

# do oysters have thoughts

by lucy lai

*in press*, “meter”, scientific american

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*“would you like to go for some oysters?”*

he said with flirtatious eyes

and a warm

smile

“i thought you were vegetarian”

“ah, but oyster are not sentient”

—

do oysters have thoughts?

or dreams? hopes

for a future

pregnant with pearls?

“ah, but oysters are not sentient”

yet,

so much depends

upon

the silent

oyster

—

whole reefs rest on

a day’s work

of filtering,

purifying,

nurturing,

protecting

our ocean homes

might oysters have minds?  
that can be changed  
as easily as their sex?

“ah, but oysters are not sentient”

yet,

how adaptive,  
flexible, and resilient  
diverse in shape and size

a unique beauty  
yet one sensitive to the needs of humanity,

and humility—  
swallowing carbon whilst man chokes on his pride  
erecting shells that  
protect not only themselves  
but us

may we learn from the intellect of oysters?  
crafting art from irritation,  
turning grit into gleam  
dancing in the dark,  
to the rhythm of the tide

do oysters have thoughts?  
do they think about us?

and might we think about them  
as brethren  
to spare from digestion?

taking his clammy hands  
into mine, i whispered:

*“actually, i don’t quite fancy oysters”*