

THE WORLD

You think the world re-
volves around you, well it
revolves around Copernicus
and around Ortelius of whom
you've never even heard, you
idiot. Who has? You act
like you're inside the Boston
Mapparium, the spherical
stained-glass window
that's meant to show you
where continents are.
Now space is elastic
(and so is matter, but
space a lot more so).
We know it's elastic because of
Ortelius, who saw that long ago
the continents imperceptibly
had broken off from one another.
The Mapparium makes you feel
you're the core of the earth,
churning liquid fire. You're not,
though—no one is, and
it's very irritating to be so
misled, mistaught. Item: Marco
Polo is a swimming pool
game. The It person yells
Marco with eyes shut and
everyone else yells Polo

and tries not to get tagged.
Or it's—Item—a restaurant
game, you go into a café and
yell Marco and if it's the right
restaurant someone yells
Polo and you win concert
tickets. Remember that smart
video called *Voices and Visions*
gathering poems and critics in
1988? Mark Strand said there
and then: "Stevens's disclosures
are not of the primary sort,"
a comforting, useful sentence
for stymied readers that
might be applied to the case
of the planet's core and surface.
It's probably all for the best
that continents were broken off
to where they be right now. If
it's the wrong restaurant, you'd
feel like a jerk. You don't have gills
like fish to swim between and among
the continents in international waters.

LOVE POEM

A man brings a
woman a chop from
China, in his lap on
the plane: it is a
basalt seal and is
topped by a bird,
red-dotted eyes.

She says oh, oh, I
love this grayish bird
his dotted eyes, the
striated feathers so
unlike the shiny base.

Oh, the chop prints
two ideograms:
I am Lark Crowe
You're Jay Wren
I guess we're a rebus.

M O Z A R T

Can you imagine
what is true, that
smack in the middle
of making *The Magic
Flute* he interrupted
himself to make
“Ave verum corpus,”
world’s most truth-telling
motet (Who made its
text? Maybe a pope),
then got himself on
track, back to *TMF*
(all the while dealing
with money-worry and
sickness of wife). When
you hear the *esto nobis*
cadence in “AVC,” you
scale the spine of the
European Enlightenment;
when you hear the
idiotic chorus “Three
Faithful Youths” in
The Magic Flute—

“Three faithful youths we now will lend you
Upon your journey they’ll attend you
Though young in years these youths so fair
Heed the words of wisdom rare!”

—you're dealing with
Bertie Wooster's
three best friends.
Because he was Mozart,
not a problem.