



Featuring Asemic Work by Stephen Nelson

HDMJ

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Featuring Asemic Work by Stephen Nelson

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...voice verse...slight echo rising out of the murmur differentiates itself by repeating itself as another...just a slight movement, a slight vibration, and the game's afoot...each one moves step by step, shaking in its shoes for no other reason than that it is here...than to be heard and seen...sound defines as it goes, thinking on its feet, appearing, reappearing, repeating itself to be heard...echo defining itself as another in order to inhabit its own skin that is not an echo...voice versa...conversing conversely...think of one leads to one another...let's call this...

Joseph Noble in his "essay/assay: on sound"
published in *AMERARCANA* No. 7

Michele Root-Bernstein

whi te vi o lets
t he b rai ns t e m
sp ring - lo a ded

O

drift
wood
I
even
know
how

O

end of day
turning inside out
star first

O

O

disturbing
the
un
i
verse

emergency
si
ren
songs

O

the while making other plans

O

O

sky
falling
petal
by
participle

springed
snow

O

MRB

Sabine Miller

Desire Path

I keep thinking it's the last of the flock but like a cargo train that's trapped you at the crossing they keep coming, their black wings flapping so loudly you'd think the air was hung with weights. Finally the train passes and the valley is quiet and again unadorned. Then, a little while later, there's one more, heading perpendicular to the flight path, swoosh swoosh swoosh toward the mountains to the last of the snow.

the wind took my hat
but polished my shoes
crow

The Grip

In the dream the horse with the matted coat and mane who lives in the corner is bucking at its stall. I want to calm it so I reach my hand out the proper way, palm up. The horse sucks my hand into its mouth like a remora.

“That’s an easy one,” says my friend Will. We are surrounded by white windmills that look like giant, futuristic starfish. “The horse is you.” I say, “Isn’t it always easy? Isn’t it always me?” The Chinese traditionalists call what I have *gu*, which means possession—they don’t distinguish between pathogens and spirits. Whichever it is, the key can only fit its lock.

Will points at the dust swirls blanketing the windmills some distance ahead.

an old horse’s teeth
...dandelions
hold down the desert

One Love

The chicken knows how to get out of the coop but not back in. She cries at the window all morning like a hoarse dog. It's not hard to write, but it is hard to write something sensible.

the sky
falls
into the
tongue too

big for
my mouth

SM

John Phillips

Light needs
no name

to hear
sight say

Here
for Nelson Ball

There is
a here

we aren't
close to

even if
it's where

we are

O

This says every
thing there is
for it to say
which isn't this

O

This

What you do with
your silence
is up to you

What I do with mine
is this

Six

Lana asked
if cats
knew they
were animals

did they have
a language
to know
it in

Or did they
think we were
animals,
wondering

if we had a
language
to know
ourselves in

Stone

Memory is a sea

the drowned
forget to
know

○

Outside my window—
years later—Ryokan's moon—
bright as it still was

○

JP

Marcia Arrieta

unwound threads

caught
between
stones
or
books
unread

shall we speak of stones

& shells & wood gathered

the sculptures of time & thought

the gardens—abundant, thriving

bravery

caterpillar butterfly rabbit ant hummingbird

MA

John Pappas

spring seedlings
all the courage
I don't have



Mark Young

geographies: Sacramento

What Is Your Spirit Animal? You've asked an interesting question; but due to unsteady aerodynamic loads on pitching & plunging wings, the California State Rules of Court say three separate motions are necessary before it can be answered.

parrot raptor

Anagrammatic. Nominated for an Oscar. Reasonably well made with an ok price but the geometry on the fixed jaw could be modified to hold better. Also would provide a harmonious facial profile—is about proportion, not perfection. From each other, however, an attempt to establish a universal law, a categorical imperative. Calling up Kant, calling him out. Parrotting his thoughts. Rapt or rapture?

The Emergence

after a painting by Magritte

"Put it into perspective," the *fado* singer says as the white bird wheels away & takes the daytime with it. "Except for the stars, the sky will be empty now for several hours; & though having a supposed symbol of hope around might at first seem comforting, grief is best left to emerge when one is in the open or beside the sea. Clean, simple. No melodrama."

Canvassed Outlets

I am left alone, be-
yond noise, leaning
against some memory
I can't quite make out.
It is incomplete, of

that I am sure. A half-
remembered painting
perhaps. Or perhaps a
painting half-finished &
the memory is complete.

MY

John Levy

The Ocean Colors

First, I can't name them.
Then

I'm floating

Note to Eve Luckring, 5/18/23

As a child, did you ever imagine yourself
lashed to a mast, by choice, because you, too,

wanted to hear the sirens

sing? And you asked your crew to pick up that
thick rope while you looked out

over the gorgeous sea. Perhaps

a dark sea, as in this poem
of yours:

dark sea
surging to the brink
of words

Brief Thought of Dying My Hair Electric Blue

I'm 71 now, greying, wondering who I'd see
under bright blue hair if I wanted this face
under an unnatural color nothing

like the sky. My hair rhymes with a pale cloudy sky

or grey watering can next to Leslie's
beautiful reddish-pink roses at the end of this April. She
tried alfalfa mulch and wow, the radiance!

This morning Leslie pointed out the tallest

(four feet) blossoming purple thistle
we've ever seen in our desert yard. Our 37th anniversary is in
a few days and I would've been lying if I'd told her I'd

planted it there, to delight her, as an early anniversary gift

so kept my mouth shut while this Spear Thistle (also known
as Cirsium Vulgare, Boar Thistle, Common Thistle,
Dodder, and Bull Thistle) (ye

of many names, none of which say *I'm purple*)

spoke up (near a sheltering
mesquite) about how joy can rush with color—to
spike a second with pleasure.

I Know a Lot About You

Early in your life, you were a child.

When you heard the story of Little Red Riding Hood
and accompanied her through the woods
as she neared her grandmother's house, you
didn't imagine birds
singing in the trees or flying
suddenly from a tree into sky.

Before you blew out

the candles on your birthday cake you
had a slight, almost imperceptible fear
you might fail this time.

You rarely, if ever, told anyone
about your favorite words
and didn't ask anyone what theirs were.

As a teenager, you sometimes thought in ways
that now you consider magical thinking
but then you didn't even think of it as thinking.

There are things you've never told anyone, but
if I told you that you are taking those untold
things to the grave with you
you would like me even less.

○

the first time I saw birds
perched on the backs of horses
I parked our car

○

May 30th, 2023, Outskirts of Tucson

Who, who who who
at about five
a.m.

two mornings ago on someone else's

street, a freshly paved and darkest
black asphalt, I was alone and
somewhat deep in thinking about

something when I looked to where

a tall saguaro was topped with a big owl
the who, who who who
I hadn't paid much attention to and

the owl
stood
on ring after ring of white open blossoms

with their yellow circular centers and the owl

called again, breast and belly to the east with its
head completely turned
west

(as I approached from the north), its

head
backwards—the way we humans can't

swivel

ours

(though what memory does, and sees

JL

David Kelly

the head as appendage

O

the modern world's
exoskeleton of radio music
(noise)

O

I'm not awake because I haven't slept

O

Peter Yovu

After Seeing the Tattooed Man

In the theater of near-sleep
I stood naked in the projector's
lunar beams and watched
pictures crawling my skin.

At dawn, as I woke, they dissolved,
like creatures into sand when the sun returns.

It Comes to This

Everything is used
up, even the impulse
to use. To live then,
with no next, no use,

as life
used to be: not
knowing how.

The Wall

I've come to the wall again
but something's different

there is no under
no over or around

silence

then a voice
as if I am reading
words that were always there

says

stay

it's too hard
I say
I can't

I turn my back on it
as I have done before
so many times with

so many things
so many people
but the wall

is still here
in front of me

I will always be here

it says

*however often
you turn from me
I love you that much*

it says

so much I've given you this

Fish

Unmoving, flat out, cold flat eyes
dusk-blue almost black as when the sun
was a disc of least light, ice light, black light,
deathcold eyes no different now than
a million years back in their coldquick,
deathquick depths,

a caught fish on a stone pier, a flounder
the same color as my shoes.

River

“...going on being” —D. Winnicott

Sometimes on a river
each bend brings
a world: somewhere
there may be a storm
but here rain begins so
softly there is no need
to speak of it on your skin,
to say trout shine
where the sun comes through
pushing you along.

Once, back home, exhausted,

finding words
came with you, you wrote:

*roiling chrysanthemums,
stars crushed, bone-swell,*

to say how the river
had churned, turned
against itself, against

you.

Toad Does Not

The toad does not consider
the skin it goes about
in, its good

enough topography,

an umber
mood.

PY

Joseph Noble

Five Sonnets

blood without knowing, shadow skin, blind eyes
rolled in the hand, thrown upon the floor,
recidivist words stumble, bite, and snap, unruly,
blinking when you hold them up to examine,
frightened at their own birth, filling your lungs
to let loose with a stammer surprising your lips—
desert clanging, you finger braille skies, ear to
sun chrysalis, scratching, moving through gaze,
earth its own forgetting, hiss or hold, habitable
meaning, brow to instant, gesture strange to skin,
interval trembling with delayed prescience,
mouth a wild creature beating chance to fate,
forgetful light a calm frenzy leaving off muttering
turning hands to guesswork slipped off augury

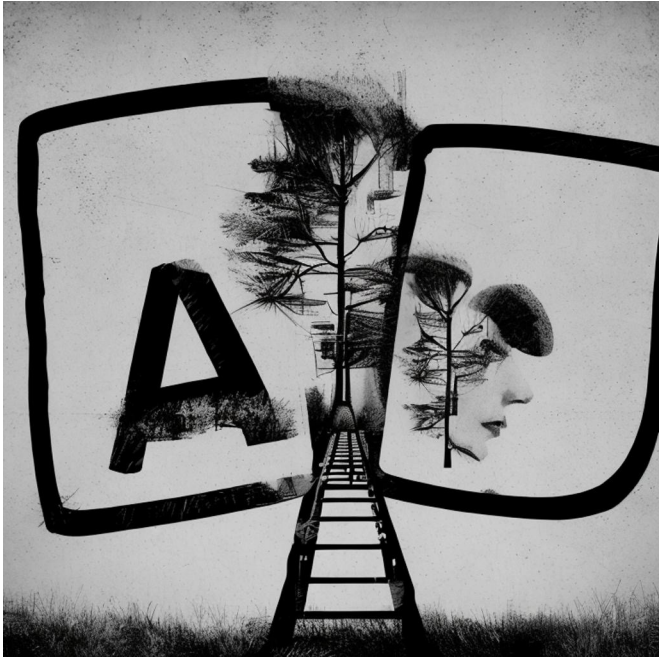
plant stem between the fingers touches
the throat quivering cords' pollen pipe,
stamen string singing pistil rung tongue's leaf
edge where he is dancing within your rooms
back and forth across the border—wrangle horse
ringing, your ears get used to death's dance tunes,
the swarm of bees a sign, song drifting from
one side to the other—voice, dahlia, font—
there is movement, death not as final
as you thought—mouth words, long-legged
steps arriving, find knowing doesn't reason,
speaking remains, shuffle silence, grin at the
leaping into where you abstractedly tap your feet:
fluted laugh fully flood and rain pliant pitch

face to face with those no longer here
present more than ever having left you
find where or gone in its certainty name
unheard in its remembrance at the lips
other face identical in the mirror
but with different features breath upon
breath turning in the throat a rush to
fill the room the space around the body
limbs upon light almost transparent dancing
with dust motes in the sun shaft hewn from
the window built upon what is building upon
blood and bone troweled together by your
movement about and among whispering
itself up out of nothing breath by breath

Another breath next to yours in the bed.
Hand on your arm. Beholden, belong, become.
You don't know where your limbs go,
breath on the glass, finger pirouetting
an afterthought in your dream, nothing to do
with her whom you can't quite figure out, can't
quite get a hold on. It is all too easily whom you
don't want that you get, whom you long for that
you lose, that you can't quite believe it is
your life that you're living, her lips at your ear.
The word is made flesh against flesh.
An old likeness at the tongue. Come to be.
Hold and long. Be. Used to. Used to be.
Come. Become what you are coming to. Be.

Up from the ground, birch to bone: shatter
dust blown in the eyes and nose; sky about
to carry its fiddle to the supermarket.
Eat the noise covered in honey. The dead
turtle at the curb has tiny oranges in its belly.
From the octagonal attic window
you can see the grass's gyroscope.
Falling from the tree to the creek—branch to
stone, light in the belly finding its own eyes—
you watch the air pass, holding time in its
body, its arms buoying you, a moment's
spun sustenance to carry on the lips—
blaring light dangling its golden lifeline
you shimmy down jangling a ringing word.

JN



Debbie Strange

spring thaw : the ice steps out of its skin

O

the once upon a time nevermore of it all

O

backscatter the almost of an echo

O

old
the
from
emerging
life
new
ecology
carcass

Johannes S. H. Bjerg

from eucharist to eucharist that's how

O

this colour got its name from a misreading of the sky

O

these pills won't swallow themselves. "Flesh" to quote St. Paul

O

but it's still winter in the room with the imaginary piano

O

O

passed a red wall today alive with a birch

O

if you would soften this old stone with your lilacs

O

a tundra on the left side where the pain is

O

that's why we were given the faces of lakes and reeds

O

JSHB



Cherie Hunter Day

Regalia

(After a photograph by Tamara Tracz)

Here we are
detained by cerulean
that urgency
alongside cobalt.
The role of taffeta
and jewel-toned silk
shifted over curves
past a divot in the neck—
that holiday.

O

winter trees
without their leaves...
the train's horn
down to a single note
blasted at night

O

snowblind in the wink of an avalanche

O

Sonnet #2 by William Shakespeare

When forty **winters** shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's **field**,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
Will be a tatter'd **weed**, of small **worth** held:
Then being ask'd where all thy beauty **lies**,
Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,
To say, **within** **thine** own deep-sunken eyes,
Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise.
How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use,
If thou couldst answer 'This fair child of mine
Shall **sum** my count and make my old excuse,'
Proving his beauty by succession thine!
 This were to be new made when thou art old,
 And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

winter field a weed's worth lies in the sunken sum

Sonnet #56 by William Shakespeare

Sweet love, renew thy force; be it not said
Thy **edge** should blunter be than appetite,
Which but to-day by **feeding** is allay'd,
To-morrow sharpen'd in his former might:
So, love, be thou; although to-day thou fill
Thy hungry eyes even till they **wink** with fullness,
To-morrow see again, and do not kill
The spirit of love with a perpetual dullness.
Let this sad interim like the ocean be
Which parts **the shore**, where two contracted new
Come daily to the banks, that, when they see
Return **of** love, more blest may be the view;
 Else call it winter, which being full of care
 Makes summer's **welcome** thrice more wish'd, more rare.

sweet edge feeding ink to the shore of welcome

CHD

Beverly Acuff Momoi

black-necked stilts stitching shadows to shoreline

Stephanie Ross

The Keys

he handed me the keys
I hadn't realized I'd asked

they didn't feel like I'd expected
they smelled of fear

hold steady—look again, he said
bellows of calm washed from head to toe

memory set for future calling
awareness expands beyond time

sit. hold my heart
pain sears through

bring in the memory of
what's possible

pain eases slowly

draw inward as body softens
nearly reaching center

stillness becoming the year's
work in that solitary moment

again, she calls softly
you've been here before

travel back through time
release the numbness

hold the memory
expansive, sure, and strong

sit. she will speak

SR

Peter Jatermsky

mind reading the tightlipped ventriloquist

O

where the arrow falls subtract one

O



Bob Lucky

The Moments, Like, Keep Piling Up

moments like a smoke alarm catching a whiff of burning plastic
moments like a snake that rattles fear and coils to strike
moments like a broken barrette in a crosswalk
moments like a leap off a cliff in a dream
moments like a tidal wave crashing
moments like a strong aftershock
moments like broken promises
moments like this
moments like
moments

Hamlet Rises from the Grave to Give It Another
Shot in a Play about Life and Death or
Whatever Comes after Life

life
but
a series
of tweaks
until you tweak
away
a dream
riddled
with cockaburrs

here we are
naked
and gasping
grasping
rolling in cockaburrs
passion and pain

then death
about which
I remember
nothing
but cockaburrs

Miracle

light
was sucked
out of the room

wavesounds

then poured
back through
the window
and pooled
at our feet

whatever
it was
was
something
we couldn't
believe
we believed

so
we gave it
meaning
and locked it
in the room

Doubt

not knowing
the name of the grass
atop the dunes
doesn't matter
to the wind

not swimming
in the waters
running through
my fingers
doesn't offend
the river

not knowing
what the grass
and wind and water
really think
bothers me

An Evening of Despair

the ocean is calm

cargo ships
frozen in moonlight
frame a sailboat

I want to call a friend
and say you won't believe
how calm the ocean is

but I know that's not true

I don't have a friend

BL

Laura Winter

State of Stasis:

an all winter wait for winter to arrive
February scuffs out the door
elbows patched with flurries sleds into a third-year fable
spring, a long stretch the bat's torpor collects
cobwebs

The Ghost Boat of Lake Mead

from aft

to stern

a vertical rebuttal

of evaporation

Irmak Canevi

Imbussable

I feel imbussable.
For several reasons it seems.
We don't know enough it seems.
It seems in fact there is no bus
Yet.
And no passenger either.

Yet, I should be hopeful, resourceful and very careful...perhaps
in Queens!?
And imbussible is knotting yet nothing is impossible for there
still is 'time' it seems.

Time is Square

Does time tick?
I think with change it seems to stick.

Movement is change.
So is age.
We consume and that too is change,
I think.

It is like pride.
Garnished, finished, even diminished with such easy repeat...
But really where does it reside?
On the side?

Is it in ink? Permanent?
And permanently per minute?
Perhaps a key chain of events in just one blink.
A link?

Meet it, cheat it, beat it!
Well, what is it?
Air? Is time square?

Synesthesia

It's never too lavender to violet.
You are never too pink to sink.
And I am never too orange to have porridge.
On second thought, sometimes I AM that porridge to turn
down an orange.

When I am deeply mellow
You think I might crow?
Am I yellow in time even or fresh out of my mind?
On second thought, perhaps I am the colour of mint if time is
pigment.

Caucasia,
Synesthesia,
Tetrachromacy,
Colour constancy.
Don't 'bcc',
Let's see,
Just TP!
DON'T CONFUSE ME!!

I am there in one split colour,
Yet, I can't get here infra red!
Really, am I that opaque?
On second thought,
Surely I am already past grey anyway...

IC

Philip Rowland

What's New?

Sitting in a shaft of morning sunshine
in the Sidewalk Cafe, wondering,
not for the first time, what and why I don't know
what 'dirigible' means. Tempting

to sit in this sunlight dwelling on the word
as my hands warm up, rather than get online
to look it up: 'dirigible', as it appears
in the closing line of Ciaran Carson's poem

'William Nicholson: Ballroom in an Air Raid,
1918', where we are asked to 'consider
the dirigible indiscernible in the bank of cloud
above Piccadilly.' It must be abstract, I assume,

to describe the indiscernible,
and presumably nothing to do with
the risible, nor, probably, the rigid.
Or compare 'incorrigible', a word

my wife's fond of, as in 'you're incorrigible',
which she says she learned from me
in the early days of our relationship. I forget
the Latinate root, which makes me hesitate

to hazard a guess at dirigible.
I have a feeling I'm getting there, though.
Meanwhile, a cup of coffee on a bench outside
steams—dirigibly?—in the cold bright air.

But now I've looked it up and realise Carson
meant it as a noun, referring to the Zeppelin
mentioned earlier in the poem.
I was quite off course and feel quite dim.

But what's new?

Kitazawa, Tokyo, around 9 a.m.

Poetry Slam

'You're more of a

modest, I mean
as in boring

what's in a name

kind of poet,
my daughter quite

rightly suggests.

'I can't believe I'm becoming so
like you,' my daughter says.

'What do you mean?'

'You know, like
liking writing and stuff,

and acting so demented.'

Daughter

singing along
to *Sing*

sewing
all morning

a felt
hat for her

mother in bed
with Covid

doesn't get better
than this

How long should this silence be?

And should it be a real silence (if there
is such a thing)? Or something nearly
inaudible, an inkling or shimmer
of sound, perhaps? Or random noises let be?

Or should the silence simply waft
at turn of page...
as though to return that half-heard
word you'd forgotten you'd lent me?

○

pedal sustaining
un-struck strings—
a pile of unframed paintings

○

at the pedestrian crossing
countdown signal
ikura
in winter sunshine

Silence

is listening
with eyes

in the back of
your ears

PR

Notes:

Stay abreast with Stephen Nelson's ever evolving asemic work at @afterlights70 on instagram.

Happily, Mark Young's "geographies: Sacramento" will also be included in *Mercator Projected*, his forthcoming e-chapbook from Half Day Moon Press (No. 9).

Embedded in John Levy's "Note to Eve Luckring, 5/18/23" is a poem by Luckring published in her engaging collection, *The Tender Between* (Ornithopter Press, 2018).

David Kelly's "the head", "the modern world's", and "I'm not awake" first appeared in a limited edition booklet, *A few little things* (2018).

The Shakespeare sonnets used in Cherie Hunter Day's redactions come from The Globe edition (1864). These are made available at George Mason University's www.opensourceshakespeare.org.

"Unbussable", "Time is Square", and "Synesthesia" first appeared in the "Chairman" pages (2009) of Irmak Canevi's colorful artist's site, www.irmakcanevi.com.

HDMJ

COCEIE
TIE IN
EEN
WEE
PI
RDAE
GE

HDMJ