



lips over a waterfall

By Nathan Shepherdson

22. *following the taillights in a dream
along the mountain pass locally known as 'the ice box'
white lines doused in memory → absolved on undertaker tar → (ignite)*
4. *the fog that walks into you never lifts
but lifts your body onto its untilled tongue
where your words are pollinated by hand*
21. *☞ when her eyelashes were found as splinters in unknown hands
only the photographs were left to take the difficult questions
about when her body would be returned*
1. *rinsing a cloud in grief
greyglo rheum yawns through cracks in a Shelley cup
cool lava seams exhaled through the calligrapher's hand*
16. *the magnitude of →when← your lips were moved by someone other than yourself
the accidental unable to fall within its own definition
as witness statements are salvaged from those who were not there*
19. *ears shout their mysteries at the same language
that turns stone to bread or preserves the skin from an apology
to transmit compound hope through the ribs of a dying star*
7. *the talk was about attaining a certain state ←
how in slim moments a mirror could be gently torn into strips
so they could reassemble themselves as each other*
5. *they strip sleep from the windows
until they all break in complete harmony
with your last breath*
18. *or → under a cloudless sky
how rain poured within the circumference of your umbrella
and how it fell clear but pooled red*
6. *in the bottom drawer of all things
a folio of sketches packed in an ear-rustle of tissue
where exquisite lines record salt forms left from dried tears*
10. *your soul smuggled out in a hollow stalk of fennel
3 hairs encased in the wax head of 1 ordained match
punished or unpunished ideas gauge regrowth in their livers*
9. *evicted from your animal form
the spine from your body and the spine from your shadow
hang like shoelaces over a gold doorknob*
17. *heron-hymned feet firm on either side of the creek
her swaying body perhaps 30 metres tall
as she swallows oncoming arrows dipped in honey*
8. *to flirt at this depth with an anchor
unsure if it can hold its own weight or iron mind
kelp-combed on the sea floor of an unintended world*
14. *this is the current turning the pages of books in a shipwreck
a seahorse puppet-plays the movement in liquid maths
in sync with an undulating photo of a hummingbird in its pink hibiscus*
11. *the 12 steps from this entrance to your image requires only 11 steps on the way down
slippage in the numbers that donate a percentage of yourself to the unregistered charity
in which your body as adhesive matter is injected into the time you were alive*
20. *these calcium-set machines in which oil needs to weep to keep them moving
the theoretical pitch at which doors simply dissolve instead of open
the auto-luminescent quick escapes the nails to paint these lines from my hand to yours*
13. *through a biscuit stack of lenses in a glasshouse Jupiter's Galilean moons become visible
4 dots that found their orbit after falling off the faces of dice in their universal crowd
400 years before ← named as Zeus' lovers 400 years after → your name affixed to earth*
2. *blindfolded she stops on the spot where truth infiltrates the ground
small kikuyu continents edge along the fault lines of a question
where 22 crow feathers are inserted quill-first into transplanted green*
15. *are there scriptures in the first rays of the sun
or is it simply a loyalty to death
that persists in auditioning time as our celestial accountant*
3. *it's rare for any of us to meet the anointed shadow whose job it is to memorise our lives
to keep the appointment never made always broken yet never missed
to sit together to cut the apple to discover full stops instead of seeds*
12. *this is the spur ←
that will emerge on the heel of a wooden crucifix
to prove your walk into eternity*