

An abstract painting featuring five stylized owl shapes arranged in a circle. The owls are rendered in various colors: orange, purple, green, and yellow. The background is white with scattered brushstrokes of the same colors, creating a textured, painterly effect.

between breaths five owls

Michael O'Brien & Johannes S. H. Bjerg

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Cover painting by Elliott O'Brien

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In this book the authors explore the parallel (haiku) as a vehicle for writing linked verse. This works quite simply with one writing “the first left side poem” and the 2nd writer writes the “right side poem” and goes on to write “the first left side poem” in the next parallel.

The poems were written under the still ongoing Corona Virus pandemic and may of course reflect this reality.

Michael O’Brien and Johannes S. H. Bjerg

fresh snow

left alone

not knowing

*the wind
carves*

your death

*a flute
in your face*

there's a kindness

cold front

in letting

a black fingerprint

the sea
lie

inside the potato

its last breath

between owls

in a fisherman's bucket

*a crayon tree
manipulates*

the universe

gravity

sleep, knee,
knowing

bourbon and cheese

you're
a vessel

the night

for Soma

a metallic womb

someone's teeth

the stones

making a lawn

*following us home
at night*

grape hyacinth

*divide us into
4 syllables*

in this cello suite

tree clowns

a fly crosses

your blood

your field of vision

a sap moon

night rain

*testing a virus
for masques*

your only friend

you touch

a mandala of ants

*your missing
face*

to get some
distance

like a water bird

you leave
the floor

you make a pig noise

for a cloud

and walk on water

preferring the night

one of these pills

to the left side

contains a self-playing

of your face

guitar

on day ten

in the woods

you begin
to return

ahead of our group

the apples' stare

a metaphor

high sun

a long gone winter

do dinosaur bones

left a fish

go pop?

in your elbow

the pain
management course

morning posture

didn't mention

the sun balancing

daffodils?

on a pole

time's hero

you'd probably

the slow dripping

find Shangri-La

of taps

under the couch

following
your schedule

after the storm

you do
nothing

the returning sound

again

of swifts

deep autumn

from the wind

the back of the vase

you pick

still there

*one cloud
at a time*

an injection
with hippos

left turn

just to
counter

a judge stirring

your allergy

salt water

autobiography

and the death poem

you shout at the moon

you wrote

and nothing happens

was eaten by frost

tinnitus:

morning haze

that's the whales

in an empty field

of your
inner ocean

a man exercising

high sun

gradually

feeding apples

you become

to the river god

a tundra

your
communication

morning heat

with the sea

a bottle of milk

is throwing stones
back and forth

leaving the bowel

soft beasts

in a harpsichord

finding the wind

*a glass heart
sews*

her new skin

*a field
of mustard*

what we know

the hawk's shadow

of the beyond

a memory

written on
a dust mote

of cave paintings

heavy w/ loose change

*you counter your gene
for casting shadows*

smacking wet cement

with one

a fish

for growing torches

lex Hollywood

abandoned railway

we can shoot

between willow and alder

the damn

virus

cuttlefish

wilting snapdragon

the mitten's

our belief

an entrance

in the killer's retirement

to the shadow world

see,

jack snipe

if we had tails

in the distance

we could
chase them

a power station

first signs of autumn

waves of cotton

the silence

take off

of other people's bodies

with the Book of Leaves

in the tower
of clouds

lightning storm

fish spawn

most people not knowing

in the word 'table'

the smell of blood

bird vision

your inner ear

you leave the mustard

*retains
the holographic ocean*

in the fridge

that birthed you

the rain
that was your friend

washing day

aspires

wearing clogs

to sovereignty

a camel

spitting at a fish

*for the sake
of argument*

you become the universe

let Kevin C. wake up

and order an egg sandwich

with a thunderstorm

the apples

this cool evening

in your ankles

in a small town

worm eaten

made famous by a killer

on the first day of autumn

in a dream

you forgive the neanderthals

you add a dog

for mother's diabetes

to Bruckner's 4th

time travel

after dissecting the tiger

that's how you find

a child looking longingly at

your lost socks

the moon

cemetery at dusk

a press briefing

you add blue

yet no one releases

to the soup

a butterfly

come dance,

deep in the tall grass

said the mountain,

folding time

in my tempo

you count to a billion

withered field

perhaps

into a patch of eyes

*the garden
with the trampoline*

you sow your heart

survives

close
to the sky

autumn fog

they use
horses' hoofs

a tree speaks

to imitate
the sound of horses

for itself

third degree

this test procedure

a leaf falls

reveals the presence

in the night

of stars

it's Thursday

on the outskirts of town

and you let
the wind

an empty bottle

sit
in your place

in an empty field

the bear's posture

spring wind

a tube of dissolvable

one more kiss

b-vitamins

and I'm uprooted

one step
at a time

pine cone

falling

you take a number

into the horizon

and wait

a hundred plus moons

like a dog

the rangers finish up

your shadow comes

for the season

when you whistle

the shepherd
of birch trees

winter morning

slowly he carves

hanging over the moon

a flute
from his femur

your loneliness

depressed

what kind of echo

but you eat a salad

can you even get

just in case

out of a duck?

spring

we eat a picnic

and you

on the hillside

misplace
the rain

watching hidden birds

asked for i.d.

absentminded

you pull out

*you call out
your own name*

a wedding photo

and answer: No!

strange
how these
spring hills

influenza

go up and down

you shout

like in winter

in a swan's ear

the stench of death

to be safe

in the appropriate box

he wears his face

marking x

inside out

his skin

dark morning

made
from stars

the language

breathes
ladders

of potatoes

