

Now, the nature of this element is easy to determine. For, in proportion as a sensation loses its affective character and becomes representative, the reactions which it called forth on our part tend to disappear, but at the same time we perceive the external object which is its cause. or if we do not now perceive it, we have perceived it, and we think of it. Now, this cause is extensive and therefore measurable: a constant experience which began with the first glimmering of consciousness and which continues throughout the whole of our life, shows us a definite shade of sensation corresponding to a definite amount of stimulation. We thus associate the idea of a certain quantity of cause with a certain quality of effect, and finally as happens in the case of every acquired perception, we transfer the idea into the sensation, the quantity of the cause into the quality of the effect. At this very moment the intensity, which was nothing but a certain shade or quality of the sensation, becomes a magnitude. We shall easily understand this process if, for example, we hold a pin in our right hand and prick our left hand more and more deeply. At first, we shall feel as it were a tickling then a touch which is succeeded by a prick, then a pain localized at a point, and finally the spreading of this pain over the surrounding zone. And the more we reflect on it, the more clearly shall we see that we are here dealing with so many qualitatively distinct sensations, so many varieties of a single species. But yet we spoke at first of one and the same sensation which spread further and further of one prick which increased in intensity. The reason is that, without noticing it, we localized in the sensation of the left hand, which is pricked, the progressive effort of the right hand, which pricks. We thus introduced the cause into the effect, and unconsciously interpreted quality as quantity, intensity as magnitude. Now, it is easy to see that the intensity of every representative sensation ought to be understood in the same way.

from *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* by Henri Bergson, translated by F. L. Pogson

#### Transference

We experience the external—  
as a glimmering of consciousness,  
a shade of sensation  
or a cause of effect  
    (first, the quality of cause,  
    then the quality of effect,  
    then the quality of sensation  
        (a touch,  
        a prick,  
        a pain)  
and finally, the spreading,

further and further without)—  
and we think of it,  
we reflect on it—  
    quality as quantity,  
    intensity as magnitude,  
        more deeply  
        more clearly,  
            we see,  
            we hold,  
            we perceive—  
and finally  
we understand.

## ABOUT THE POEM

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“Transference” was created from *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* by Henri Bergson, translated by F. L. Pogson (1910). About the poem and the process of composing it, Jim Murdoch writes:

“Transference” was my second attempt at writing a found poem. Having struggled with my first (where I used the words strictly in sequence), this time I allowed myself the freedom to pick the words in any order. The text was chosen fairly arbitrarily and I simply selected a block of text about the right length and took it from there. This time the context of the original pointed my way and the poem came together far quicker than my first go. The title is of my own devising.

