The Middle Distance: A Reflection on Craft and Art

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ABSTRACT

In *The Breaking of Style* Helen Vendler examines the point in three poets' careers when a radical departure from an established style occurs, often in response to a crisis or a change in orientation to art and life. For me the moment of rupture or reversal occurred with the act of migration. From movement and departure, my work has gravitated to a poetic of return and homecoming. The essay attempts to identify this moment of change, and also traces the threads of continuity, the abiding influences from my beginnings as a writer, and which are continuing to shape my emigrant life and work.

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Boey Kim Cheng emigrated from Singapore in 1997. He lives in Sydney and teaches at the University of Newcastle, Australia. He has published five collections of poetry and a travel memoir entitled *Between Stations*. 
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Middle distance – As you move farther away, the tactile quality of foliage details become a pattern of textures, scribbled lines and tones. Atmospheric perspective effects might cause buildings, concrete and brick surfaces to gradually disappear to become an undefined visual texture. Far distance – The distant background becomes a textural pattern. The awareness of individual characteristics shifts to group awareness. An object’s “Local Color” is changed by the reflection of colored objects nearby and the colors within the environment. All my examples are placed in a white environment and illuminated by an artificial daylight light source. As an example of no color reflections I show a white sphere, in a white environment. Have you seen the loneliness of a middle distance runner As he stops the race and looks around? I like the stage you've seen it now. I'll walk to the station Walk to the station Walk to the station Won’t you follow me down? I would also read this as a reflection on the daily life of a musician spending so much time in solitude, preparing for those short times when you're 'on stage'. Also the juncture that B+S had reached, following an apparently tumultuous period, ‘it doesn’t mean that we will show’; the song seems to reflect the adventure of being a successful band, the uncertainty of its future, and its engagement with the commercial world, ‘businessman's conspiracy to sell you wares’ Less obvious now, but at the time B+S seemed to.