

Transmission (Variations in *a*)

There are 1,109 words that begin with *ana*. This is because *ana* is a Greek root, one that means *on, up, through*. *Ana* makes other words, other roots, go above and beyond. Like *anaphora*, like *anabasis*, like *anagram*, like *anachronism*.

The translation of *ana* in English is *per*. As in per-son. Which I was instructed comes from the Latin *personare*—to sound through—which in turn comes from Roman theater. From actors on stage whose echoes had to puncture costume, pierce mask, to declare. History's irony, rich, to name as self the wearer of a fabricated face.

If there is one etymology to remember, it is that of person.

If there is a second etymology to remember (for me) it is *ana*. *Ana* as root, as enterprise of *anatomy*—the body above and beyond the naming of parts.

But *ana* as personal name does not emerge from its function as Greek root. Rather, from the Hebrew and Arabic word for *grace*. Derivations, history's descendants of *Hannah*, palindromic, like *Ana*. Pervasive, like grass. Even in tongues read through Cyrillic, the two open-throat vowels, the temperate consonant clamor. *Ah. N-ah*.

Of course, after all the eons of saying, of naming, it's only natural—we ran out of words, out of sounds; we doubled up.

Ana as grace; *ana* as root. Animal communication is the transmission of information via sound, sight, smell, touch. *Ah. N-ah*. What raw need satisfied by this call? Why do some combinations of sound classify as personal name while others become label affixed to inanimate thing?

Grace—above and beyond.

On a full moon night, I teach my four-year-old girl to howl. She howls *ahuuuuuu*. Remembers now, upon moon sight, to howl. A transmission that communicates.

Hums of *a* followed by echoes of *u*—that petit *a* hurled out as you.