Seeing through Smells and Sentiments...

You may blend your senses with my senses here to understand this part....

You could be going through rain sitting in a Greyhound bus. A high-school student could have calculated a formula and theory around the relative movement of the bus and your being stationary. No matter what you and the bus are going through, you smell the inside of the airtight bus. Buses smell different when they travel through rain. Nobody calculates smell.

There is rain before your eyes and the color around you is no different from the sky. Every car passing by is a shred of reddish or a blackish streak of involvement, as though interrupting the otherwise gray space. The overall color of gray simplifies the visually complicated earth in the rain. You are not quite interested in outlines. You are forced to smell the seats and the confined space. You contemplate and discover a formula for smell.

Two cars on the other lane—shreds of interruptions, then their blending sounds a big swoosh and then the swallowing. The sound of rain swallows the swoosh;
somewhere an occasional honking; drivers must see through swoosh and slush! Far away, a deep rumble from the intestines of the clouds. There could be a radio announcement, warning about the flash flooding somewhere inside a car. Our bus rips the liquid gray and moves through — with some mechanical formula in the intestines of the engines. The solid world of outlines is just another joke when the rains pour thick! You realize you are the guts of the bus digesting the visual watering. There is this strange smell. A semi-wet jacket hangs from the seat in front of you. You can see a head sprinkled with hair. Smell is a neglected mathematics.

You will be farther from a town when the bus sloshes fast.

You may even try looking at darker points — it could be a refraction of a bird or a distant house, and if you are looking carefully, you could also find a slender tree floating between the spaces, now erasing, now gasping, then drowning until you have moved a mile away from it. The Greyhound bus window is not the same as the Hubble telescope, isolating star from star. The Hubble has no clue about the different smells that could be out there.

Rain in Texas does not believe in any equation for the eyes. And you are just smelling through sights creating an experience valued by sentiments of a random memory. Your limbic system uprooted them randomly. Somewhere in the street food stall of Bangalore, the smell of roasted corn sharpened the prick of the drizzle. The man had squeezed lime and sprinkled a drizzle of salt and pepper. You remember the charred smell under his big umbrella. You recall a shower curtain at a hotel smelling of hotel shampoo. Texas is a tub too big to believe in shower curtains.
Our left eye is supposed to be separated by its identical twin, the right eye, by a distance of fifty to seventy millimeters. There is a slight difference in the coordinates of an object seen from the left point of view and the right point of view. But thankfully there is the brain to smooth the binocular disparity, helping us to recognize the depth and distance of those dots and lines, blurs and angles! The equation lies in the recognition, how the dots are joined. If a small blur is a bird against the wind, and a bigger blur is a rain-washed house, what will you call a slightly darker blur that is thicker than a tree trunk and is swaying on the road side? You saw it through the smell of the hanging jacket swaying with the movement. It isn’t going anywhere. Why is the nose placed halfway between the eyes? Doesn’t the smell of the dangling jacket remind you of an armadillo? Just from the distance?

Once you saw the body of a dead armadillo on a trail. Its strong decomposing smell spread throughout the area. The laws of smell, like light, like sound, spread with a Doppler ferocity through a field. There was a dampness in the air and the smell seemed to thicken a brew consuming the trees or even the bicyclists who whooshed passed whiffing the wind. The body of the armadillo — green-backed and white-stomached, scales and claws, was the only thing that seemed to matter on the trail. You were looking at a still picture uprooted from a picture book you possessed long ago in your childhood that happened to mention “A for Armadillo” instead of the generic “A for Ant.” You have never seen a living armadillo but have memorized the green and white stillness of a dead one. It wasn’t raining that day like now while your bus moved.

There was no rain to wipe away the world that day. Erasing the road and trees, the armadillo’s green back and white stomach was too alive in the smell. Life wasn’t being balanced by the living green decay from mil-
lions of feeding bacteria and the fading of drying Texas grass. Green wasn’t balancing either with the browned grass. Even the sunlight was just a porous presence seen through the smell.

Armadillos have a strong sense of smell and can smell up to twenty centimeters below the ground. The smell of the dead armadillo had followed you home making you wonder about the potentials in the energy of decay. Life begins with reactions, ends with reactions; all along our “living it through” and “dying it through,” we are doing nothing but balancing equations as we metabolize, as we see and hear. Seeing through a smell is just a matter of balancing another equation. Biologists memorize life and decay, diagrams and equations. Someone will see through the proto-ness in the protoplasm and discover what primitive plasma smelled like one day. You were merely recalling the smell of decaying protoplasm in the armadillo and now its memory returned in your jacket. That jacket would complete the journey to Dallas with you.

You could be seeing through smell. So blend your senses with mine.

I can find the exact light switch without faltering at night in my room because I can see through smelling as I get closer to the switches. Smelling in darkness is not echo-location. That’s for a bat. A bat will depend on sound to see. As a bat depends on sound to see, I depend on smell. The light switch is closer to the sink. The sink smells of hand soap.

Many times I can even harpoon out the white curtain swaying under the ceiling fan in one of those rooms that I used to spend time in, while growing up in India through the sea of distance. I have the memory of the wet earth smelling from monsoon showers that blew inside
through the window—the wet earth smell intensifying near that window. Sometimes there was the smell of carbolic acid that was sprayed around the house to drive away the snakes if they decided to be a guest, because their homes would be flooded with rain water.

Smells from memories will roll in with the tide every time I see the rain. Darkness may pool the world, gray may flood the eyes, but I will fish up a smell from any sea.

One day, I fancied looking at a broken porcelain tea cup on a window somewhere. I had isolated it out from this world and placed it on the altar of another world that lives inside my head. I had given it a voice. I had named it Prometheus. Prometheus had no smell, but Prometheus was accommodating. It just blended with the smell of candles or whatever was around it. There is a responsibility when we place an object of interest in our minds. We have to keep it alive by mental movements and activities. And you may be surprised how much seeing through one must do in order to keep a broken porcelain tea cup alive inside one’s head without a definite smell! Imagination is a kind of parallel seeing without the actual visual input. But it is undoubtedly seeing through. I have recalled Prometheus through all kinds of smells of curry and pickles, candles and tea.

Seeing imagery requires you to bore a hole and puncture the phenomenal world into a hyper-visual zone where you are the master of the light and darkness. You can even float that psychologist’s head like a bloated moon and puncture it with a pin! Wasn’t he describing you without bothering to plug your ears first? All you did was smell his glass door, instead of approaching him like an obedient service dog when he called your name. You did not even bother to explain him that if you don’t even
smell the glass you may miss out a bigger picture — how it mists up from your breath!

I think I was given a diagnosis once again that day for not responding. He was happy enough to understand that not responding balances an equation of not knowing. Everyone has to balance things up!

Seeing through reality is like digging a canal to irrigate a field of productive wonders. You grow, you harvest. You are the master. Grow whatever you want. Grow that smell from a broken cup.

Stuart Cumberland saw through his blindfold and found hidden objects. Stuart Cumberland picked up a subject’s hand, saw their thoughts, spoke their thoughts back at them. Stuart Cumberland wouldn’t claim to be telepathic but in fact disputed the concept of telepathy with the Society of Psychical Research, because Stuart Cumberland found a way to see a thought by feeling the muscles of a person. Stuart Cumberland died in 1922 without teaching anyone how to see through muscle movements of hands. And Stuart Cumberland left the medical doctors with nothing but an X-ray machine to see mere bones through muscles.

On the first day of September, I tried seeing through the mirror in a new way — the parallels, the contours of my face, the left side turning right. We were in harmony. We copied each other like synchronized dancers. The seeing had no smell.

On the second day of September, I saw through my image and noticed how irrelevant the position of my heart is. There was no smell. My nose was up there.

On the third day of this September, I saw through my image and realized that I cannot know enough. Did that image learn to read a book from left to right? The details of the laws of reflection, the lateral inversion of images,
may just be mere explanations of what we don’t understand. How relevant is our understanding against our image? I would never know whether my image smelled like my aftershave. Did it get the diagnosis?

Even doctors provide explanations when things get out of control! When a patient’s medical condition is beyond control, doctors call it Autism or Bench syndrome or Bingologism. Medical books are full of names and examples. Explanations and labels can hide much of their cluelessness. And who has enough time to see through a smell? That’s why I urge you to blend with my senses.

Churchill once said, “If you are going through hell keep going.” The man will keep going without a shower, going back to the McDonald’s for refills, defending himself from rain and soap or sponge, blow-drying the dining space clean of people.

We wouldn’t even know all his secret thoughts. But we saw him smile his indifference like Diogenes, chuckle with the ice cubes.

Like Diogenes of Sinope, who was revered by Alexander the Great, who ridiculed Plato yet managed to leave his wealthy home and settle in the streets, live in a barrel, and refuse to bathe, the man pushed the boundaries of human tolerance.

He started the new school of thinking called “Cynicism.”

I thought this man was collecting something through his defiant indifference. If given a chance, he was ready to teach something big, as if a modern-day Diogenes were visiting the materialistic world. Perhaps he would wait till the right moment comes.
Alexander said after meeting the wise man on the street, "If I were not Alexander, then I should wish to be Diogenes."