The Deconstructionist’s Riddle

this is a poem

it is a poem about the structure of a poem

no it’s not

all the poems in this series

assume a structure

(assume means more than one thing)

all the poems in this series

therefore assume a centre

the centre of a series of poems about poetry and poets

is the assumption

that poetry is a metaphysical act

(metaphysics being the *science of being and knowing*)

or perhaps

a poemetaphysical act

(poemetaphysics being the *poetry of being and knowing*)

and that poetry is valid

the centre of the series of poems is poetry

the structure of this poem

which is about structure

is not the structure of this poem

that is another poem that is not this one

but shares with this one the structure of the series

which is about the structure of poetry and poets

are we clear?

no we are not

why are we not clear?

because we know

that the centre of a series about poetry and poets

should be the poem

but by definition

there is no such thing as a common structure in poetry

the centre

is not the centre

no, this is a lie

(what is a lie?

oh don’t play that game with me)

the centre is an inviolate centre

but because i am using poetry

to deconstruct poetry

the centre is double

the poem

is an inviolate thing

and therefore outside of the structure

yet, because this is a poem

the structure still has an internal centre

there are two centres to the structure

in fact, this also is a lie

there are three centres to this poem

the third centre is the centre of meaning

meaning is a structure

like structure is a structure

they are integrated, but each have a centre

the central meaning here

is that poetry is us

no, that’s a lie

poetry is not us

poetry is me

this is how i think

this is how you think of me

i am the centre

there are now four centres

and each one supports the metastructure

if you remove any of these centres

the structure will collapse

there will be no act of poetry

there will be no poet

there will be no meaning

there will be no structure

there will be no poemetaphysics

(that is, no theory of the *being and knowing* of poetry

poetry *be*s, sometimes

this is why my deconstruction of my poetic motives

is valid, sue me if you don’t like it)

the four centres

add up to five centres

this is embarrassing

in fact, the fifth centre

the knowing and being of poetry

is not a centre of this poem

it is a result of the addition of the other four

at one time

poetry itself was the centre

(this is a different use of the word centre)

it is no longer a centre

the centre was the reader

the reader has collapsed in our age

the structure has collapsed with the reader

this is a poem

it is the single most important post-modern poem

*ever written*

it restores the centre

which is not the centre

but upon which is built the structure

which has six centres

you

my love

are the centre

this is a poem

it is a poem about you