



**S O U N D   A N D   C E R E M E N T**  
technologies   of   de - c a y





sound and sentience  
Nathaniel Mackey

Scales what would once have been  
skin... Feathers what would once  
have been cloth... There that  
claiming heaven raised hell, fraught  
sublimity, exits ever more to  
come...

A drum's head it was we walked on,  
beats parsed out by ghost feet,  
protoghost feet our feet had  
become. It was a dream of beaten  
earth,  
beaten air, beaked extravagance,  
birds we'd eventually be. Albeit  
feeling took flight's place, flight  
familiarity's run, movement found our  
feet, what once had been wood...

We  
stood as one, stung wood's revival,  
„Pinocchio“ was on the box. Puppet  
run, strung wood, stump trumpet...  
Bugled admonition. Spun... It wasn't  
swirl

we wandered into, circling wind we  
considered moot, a way we had of  
running in place... Phantom limbs they  
were we ran on, ghost feet that  
they were. Nubs that'd once been feet  
lost their numbness. Feeling it was  
made

us run... It was feeling's return we  
ran with, irredentist earth beneath  
our feet felt good. Irredentist earth  
fell away from our feet as we kept  
running, ran from day one long before  
day

Göksu Kunak  
Marie-Pascale Hardy  
John K. Peck  
John Z. Komurki  
Alan Mills  
Jane Flett  
Kenny Fries  
Magdalena Nicholls  
Sreejoe Kaniyamparambil  
Avrina Joslin

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## Re- (prefix)

1. Once more; afresh; anew; with return to a previous state.
2. In return; mutually; in opposition.
3. Behind or after: in a withdrawn state; back and away.
4. With frequentative or intensive force.
5. With negative force.

To re-turn to sound is to let the world fall down: "let its *names* perish; abandon all investment in them." To re-turn to sound is to turn our backs to meaning, to seek the cave, the mouth, the big bang: the place where everything and nothing are possible and hence, past all possibility: the apocalypse. In the blackness of the mouth words lose their skins: they are wind, dance, rhythm, cosmos. Sound is the mystery of the world: *davar*, what is said and what is done. Sound is the pure image, the gesture devoid of meaning. Sound does not let itself be narratively plotted: the shrill will simultaneously be fear, pain and climax and by being all is nothing. Sound is non-rational, non-relational, non-indexical thought: sound does not pass down meaning in a structure of kinship because it sees as the entire world as its kin. Sound is the thought that does not think thought. Sound is incessant: "My incessant Word," says God. It is when sound ceases that we hear its echoes, its multiple reverberations. Sound is the *ruach*: spirit and breath. Sound is the breath and the breath-less. Sound is the instant, the fleeting moment, all what is born and dies simultaneously. It is intimacy: the nubs in the skin, the traces of whispers. Sound is clarity before clarity: prophecy, the utterance that recognizes the fragmentary unity of the world, the cyclical. It is non-sense, the language of the oracle, the human-animal, the volcano. Sound is ancestral futurity, what is said in the forward-moving

time, and yet always looks back at its spectral past. Sound is the backbone and the flesh of language. "Say only a human word!/My name only in the ripeness of Eath/in this sun of Hymenaeen night/And not one of those terrible words without a sound that you communicate to me only one/Like a cross so my mind will stay fastened to it"—Claudel. Sound is the technology (the interface) of the self that knows no mother tongue and recognizes in all languages telluric shadows, mystical secrets. Sound is a web of "affiliation and affect", a community that rejects masculine formations of lineage, kinship or nationhood. Sound, the body that has done without organs, without organizations and functions, the body that says "let us go further, we have not sufficiently dismantled our self." Sound is the un-placeable, the *this*, the *now*, the *present*: the image's prophesy of decay as well as its afterlife. Sound is the affect, the voice that survives death. Sound is "speaking remembering we were never meant to survive."—Audre Lorde. Sound is silence: it dies before it reaches the ear. Sound is "death not gotten over." To re-turn to sound is to re-form, re-vise, re-trace, re-vert, re-side, re-cognize, re-semble, re-act, re-main, re-peat, re-cant the world: to stop and do over not for the sake of doing things differently or better but to see the "city sound out".

A group of poets were asked to ruminate about sound as a technology, which could allow to translating the poem *Sound and Sentience* by Nathaniel Mackey. This book, the cerement, compiles their work.

Valentina Ramona de Jesús

ou a e ie e  
Göksu Kunak

ae a ou oc ae ee  
i... ea e a ou o e  
ae ee o ... ee a  
a i ea e a e e, au  
u ii, e i ee o e o  
oe...

A u' ea i a e a e o,  
eas a e ou o ee,  
oo o ee ou ee a  
e oe. l a a ea o ea e  
ea ,  
eae ai, ea e e a a a e,  
i e' ee u e. A ei  
eei oo i' ae, i  
aiii' u, o ee ou ou  
ee, a o ce a ee oo...  
e

oo a oe, u oo' ela,  
"io i" a o e o. u e  
u, ru oo, u u e...  
u e a o ii. u... i a '  
i

e a ee io, i i i e  
o i ee oo, a a e a o  
u i i ae... a o i s e  
e e e a o, o ee a  
e ee. us a' o ce ee ee  
o ei u e. ee i a  
ae

u u... l a ee i' eu e  
a i, i ee i ea eea  
ou ee e oo. i ee i ea  
e a a o ou ee a ee  
ui, a o a oe o eoe  
a

oe, oo o e ou ae... e a e  
e u i i lae." oo "i o  
a o e o. e e e a i u  
ee ou o e e e e, ia  
ee ut oo e e e o, ea a  
ea

o us oe  
ue



**f s r b c**

**Marie-Pascale Hardy**

featherssscalesraisedbeenclothfraught  
skinrunbeenclaimingfeetsublimityrun  
beatsfeetsstoodrunningbycomefeetstung  
ranbecomecirclingfeelingstrungrun  
beatenconsideredflight'sstumpreturn  
beatencomeflightspunranbeakedcut  
familiarityswirlrunningbirdscamefound  
spooksranbecomingsfeetsorythmically  
beencityfeetstringsrunawayboxfeetso  
ricochetbugledfeelingseemedreachbeen  
feeling'ssuchrivalbeneathsplintersrun  
beforefeetsoundedrearedboxfellremitless  
butfeetreconnoiterbutfromrevisitation  
beenbyblinkedbeforebeenborneblurblent

**Sand and Sentinel**  
**John K. Peck**

Scales form, and we  
can spring for a new skin:  
this wasteful framework,  
this requiem,  
fools all of heaven and hell.

Incendiary fall,  
proto-dream,  
palaces  
in hail and snow.

So be fools of Isis,  
that our simple waste  
may shift spirits away.

All owls love dreamworlds,  
but hate bearing witness  
out of spite—  
birds' wild decollage.  
Whatever I feel  
it's always blond in the end,  
she takes our information to rent a movie,  
then gets off free: so lifelike.

Her program in style  
waits, like the tree  
from Pinocchio. Her feet dolorous,  
shavings, pages, photos  
motion-blurred, decorated with beads.  
Fame,

a dreadful Turing machine.  
We wanted to connect the circuits,  
but God, he of the conflict, went on his way.

Go, phantom limb, heart,  
head, run away, play  
awhile. David went walking,  
lost a thumb. I found it waiting,  
carbon-burned, we had a feeling  
the sad iridescence of Earth  
was at our feet.

Incidental art  
forevermore, we failed at the foot-race,  
after the long run to play,  
Chlytemnestra's hymn  
cantilevers awake.

Musical calls go up, spines out,  
they wept on their feet. Whales escape  
despite their pods.

A wavering in the lowest register  
kneeling, tall as dreams,

seas always  
drown  
the truth.

Google Translated into 7 languages, back through  
English each time, then translated homophonically  
English to English

## John Z. Komurki

admonition  
air  
anthem  
beat  
birds  
box  
box  
cloth  
day  
day  
dream  
dream  
drum  
drum  
earth  
earth  
earth  
earth  
entourage  
extravagance  
familiarity  
feather  
feeling  
feeling  
feeling  
flight  
flight  
foot  
foot  
foot

beaked  
beaten  
beaten  
bugled  
circling  
elect  
fraught  
ghost  
ghost  
good  
irredentist  
irredentist  
long  
moot  
phantom  
protoghost  
protoghost  
strung  
stung  
true

be  
be  
be  
be  
be  
be  
be  
be  
be  
be  
be  
be  
be  
be  
be  
be  
become  
claim  
come  
come  
consider  
exit  
fall  
feel  
find  
have  
intimate  
keep  
loose  
lose  
make

parse  
raise  
run  
run  
run  
run  
run  
run  
spin  
stand  
take  
walk  
wander

foot  
foot  
foot  
foot  
foot  
head  
heaven  
hell  
leg  
limb  
movement  
music  
nub  
numbness  
place  
place  
puppet  
return  
revival  
run  
scale  
skin  
spooks  
stump  
sublimity  
swirl  
trumpet  
wind  
wood  
wood  
wood

**mills & windmills**  
**Alan Mills**

Secrets like feathers inside your skin  
Transformed into my own clothes  
And here I proclaim Paradise is Hell, hot sublimity,  
Coming after me way before I reach the exit.  
We beat our drums as if they were the head of the Ghost,  
We went inside the nonexistent body of the Ghost,  
Don't you feel it too?,  
We stroll along a dream of scorched earth,  
We walk like an extravagant duck,  
The flawless bird we will eventually be.  
They say it is too easy to shoot a bird in a cage,  
They say some desperate animals just forgot how to fly,  
Thus our reason escapes slowly  
And our feet run in circles after that lost possibility:  
We are now the nonexistent feet of the Ghost.  
Let's burn the wooden figurine we used to be,  
We are no longer one forgotten saint placed in the Ghost  
House,  
A dark liar that exceeded the limits of our prayers  
And considered our involvement as somewhat trivial.  
It wasn't a windmill, nor a millstone, nor a modern grist-  
mill:  
We woke up inside the Mills family,  
A family name just like any other  
Except we were the phantom limbs of this Ghost,  
I mean, of this Name.  
We are the Spanish-speaking spooks,  
We are trying to learn the language of our own family  
While some foreigners say our mother tongue will always be  
a translation.  
Sometimes your name won't rhyme with your face

So please don't rail against reality  
And accept your ancestors had sex wearing carnival masks,  
'Cause that's how it rolls when Chaos is your only God  
And transgression is the secret encrypted in your genes.  
A flock of endless shadows go with the flow,  
Comings and goings not fully understood in the Tropics,  
Ancient, buried, forgotten names are pulling the strings  
And sometimes you feel like a jack-in-the-box  
They once dared to call Death.

love in a time before evolution caught up with us  
Jane Flett

Remember when we were birds?  
No, wait. Before that.  
When we were snakes, slitherers, creep-crawlers  
hobbity-gobbling on our stumps?

Cast your mind back,  
back-back-back chicken feet,  
to a time before ghosts (for the ghosts  
are just reflections of things already gone.)

To when we first met.  
To when we were windgrit.  
Or further.

Let's hold hands as the things we were before  
the arms/the legs/the form  
kiss as bits snagged on the air  
as the stump and gash orchestra  
the caterwaul of hacked bassoons.

Back then, we were still looking  
for the shapes that would make us.  
We were movement, ever-on-on-onward,  
aimed roughly at a future  
we hadn't heard of yet.

We hadn't heard of hands either.  
We didn't know that shrieks weren't limbs.

Let's go there. I want to  
sink our pre-claws into fore-dashes &  
wiggle in the atomic splash.

And if we're close enough, when it happens,  
we'll know how to cross  
what will soon become skin.



**ghostfeet: a dream**  
**Kenny Fries**

Scales, feathers, cloth  
claiming heavens, ever  
more to come,

drumbeats, ghostfeet:  
a dream  
of beaten earth,

air, extravagant  
birds took flight, our  
feet no longer

wood, strong  
wood, spun  
into wind, running

in place, phantom  
limbs, ghostfeet  
run, return, earth

beneath, earth fell  
away, kept running  
not there, not

elsewhere, loosed,  
a dream come true

**taxidermy**  
Magdalena Nicholls

there  
that  
box          bed          room          sanctuary  
she called the place  
of prayers to Daniyy-El  
spectral voice that  
sold detergent divined long gone storms

her red fingernails clutched  
petrified memory of a remote control  
a bible  
read out loud to the neighbouring  
feet that    snored    farted    familiarity

the red fingernails' mould was a child's back  
one for every time  
the skin's touch was a woman's  
toll to heaven  
nubs that'd once been  
her feet  
maimed    taxidermied    protoghosthood

stubborn stains remained  
detergent notwithstanding

Death on time  
arrives too late

## Sreejoe Kaniyamparambil

1.

Sinusoidal rhythms moving through our skin.  
washing away the dust of everyday life from our souls.  
Air particles moving, slapping our eardrums,  
only to bring paradise to earth.  
Sublimity exists evermore to come..  
Sounds of drums and cymbals echo,  
echo in the valley of heaven,  
heaven that raised hell.  
Beats cause our feet to move,  
move without our control, move as though  
the strings of our feet are controlled by ghost.  
Protoghosts feet our feet had become.  
It was a dream of an earth singing;  
movement found our feet.  
The snair drum is high pitched.  
The sinusoidal rhythms are faster.  
The earth's song can be heard from far.  
They combine. Combine to form something  
very powerful. Something spiritual.  
Music dilates and inflates time.  
Controls the natural way of entropy.  
I open my eyes, it was all a dream.

## Avrina Joslin

2.

### Last Words

Alone in moodless sway on a tree above  
waterless earth: undamp, flesh lost taste; waiting  
for an aboriginal dance. Cracked feet like  
cracked earth bleed and cry in what's already  
not enough. This, the madness of walking a year  
into yourself, into the core, the saliva-lava of  
your soul - a landscape of freedom turned  
to debauchery, religious riotry to crucifixion  
and mangling of white doves. You scrape the  
dirt off your feet, your branch creeks, the  
holy Alpines unanimously roar - elephants'  
trumpet, wolves' call, human chatter all muffled,  
curated to make the symphony of your days -  
few, last, as from here, walking on air, tapping  
your war-torn feet to the nothing around them.  
Tapping air, flicking toes as also heel, to the  
last words, the last thoughts, tangible and alive yet  
in the innermost chamber of your heart. Yes, you  
are now in the innermost chamber of your heart.  
Unclogging. To the tune of every by-gone violent  
thought, of behavior unsuitable to women in suits,  
you beat your legs. You remainder of human life,  
reminder of numbness now pinching even through  
your coarsest vein.  
The branch on which you're seated will soon enough  
break. You'll fall to the hardened earth to moisten it  
with blood and pain. But when you fall, your words  
that you gouged out from the depths of  
your femme fatale cushion you in their swamp.  
The earth that gave you, saves you and it.  
You were there but also elsewhere.  
Rhythmically, periodically. The river you cried  
for the earth carried you. Everywhere.



one, protoghost entourage... Leg anthem  
the music intimated. „Spooks“ it now  
was on the box. We were anything but  
there though not elsewhere, rhythmically  
elect but loosed even so, earth a  
dream  
of drums come  
true

It wasn't puppets we were, strings  
tied to what had been wood notwithstanding,  
wasn't we were wood anymore. Runaway  
earth abrupt cut from under... Ricochet  
and Reach rival names we knew it  
by...

Blinked and before we got there were  
gone, protoghosthood its own haunt...  
So that Run it seemed it was we came to  
next, a place, had it been a place, made  
of  
whisk, borne-away whatsee, blur... Blent  
vista such that splinters reared up  
and walked, went remittless... Endless  
reconnoiter, endless vex, revisitation.  
Endless hoist and hoofbeat limbed on  
high...  
Comings and goings not gotten over.  
Death not gotten over, goings away  
glimpsed again had us gone without  
going, on to the heard-about  
City,  
sounded  
out

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des Hauptstadtkulturfonds

HAUPT  
STADT  
KULTUR  
FONDS



**SAND**  
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**S A V V Y CONTEMPORARY**  
**THE LABORATORY OF FORM-IDEAS**

