The Deconstructionist’s Alchemy

this is a poem

it is a poem about the letter a

ok, that was a lie

but an important one

this poem *could* be about the letter a

it would go like this:

the letter a is a fine, fine letter

there’s a letter b, but a is better.

but this poem is about more than the letter a

it is about the fact that a word is greater than the sum of its letters

it is about the fact that a poem is greater than the sum of its words

things being greater than the sum of their parts

is what the ancients, and the idiots today, called the spirit

in a human, it is what the ancients, and the idiots like me, called the soul

a poem does not have a spirit

even if it is written in the spirit of a soul

a poem is a collection of words

arranged into an interesting juxtaposition

reflective of the aspects of fun, Fun and FUN

or selectively denying them

while commenting on the moral, ethical or spiritual (there’s that word again)

nature of the human condition

ok, that was a lie

but it’s a famous one

it’s a lie that well illustrates my point

which is that a poem has a spirit

now i’m just messing with your head

a poem takes everything literally

paints words on a page or hangs them in the air

and is something greater than its constituents

the poem

therefore, does not have a spirit

it is a spirit

it is my spirit

it is your spirit

just not all of it

no, that’s not what i meant

i mean, it isn’t all of your spirit

but all of it is a spirit

which includes, ipso facto

the stuff that went into it

which includes, goddammit

your spirit, my spirit

(soul and soul, assuming we’re humans, which is a large and alarming assumption, in that it is a statement of responsibility which we can never meet, free will being a user-friendly but highly deconstructible illusion, which i love, go figure)

the alchemist

pours the base element into his crucible

adds the intangible, indescribable something that doesn’t exist

the essentiall oomphe of the philosophyr’s stone

and receives gold

here is your gold

it’s a cheap sort of gold

but pure gold never lasts as long as the marriage does

(speaking of alchemy)