SOUND AND CEREMENT
technologies of de-cay
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
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 Behind or after: in a withdrawn state; back and away.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 Hymenaean 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
feathers scales raised been cloth fraught
skin run been claiming feet sublimity run
beats feet stood running by come feet stung
ran become circling feeling strung run
beaten considered flight’s stump return
beaten come flight spun ran beaked cut
familiarity swirl running birds came found
spooks ran becoming feet sorythmically
been city feet strings run away box feet so
ricochet bugled feeling seemed reach been
feeling’s such rival beneath splinters run
before feet sounded reared box fell remitless
but feet reconnoiter but from revisitation
been by blinked before been born blur blent
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 irridescence 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
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.
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 &
wriggle in the atomic splash.

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

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 remitless... Endless
reconnoiter, endless vex, revisititation.
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