine-year-old girl get lost at ten
in the onrush of self-consciousness? e^x measures
change without losing that integral of self.

REDUCED FACSIMILE OF DRAWINGS SHOWING SOME EVIDENCE OF SO-CALLED THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE.

Art Information

- "Transference of Thoughts" [3] from *Science—an Illustrated Journal* (Science Company, 1885); public domain, courtesy of the *Public Domain Review.*

Carol Dorf is poetry editor at *Talking Writing*. Her poems have appeared in *Canary*, *About Place*, *Sin Fronteras*, *Scientific American*, *The Mom Egg*, *Spillway*, *Maintenant*, *OVS*, *Best of Indie Lit New England*, and elsewhere. She lives in Berkeley, California.

Carol will read the two poems here and others at TW's panel [“Wild Equations: A Math Poetry Reading”](#) [4] for the AWP 2016 conference in Los Angeles.

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