

*singing about melon*

SAMPLER

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Luke Thompson

*Singing About Melon*

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*for sarah*

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SILENZIO  
SILENZIO  
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## Three Poems

*after Lafcadio Hearn's 'Insect Musicians'*

'Let us go insect-hunting tonight,' the poet said.  
'It will be dark and I have many lanterns ready.'

do not  
leave the city

cicadas and crickets  
in bamboo cages

eating melon rind  
singing about melon

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on a spring night  
Kiryama hears  
still, small voices  
risen from clay

a ghost-song in the jar  
where our parents died

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and at my funeral  
the cage will open

but instead of insects  
lizards and birds  
singing

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Sitting in the shade of lime trees  
on the piazza of Santa Chiara.  
Swifts scream in the olive grove.

A leaf falls

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Rondini	silenziosi
Rondoni	rumoroso

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## Mouth

words scatter  
like birds  
when I speak

the moon  
rolls down  
my tongue

salt on my lips  
a ship's hull  
pressed to the sea

each word  
dressed in feathers

each word  
a waking bat

a waking bat  
hanging from the roof  
of my mouth

the wings of a parakeet  
beat in my puffed cheeks

hollow  
as a lobster

my mouth a bowl, full  
of seahorses

the sea  
pours through  
my teeth

my tongue  
a river  
of eels

a sea of eels  
lapping the shore

words slither  
up the berm  
of my lips

spider crabs  
hammer  
at my teeth

my teeth  
a row  
of uncarved slates

an ulcer  
in my cheek  
a moon

an egg  
on my tongue

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my tongue a bear  
my teeth flames  
in the circus

elephants wearing garters  
and feathered skull caps circle  
the sawdust floor of my mouth

a bear in a coloured ruff  
and muzzle pedals a bicycle

I lace the kangaroo's gloves  
tying them with cherry stalks

my teeth a troupe  
of polar bears  
with scarred noses

my teeth a train of wagons  
transporting lions,  
tigers, bears and dogs

releasing exotic birds  
on my breath

puffins nest  
in the burrow  
of my throat

on my tongue  
an abandoned egg

my tongue  
a murmuration of starlings  
falling to roost

on my tongue  
a forest of words

and within it a nightjar  
churring

my breath  
bare-beaked  
rooks

each word  
a hollow gall  
drops from my lips

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