

Watching Watching

By Jason DeHart

An act of Cartesian
curiosity – I am, after all, this
being or form, existing, an open
eye that refuses to blink when it should,
trapping images like mouse upon
painful pads, traveling along the digital
word, the image of myself peering back
at me.

Here we are, assembled in this
virtual theater none of us asked for,
threading words together with images

to make sentences
to make meaning.

How long have you been here?
How long will we be here?
 Will we ever be the same?

A play across our faces, the flickers of actors
moving on a stage.

I've learned a lot, but I still stumble
through a monologue sometimes.

The unknowing in me, which may
be mingled with hopes for expertise,
wishes for more than gestures,
more than promises that prove hollowed,

perhaps an unseen, welcoming
continent of shared experience, a
pipeline to what counts

as consciousness,

but I must admit I enjoy
the connections, the collaborations,
that knowing glance back in a shadowed

room, one being noticing another
if only in millisecond frame.

This poem draws on our current experience in digital literacy during the pandemic.



Jason D. DeHart is an assistant professor of reading education at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. DeHart's research interests include adolescent literacy, arts-based approaches to qualitative work, and multimodality. His work has recently appeared in *The Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*.