

The Ice plant *Drosanthemum speciosum*

there is cool and there
is beyond cool where this
brief humanity turns to chill
and all communication is frozen

forgetfulness of what is knowable
confronted with many new shapes
I was once more overcome
by my old whimsical fascination

27 January 2014



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'And then I must confide to you that I am very close to discovering the secret of the creation and organization of plants.'
Goethe. *Italian Journey* 17 April 1782*

'It is the strangest claim in the world – that one should present experiences without any theoretical link between them, and leave it to the reader to form his own convictions. But the mere looking at a thing is of no use whatever. Looking at a thing gradually merges into contemplation, contemplation into thinking; thinking is establishing connections, thus it is possible to say that every attentive glance which we cast on the world is an act of theorising. This however ought to be done with consciousness, self-criticism, freedom, and, to use a daring word, *irony*...' Goethe, Works (J.A.) vol XL p63 both passages translated and quoted by Erich Heller *The Disinherited Mind* Pelican 1961

*Heller's translation differs notably from that of W.H.Auden and Elizabeth Mayer, Collins 1962