Notes on Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey

Inside, there is the sound of technology.
Outside, there is the sound of nothing.

Inside the space suit,
there is the sound of respiration.
There is no
outside the space suit.

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The film essays
the gap:
the slight delay
on the phone

when the father
talks with his daughter;
the hours it takes
the signals

to reach a space ship;
the message
buried in a computer's memory.

Even light
has a history.
(The light in the sky,
the light on the screen).
HAL is one-eyed
(like a camera).
Bowman, so otherwise
calm, has a

murderous stare,
stored ghosts ago, sunk
within the base of
his prehistoric brain.

The ambitious imagination—
a universe of analogy.
The famous montage
from bone to space station.

But also the movement
across a stream
and across space;
the rotation of

that space station,
and the rotation
of the planets;
the early humans

in their ape suits,
and the moderns
in their space suits—
the literal-mindedness of creation.
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How many science fiction
films have focused
so resolutely on the soft,
primitive violence of eating?

The primates and their flesh
(of fruit, of pigs);
the in-flight food;
the astronauts

with their TV dinners.
And Bowman,
having crossed galaxies,
spends his final
days eating and sleeping,
showing that every chamber
is an antechamber,
that every inside entails

a wild, unfathomable outside.