

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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