Although Kathy and I may not love John Ashbery, he is a major poet and you might like to decide for yourself. Here's a good place to begin: [http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/john-ashbery](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/john-ashbery). Prepare to be unsettled. I find him puzzling, charming, jarring and wise all at the same time. But it’s good to be jarred. I copied here two of my favorite poems of his.

John Ashbery's **Paradoxes and Oxymorons**

This poem is concerned with language on a very plain level.

Look at it talking to you. You look out a window

Or pretend to fidget. You have it but you don't have it.

You miss it, it misses you. You miss each other.

This poem is sad because it wants to be yours, and cannot.

What's a plain level? It is that and other things,

Bringing a system of them into play. Play?

Well, actually, yes, but I consider play to be

A deeper outside thing, a dreamed role-pattern,

As in the division of grace these long August days

Without proof. Open-ended. And before you know

It gets lost in the steam and chatter of typewriters.

It has been played once more. I think you exist only

To tease me into doing it, on your level, and then you aren't there.

Or have adopted a different attitude. And the poem

Has set me softly down beside you. The poem is you.
“The Love Interest” by John Ashbery

We could see it coming from forever, then it was simply here, parallel to the day’s walking. By then it was we who had disappeared, into the tunnel of a book.

Rising late at night, we join the current of tomorrow’s news. Why not? Unlike some others, we haven’t anything to ask for or borrow. We’re just pieces of solid geometry:

cylinders or rhomboids. A certain satisfaction has been granted us. Sure, we keep coming back for more—that’s part of the “human” aspect of the parade. And there are darker regions penciled in, that we should explore some time. For now it’s enough that this day is over. It brought its load of freshness, dropped it off and left. As for us, we’re still here, aren’t we?

from Wakefulness (1998)