

## POETRY

## Whisper pectoriloquy

1.  
 Deep breath.  
 head down I'm listening  
 pads over holes, fingers flexed, poised and ready  
 to transmit and receive  
 sounds without vibrations  
 Please note  
 there is a confidence issue here  
 patient speaks quietly into his chest  
 sound lost in a snail shell, moving at its pace  
 he's a blacksmith cowboy, carries his tools in his head  
 and hears only the iron clang of bone on bone  
 harnesses horse power first  
 does no harm  
 second hand over heart  
 third and fourth  
 a canter, then a gallop  
 That's music.

2.  
 He forges a dish of ironwood  
 for lack of steel  
 charred muscle alloys stronger  
 His fingernails spoon viscous time from the bowl,  
 heat tempered with twelve fingers of eau-de-vie  
 Chewing the fat,  
 his discourse is jejune, full of blind ends and diversions  
 and with locked jaw he can only eat words  
 wrenching them with greater and greater momentum  
 he gets a gut feeling  
 flesh around a pit  
 His ego, deceitful, comes out as a long-winded objection  
 to the knife & fork  
 Sanguine but yellow-bellied: too sanguine, or not enough,  
 he wastes salt  
 pours water into a gutter  
 and learns to live with less rust.

3.  
 He is inhibited, a reduced alpha male  
 hairline receding, trying to stand in front of a mountain  
 He must create gravity  
 Cloaked in white, he's lily-livered  
 finds an empty scabbard and buries an acorn  
 No flowers in the tomb  
 no chance for abrupt complacency



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Her ninety-nine complaints —  
 he uses his hands for ears  
 Yet they go together and he fills her bowl  
 with rust, water, salt  
 Now with narrowed vision  
 I'm listening to a drum and a bell  
 and seeing beyond sound  
 in her the gallop transmutes into two voices  
 a duet of drummers keeping Galileo's time  
 one swelling inside the other  
 and he waits.

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