

## *History (n.)*



*"I didn't make these verses because I wanted to rival that fellow, or his poems, in artistry—I knew that wouldn't be easy—but to test what certain dreams of mine might be saying and to acquit myself of any impiety, just in case they might be repeatedly commanding me to make this music."*

—Plato, *Phaedo*

Viewed from space, the Chilean volcano blooms.  
I cannot see it. It's a problem of scale. *History*—the branch of knowledge dealing with past events; a continuous, systematic narrative of; aggregate deeds; acts, ideas, events that will shape the course of the future; immediate but significant happenings; finished, done with—"he's history."

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Calbuco: men shoveling ash from the street.  
Third time in a week. And counting.  
*Infinite antithesis.* Eleven  
miles of ash in the air. What to call it—  
just "ash." They flee to Ensenada.

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*The power of motives does not proceed directly from the will—  
a changed form of knowledge. Wind pushing  
clouds toward Argentina. Knowledge is merely involved.  
Ash falls, it is falling, it has fallen. Will fall. Already flights  
cancelled in Buenos Aires. I want to call it snow—*

what settles on the luma trees, their fruit black, purplish black, soot-speckled, hermaphroditic—if *this book is unintelligible and hard on the ears*—the oblong ovals of its leaves. Amos, fragrant. Family name *Myrtus*. The wood is extremely hard.

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Ash falling on the concrete, falling on cars, ash on the windshields, windows, yards. *They have lost all sense of direction. They might as well be deep in a forest or down in a well. They do not comprehend the fundamental principles. They have nothing in their heads.*

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The dream kept  
    urging me on to do  
what I was doing—  
    to make music—  
since philosophy,  
    in my view, is  
    the greatest music.

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History—from the Greek *historía*, learning or knowing by inquiry. *Historein* (v.) to ask. The asking is not idle. From the French *histoire*, story. *Hístor* (Gk.) one who sees. *It is just a matter of what we are looking for.*

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