

do oysters have thoughts

by lucy lai

in press, "meter", scientific american

"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”