*(FADE UP: tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan (FADE OUT))*

I can see you all, there in the middle

I can hear you if you choose to be heard.

(DREAM; ROOT; TALE; CLOCK; SEA; ECHO displayed)

Here, beyond the blanket of sky,

I peep my good eye through a star to see

each one of you able to speak – with words.

(DREAM; ROOT; TALE; CLOCK; SEA; ECHO in a variety of languages (not displayed))

You may not understand what you have heard

but you know that these noises are words – why?

Is it the tone of the person speaking,

believing that their noise has meaning,

which gains the trust of your ears?

Or can you hear the shakes in a person dread to speak:

the flickers in their throat gifts your ear their lot?

What makes some noise a word and some not?

I’m sorry. At this early stage, I must apologise.

I am preoccupied with teasing.

Soon, I will set out your choices-

* as an oak cares for his saplings -

But still, before we begin,

I insist you hear noise for what noise is –

just pops, clacks, purses, ticks, bahs, clicks, huffs, hisses.

So many noises, so many words, so many

*names* for the noises of words. It is madness

to carve a noise from out the air and trap it in a bottle –

saying, yes, this should be shared by tongues;

saying, yes, sew ribbons from lips to lips along

a patchwork of talk and so perform, the most beautiful of tricks:

the one where you turn noises into words.

I had no choice but to study it.

As a child, I would fit in the barley fields,

gritting teeth to end our family meals

across my mother’s knee; I would sick bile onto her shoes:

**each drop from me withdrew language from my mouth**.

I lost the word for ‘sorry’ first. Then missed the word for ‘lost’.

I began playing fewer notes for food, just rudiments

for washing; I had become a mere triangle

before an orchestra of talking - so I watched.

I saw how words define through repetition

as repetition forms a pressure on the herd,

a pressure which repeated forms a prism of a word;

one block of meaning which is said, to shed light.

Depending where you’re stood, it can be white

or any other colour. So each word remains a secret

in the pocket of another. For some,

one word could mean a fat pigeon flapping,

a tacky wet lozenge, my mother’s caress;

a glacier the size of a hen drooling

eggs in a scrambled net, all meaning

defined and lost in your underlying consciousness.

As I have said,

so many noises, so many words, so many

*ways* of interpreting words. And, what’s worse,

is the size of the web which forms.

Dormant in the middle,

you lie in stasis; flies spread on the rack

of language stretched by conjurers:

these people with a thousand words for one,

are but clowns with glitter –alchemists of nothing -

whose sad faces we know better.

They straddle you to escape

and yet, you scream behind small talk,

you bear chains of jargon you never wanted

or thought you would choose to wear.

Lose their web; join me here, beyond the blanket

of sky at the edge of the sphere.

In this matter you have a choice to consider

as I have done too many times to count:

**if you could speak only ever one word**

**how would you stop from becoming a sound?**

(DREAM; ROOT; TALE; CLOCK; SEA; ECHO displayed)

You have six choices.

(dream)

Your life is a dream.

I would reach out my hand as

to dream lifts up the soul

but the false comets I’ve seen

which arc and hurtle back to Earth

make such a life a dream.

True, comets burn in a direct beam

but in opposition to the mass,

to dream may lift the soul,

But they seem

powerless

when life is just *one* dream

* just one drop within a stream –

You must pour your will in many as

to dream needs many souls.

Stand on the shoulders of ants,

use the safety of the whole -

such a life can rise to dream

as to dream lifts up the soul.

(root)

The beauty of a root

lies in its silent hand as

to root always creates

a tasty, naïve fruit

that poisons in despite of

the beauty of a root.

True, it is the slowest route

to go beyond the sky but

to root always creates

A path way over time;

haste is vilified by

the beauty of a root.

You will not see through

the dirt that is in the way, but

to root always creates

A devastating shoot -

a will which never breaks as

to root always creates

the beauty of a root.

(tale)

Tell a tale

in three parts as

to tell a tale is human.

Lead the ants on veering trails

then in the deserts say:

“tell me each your tale”

create a scale

of noise which shows that

telling tales is human.

Gag them on their own tails.

True, this may cause a little doubt

but tell another tale,

veil their ears

to the choking in their mouths.

After all, following tales is human

Christendom, serfdom, capitalism

men as marionettes

told tales of threat and hope

as to tell a tale is human

(clock)

A clock breeds guilt

in the masses; causes them

to clock a watchful hour

in the lives they’ve built –

ants will, freshly, look at work again for

A clock breeds guilt.

True, to start, the clock knelt

on the neck of wasted time for

to clock a watchful hour

is a Sin dealt out in line

with the whim of leaders. But if

A clock breeds guilt,

give them guilt!

Stories of deaths; incite them

to clock a watchful hour

As you walk beyond that mass

to the plains by Babel’s Tower

for a clock breeds guilt enough

to clock a watchful hour.

(sea)

No harm can come the sea

for the sea cannot be cut, but

we drown within its wounds

when it sounds the waves of freedom

from a mouth which can’t be shut.

No harm can come the sea

true, or its speaker who can see

its canvas clear as knives, that

you could drown within its wounds.

Still, impulsive fools will sing

“no harm can come to me as

no harm can come the sea”.

And so, the greater it may be

to encourage journeying in

ants who drown within its wounds.

Then, to reach me, walk on water

use their heads as stepping stones

in the clinical vast of sea

where they fall within its wounds.

(echo)

An echo is a kiss

returning borrowed breath.

To echo is to love.

A parent’s call in stress

at a footstep toed too far is

an echo as a kiss.

True, where lacking depth,

playing shadows may not help but

to echo is tough love

and overwhelmed, listless,

the ants retire to sleep,

the echo acting as night’s kiss.

When they’re there, await the breathes

they miss - their last in useless lungs.

In an echo that was loved

Edge backwards out the door

a faceless body for

to echo is to love as

an echo is a kiss.

I have given you six directions in which to move,

before you had two; soon, there will be more.

As speech in future festers, so many noises

will become so many words and so many

ways of using those words will become

each its own way of viewing the world –

I fear for you.

My path is clear. I have the word I speak.

It is born at the tip of my teeth

and on an exhale of breath, sailed across

the horizon – it echoes on hospital walls;

all subtlety lost on nurses and porters

(who name me my word, they think me a sound!)

but, I am glad I am not bogged down in the bedding of language:

I may bleat like an animal but I live beyond human.

Hidden to their ears, a cliff face of my thoughts

falls through these tear-shaped lips.

Only in middle age, did I learn to own it;

it became a grate to filter sewage out and, to think,

my mother would ask at first, ‘what is wrong with his mouth?’

She would call it ‘the rabbits’; he calls it Aphrasia.

I call him my doctor as well as other things.

But to him, I am no patient; I am an accident of God.

The straw basket on the river to serve him; I’ll serve him not -

my word is my captain, helming a drunk-crew of doubt

through the blanket of sky to the true source of light: the horizon.

It feels like home at the edge of the sphere

and tell me, if I play with faith to say

the orchards, arboretums and lost gardens

of my home exist here.

No one of them could comprehend:

the kiss of echoes, the stones of sea

the veering tales, the watchful hours,

burrowing down their roots, rising up on dreams.

**You decide if I am mad.**

Look, behind you at the Earth,

the clambering, the fretting.

What is the point of talking to ants?

Even if you could, would they ever understand?

When I think of dream, I think release

when I think of dream, I think of flight

when I think of dream, I think of teeth

when I think of dream, I think of light

when I think of root, I think of growth

when I think of root, I think of mother

when I think of root, I think of grain

when I think of root, I think of pebbles

when I think of tale I think of seas

when I think of tale, I think of evil

when I think of tale, I think of mother,

when I think of tale, I think of limbs

when I think of clock I think of space

when I think of clock I think of guilt

when I think of clock I think of coils

when I think of clock I think of waste

when I think of sea I think of weddings,

when I think of sea I think of eyes

when I think of sea I think of tongues

when I think of sea I think of little else

when I think of echo I think of echo

when I think of echo I think of cliffs

when I think of echo I think of cliffs

when I think of echo I think in seconds

*(FADE UP: tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan, tan…)*