

Telephone

poems by

Jen Besemer

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Telephone

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About the Poet

dialogue one:
call

stone grows plump : its arms & laces under the earth
: stone erupts in compact pregnancies of tourmaline :
circumstances unforeseen : sharp ranges cut through
by threads of butter : the taken & the taker : each
quick to claim its own before : its own after ::

why must we chase our cool : the fear that drives the
horse around the post drives the heart into a corner
: false teeth grinning through the soul-stuff : look at
how we chatter away & waste ourselves for weeks :
rough tortoises nodding with our tongues in the wind
: better make it good : the whole world is watching ::

some cup : full of word pebble : tiny lemon fort :
dream of conger in a crevice : ceviche saddle : make
a float & put a line on it : fend along the shore & pole
up pesce ::

ice that speaks : vast understatement of winter : forces
slide between weak & strong : free & taxed : naked
sun-birtherd line between solid & vapor : note our
shadows : ink-blue & antennaed : a border flapping as
we walk : snow mouthing our shoes ::

make a heart with your hands : your knuckles & their
silent daybreak : mop up your only egg broken on the
tread : ascend & descend : baby buggy balance beam
: before the wilderness engulfs the kick ::

the bulge in my trousers is that blip in spacetime : my
forests of magic christians & trees full of puppeteers
: everybody loves a schism : treble peppers bass &
makes trenchant song : mama gets her bullies in a row
: pins the collars down for ironing : i have to rewind :
i have to find my wormhole ::

dialogue one:
response

another nibelungenlied over the phone & the broken
mirrors clouding with a touch : fierce sentiment rises,
foam in a bottle, if the neck is long : the voice of ore
& root : what sort of argument is there today : forge
& mine are places & actions & quanta of association :
ghosts of animals rise with each fallen word : a name
like a sneer tearing at the earth we rest upon ::

a hand grips another hand : an eye watches both :
nostrils dilate : shallow breath edges inside : it seems
the skull echoes : somewhere a door has slammed : a
vibration of empty data : the message of the moment
shifts : one sees a flash like the feather of light just
before sunrise : one sees an injury as a burnt forest :
one sees time & how it departs ::

relocate to another dictionary & with that bucket
dredge up thick silence from the margins : a paste of
pages spread upon the brow : wrap my head in soft
candy flavored by essence of inquiry : sick with talk,
reach into the tongue : turn it inside out : dust it with
bone-slivers : begin again ::

the black box has a name : choose it from this list : write
your choice in blue or black ink on the card provided
: fold the card in half after you are done : be sure your
choice is concealed from casual view : your privacy
is important : leave the folded card in the upper right
corner of your desk for collection : do not make eye
contact with the proctor : your privacy is important :
the black box has a name : your participation in this
survey is much appreciated : it is entirely your choice
: choose your benefit premium from this list : write
your choice in blue or black ink on the card provided
: fold the card in half after you are done : your privacy
is important : do not make eye contact with the black
box : the black box is important : it has a name : it is
entirely your choice ::

children & elders walk single file down the canyon
path : in each pair of hands a fat candle the color of
yewberry : a hum of purposeful movement : the click
of teeth & garnet rings : the toss of a doll into a hole
in the earth ::

the moth gives up its dream of taming light : it loves
its life of silent paper & cool leaf-hair : it loves its
thinking tongue : its miles of wind : the doors of color
it sits beneath : the moth is only ever itself : the light
is light's own business : they are not our story ::

JEN BESEMER is a hybrid artist and the author of four poetry chapbooks, the most recent being *Object with Man's Face* (Rain Taxi Ohm Editions). She is currently pursuing solo and collaborative projects in recombinant poetry, translation, performance, criticism, visual art, and combinations thereof. Recent work has appeared in *Artifice*, *Aufgabe*, *BlazeVOX*, *Drunkenboat*, *e-ratio*, *Otoliths*, and *Pank*, and is anthologized in *Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics* (Nightboat). Jen writes features and reviews for *Rain Taxi Review of Books* and teaches art and poetry workshops in and around Chicago. To learn more, visit www.jenbesemer.com.