

Lately I've been practicing meditation. When my teacher asks me to take a moment to think about all the things in this life that I will experience for the last time, I think of your paintings.

Not just the pictorial pointers, but the intensity of it all. The colours, the pain, how everything is grown together. You paint impossible gradients, compressed perspectives, dying whales and your own naked skin - history, habitat, crisis. You are literally giving us all you got. What's going on?

I think you are in awe of life. Of course we will all die and by then everything will have been done for the last time, but even long before death you will cease to have certain experiences. Once stumbled upon, a thought like this is tricky to forget. We do everything a finite number of times, and often you haven't the faintest idea which is the final one. What shall we do?

Basically all moments give way for the next, so I understand why you are concerned now with what will come - what will happen to the whales? But if we were to distract ourselves with words now, the route is already laid out. You read one word and then the next, you just keep on reading, talking, listening, word after word after word after word.

Human words are young and nervous to get things straight, and equipped with them we either try to figure something out or to arrive at the end of it. But as Scooter knew, the chase is better than the catch. The secret is of course that there is no such place to be found, there is no end to this net. And as things tend to get complicated over time, here we are wriggling around stuck in a mystery.

Just staying a while with your work is a reminder of the mystery going on, either you like it or not. Finding a route between the entangled parts of torso, surface and carcass that are your paintings, acts as a kind of involuntary breathing pause. A calm entry point from which to dive back into the depths of symbol and conversation. Not unlike the ancient whale, which through generations of underwater trifle, love and society, raised undersea heroes, language and eventually despair, is at its heart a yet unbroken chain of gasps for air.

So breathing pauses might be the best we got at this point. Breathing room to imagine a strange future in a different way, even though it's difficult to explain. The scholar Eve Sedgwick even proposes to imagine the profoundly painful, profoundly relieving, ethically crucial possibility that the past could have been different from what it was.

In the end that's not very different from waking up from a dream. And how much effort does that take?