

The Secret Project – Poetic Text (all)

Text by Jools Gilson-Ellis

out loud

tell me
say it
out loud
bring it
into the
light
that secret
the one
left over
that omission
you made
that thing
you
never said
I want
the knowledge of
it
in me
press it damply
out of you
tongue to
teeth
breath to heart
say it
out loud.

twice turning

(inbreath) (inbreath) trip, shift to side. over slow, down. (breathe) runs, slipping up over. over down. (outbreath). fall (breath). down and wide. singing out over wide, to the left. wide. ocean. I have you. I'm falling. (outbreath) (two small sighs overlapping) sings, root of her, (outbreath). touchlight, falling, waterlight, over. ache. high, falling and over (escapes) (small breath). seeming. shift and echo to the side. twice turning. fly lightful, air wards, cleanly (breathe), small flicks passionate. keep sky, out over down. aches two. light folding over. small secrets, up over down. twice turning. stop (outbreath) (outbreath)

wind ghost

In the night, winds rise in her. They rush skin-close, and find the space of her. Warm blizzards arch in her chest, and her breasts swell and turn tender. Her belly answers the hefts of small gales - air filled with ochre leaves, turning on itself. She turns as the airs in her move. Leaf winds curve her a belly to meet her high breasts. Small breezes trace the surface of her skin, and when she wakes, she is plumply ripe and ready to birth. But before breakfast, she is tiny again. The flatness of her stomach inside her jeans. Her breasts are two handfuls again. And tenderless. This is an air haunting. She is nightly flooded with gusts that curve her from inside out.

palm

if you're falling
so is the snow
perhaps
you will also
melt
in my palm

squeak

here
coiled
in
squeaky
silence
is your
small
secret.

too soft

I'm the secret
spun in
detail,
my hand clasped
sometimes gleefully
sometimes
in pain
between my
careful
thighs,
or pressed
to your
too-soft
mouth.

didn't tell

the one
half-heard
& falling
here behind
your tight
eyes?

wickedry

Here is your hand in mine,
and here is the other tickling me
Wickedry. Listen.

heart

my small heart
flying towards
the finish line
without me

kiss

your forehead
didn't deserve
kissing
nor your
small
hands
let me tell
you

I set you
apart.

echo

I have your
echo
in me

lingua

secrecy *n.* condition of being secret.

secret *adj.* about 1378, hidden, concealed, private; borrowed from Old French *secret* concealed, private, learned, borrowing from Latin, and borrowed into English from Latin, *secretus* set apart, withdrawn, hidden, originally past participle of *secrevere* to set apart.

an earlier form *secre*, with the meaning of a prayer said in a low voice, found in Middle English about 1300, borrowed from Old French *secre*, variant of *secret* secret. *n.*

secretive *adj.* 1464 *secretife* secret, hidden, formed from Middle English *secret* adj. + *ive*. The current sense of having the habit of secrecy, not frank and open, first recorded in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Villette* (1853). This sense is a back formation from the earlier secretiveness (in phrenology) quality or state of being secretive (1815) formed from secret + *ive* + *ness*, patterned on French *secretivité*.

also *rarely* of time

also *rarely* of movement

snow ghost

Walking slowly in the snow, she trips. When she looks to see how she stumbles, there is nothing there. No root or stone. She walks on. The light shifts and moves across the tree line, blinding her a little. She trips again, as if over a branch or a rock, but the path is smooth with compressed snow.

Later, she sits in the valley café drinking tea, and Joe comes in & moves into the booth across from her. "I'm not falling" she says. "I know" he says. "It's snow ghosts, tripping me." "I know" he says & turns to order coffee.

Ice.

When the trees fall there are two sounds - the moist wrench of ripping wood flesh, and then the brittle shattering of the ice as it hits the road. Inside her, something falls away.

She gets up to leave.

As she walks past the booths, snow falls from the air & settles on the tables. Customers stare at the snowflakes on their bacon.

*snow queen
ice maiden
how lean
and how laden
are these times?
how full
and how slow
are the rhythms
of your heart?*

The girl-children skip in the bright sunlight. Two holding the ropes and three of them waiting to skip, another jumping in the whipped up snow. But they all sing the rhyme, heavy with its beat. The jumping child stamps on the rope with two small booted feet on the thump of 'these'. As she looses it the tempo rises and she jumps double-time before leaving the lemon space of the turning rope on the last word.

heart.

And another of them runs in.

snow queen ice maiden.

Skipping is not a game for snow.

Out from the café and off along the snow paths. She begins to run.

I hear your
smile
but see only
your breath
in the
ice-air

Running is not a game for snow.

And she falls, this time.

Not the stumbles and trippings she had been used to, but a turning, aching fall. Inside its arch a haunted language moves from her.

Snow falls. Thinner than earlier, but steady. Its movement groundwards not unlike the falling of words from her turning body.

I'm not falling
I know
It's snow ghosts
tripping me
I know

(Falling) As she falls she remembers how the sap from the pine drips. At the Valley Café, customers catch honey on spoons. They twist it greedily before letting it fall into their coffee. She still falls. The logic of gravity and grammar evades her.

The girl-child waits for dusk. Bored, she picks at the half-solid drips on the tree beside her. The smell of the stickiness between her fingers storms her from ennui into the memory of summer. Its' heat hefts her small body - sunned rock and the fragrance of pine. The force of the turning memory slaps breath from her, and she falls backwards into the snow. The sound of warm earth, dull and reliable after the treachery of ice.

(I'm falling) (I have you)

Glimpses. Sunlight. Honey drips down the outside of mugs in the valley. As the child hits the ice-warm ground, so the turning ceases. The two of them at either end of the valley, suddenly still in the snow. The woman and the girl feel the warmth and wetness off blood.

Five small girls in the town stop their skipping and clutch the blossoming red between their legs. Five small girls run to their mothers in tears.

One girl lying in the snow bleeds and begins to laugh, small muffled giggles at first and then a rolling laughter, untroubled and sparkling.

One woman lying in the snow laughs out loud.

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