

**Words are my warders
but don't keep
an l on me**

Daniela
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(words are my words)

Again my lack of voice morphs neurosis in new roses.

Again recall, repeat, sing: the song I once wrote and burned, a verse from the broken song never recalled as one, it says: today my lack of voice morphs.

My neurosis in new roses, roses.

Today my lack of voice morphs neurosis in new roses. It might have been a verse from a song, written and burned, singed, it must have been song, singed, sung, sunk, en, now, into the depths of a past now floating back to surface. It must have been a song never complete, a composite song, monstrous, chimeric, ever shifting and ever present.

Where is the song heard. How is the song cited (cited, sited). In shards and layers of words from the depths of a past, from the outer edge of a buried age.

The new roses in the never-complete, never-completely-recalled song are old: they grew, knotty and unruly, among other plants in the magic balcony of my childhood, a site full of wonders at the back of my grandmother's small flat in Southern Italy. First, there were the sensitive plants. Folding and dropping when touched. Sensitive plant, humble plant, Touch-me-not, those plants sang. What do they sing in my ears, in those later years now? They sing. *Touch me not, touch me not, come back tomorrow. Sing to me. For you sing. Touch me not.*

In the same balcony, hiding mysteriously among the plant pots, there lurked the tortoise. Old and big, rescued by one of my uncles on the side of a busy road, so the family story goes. In my childhood eyes and understanding, the tortoise had materialised there as the severe guardian of the touch-me-nots and of the roses. Her, and her slow pace, manifested a manner of being-as-staying that did not fret but stopped and considered, each of the thousand wrinkles in that wise ancient face holding a fold of time kept, given back in petrified stares that seemed to invite quietude and long times, a measured pace, a solemn presence. As she slowly ate salad leaves while keeping watch, I knew the tortoise was there even when hiding. I thought at night she sang. Sing to me, tortoise. *Oh my heart shies from the sorrow. Sing to me. Touch me not. Oh my heart shies*, her head shied too, like the touch-me-nots: all the creatures on that balcony seemed to invite a movement toward quiet, inward places. *Sing to me, let me enfold you.*

Oh my heart, finally, the roses. Oh my heart, now let me enfold you. I will not tell you of those knotty old roses, growing unruly in pots on the magic balcony, their thorns and petals conjoining beauty and danger, fascination and risk. I will not tell you of those old roses, knotty props for insidious cobwebs that would gleam and quiver in the breeze after the rain, echoing again the coupling of danger and beauty in their gossamer geometries. Touch me not, the leaves of the sensitive plant fold in, the head of the tortoise retracts, the cobwebs are blown away and the spider retreats. In this pervading retiring movement what is left are those roses that I will not tell, will not sing and yet they're there, as the verse from the forgotten singed song comes back and not in full, renewing today my neurosis in new roses that are old, a sense of presence in mystery and beauty, beauty and danger, danger and song, danger, dancer, now dance the song that morphs my neurosis in new roses.

Roses I become or mist in a field, at that threshold hour of the day not quite twilight but a mysterious morphing passage when all sounds fold and the stillness quietly admonishes, as if the tortoise spirit of the balcony had come back, humming its song from the outer edge of a buried age, never entirely remembered. The song would be sung in that morphing passage, in presence and forgetfulness, in broken verses, is this a wave breaking in a song with no name, voice with no face, song of no name, in disjointed vocalisations shifting so now I want to choke, want to laugh, want to smash this microphone want to crash, I did all my best to smile but I'm in pain and I sing, bleeding I sing, but the song is not there or at least, not entirely.

Not sure what I am tuning and turning into, now it is the depth of night. Soon again it will be time to sing and I will not sing, those words will sing me, sing to me let me enfold you. Lips curled, voice astray, the rose arose into another song, the song of Elfriede, where the edge of my voice bleeds. My edge, my margin, my site, has tears and frayed edges. *Situs* in Latin is site as well as dust, mould, detritus, which deposit in a place across time. To site is to be with residue, impure. My margin is where boundaries between siting and citing, between being and reference, dissolve. I yearn for csiting that sites and cites, that shifts away from pre-validated sources as fixed frameworks of legitimisation, and sites itself, entangled and monstrous, claiming its singular being, citing words that came before, no matter how obscure and out of sync they may be. Csiting I cite and site, a porous way of being me not all me, quoting and placing, repeating my self and my words from other times, inhabiting them slightly shifted, self and other. Sometimes the words I csite are not written but spoken, then heard in a page, csiting is listening is transmitting. Csiting I write after listening to Elfriede Jelinek's Nobel Lecture, in part from memory, in part from what I wrote before with her not all her, with gaps and missing links, on an aural margin where writing enfolds telling, speaks with its subjects. I hear the subtle voice of prose: a shift from the *touch-me-not* admonition of a text to a voice, to the inscription of a voice in *let me enfold you*, where writing is heard in a telling. Listening to her speech sounded a cadence inside my perception of writing in and out of the page, enfolding radiance and discourse, presence and concealment. The subtle voice of prose, the voice of a page is not a lyrical ornament, just because it cannot be summarised or captured does not mean it is devoid of substance. My commentary to this most profound and elusive piece cannot be on the margins but inside, incsite. Where is commentary to a recorded speech? Where is the csite of a spoken text, loaded and ephemeral? It is in the residues which listening holds and releases, holds and releases. For some time I inhabit it, for these pages I transform it, for ever I am transformed: into my fundamental cadence. The subtle voice of prose had better remain unsaid, unsaid and groundless, groundless but not without grounds. I whisper it back, like the impression left by the telling of a story, by the playing of a record. It unfolds in the sense of being enmeshed in histories of reading, in enfolds states of voice, states of mind, states of mine and the mine is deep, some

of it unmapped, some of it dark, some of it with precious stones, some of it with dull rock and moss and useless damp slippery surfaces. I have dwelled there for long times, sometimes I have slipped. I never had a voicemine proper, I had to construct it, aware of the workings of rhetoric, artifice, assembling words heard and connected by kinship, many voices, all mine. Broken material I have at hand, its cadence is never a frame but a heartbeat, core not score, heart not instruction. Listen. Some time ago, having heard again my song, I disappeared. I wanted to sing the song, not say what it is. Is singing the gift of curling up, curling up with reality? What happens when there seems to be little real, relevant to sing; or when another type of reality must be sung, one which is not current? My reality, my song is no formal thing. Sing? The song can't be held in one style. The song that is another song cannot be tidied up and neatly arranged, drawn everywhere so tight and buttoned everywhere so thick. Unruly, it tangles up with the words of other writers, thinkers, singers, and with older words of mine. How many times were these words retold, to make myself heard in that low hum, the subtle voice of prose. I hear its hum in voices in books, those whom I can talk to without worrying about the right style, intent instead in finding kinship. The song may sound like an abolished bibelot of sonorous inanity, in fact it tells me my words. It's me not all me, many voices, so they are, unruly, untidy, more echoes, a disturbing song, flip of a book, half-slip of the tongue, rhyming words as much as rhyming a disposition with that of another, the fractured voice of understanding, the same and not quite so. Words are my warders but don't keep an I on me, Elfriede said. Words are my worders. Listen. Here is what a wise reclusive one once said to me: *What should remain, is always gone. Still, you must carry something for a long time, learn to be still, on site, csiting. Sometimes even a short sentence holds a long arc of time between one word and another. This is the portion given to you and you must attend to it, in the most dedicated manner, small as it may be. Get there late, be demanding to your words, better to make them difficult to publish, than avoid going to their extremes. There will be nothing left, nothing but a rose, a hum, a song. I cannot change much. I can transmit, transform this faint hum. It is cold here, it is the depth of night. So what is left to one, nothing but a rose, a hum, a song.*

If only I could take some deep breaths from these speechless lungs, blood-filled lungs. If only the sound could be deafening. But the low hum. On the evening when my mouth started bleeding it was blood from the mind, and from the cut on my throat, blood of yearning, flowing, flooding. This is when the inner singing begins. When I have no voice, this is how the song begins, in its uneasy rhyme, and wouldn't it be easier if I'd been given a catchier one? How about the other voices? Oh, those are smart. Very smart. They have seen a lot. Seduced, sung. Do not assume that because this voice is silenced or out of tune, it ceases to exist, to yearn. So it sings. Remember, it sings, not I. Remember the day I understood that 'to sing' does not sing, 'to write' does not write, and 'to bleed' does not bleed; and learned to trust words for what they are, how they sing. Perhaps now the song should begin in the tune of recalled roses. The song should be sung in the pitch of voice of someone stitched inside a dream, and no doors. Lock all the fine rounded words inside, no doors. Sing clipped beginnings of song, with stitched lips. Sing, despite stitched lips: will anyone exhume me from beneath these layers of history, no, not exhume, exhaust. Exhale? Song, you escape me. You say no, you are tired, you quieten. Let me enfold you and I faint, fall, and in my fall I hear, my lack of voice lack of words taking you away. So it ends and begins with no whole song, with a cadence, shall I sing, with the rose, the hum, the song, as again today my lack of voice morphs neurosis in new roses.

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Vibrational Semantics explores the voice's ability to shift seamlessly between signification and sonority, from speech sound to noise. Questions of linguistic ambiguity, embodied voicing and feeling/meaning are investigated in relation to the place and presence of the performed voice.

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