

(CREATURE SOUNDS FADE)

>> SHANNA COMPTON



Black
Lawrence
Press

Contents

(♪♪)

- 5 The Eyes Have Woods
- 7 Names for Storms
- 9 Example Sentences
- 11 Aurora Says
- 12 Dark Acres
- 14 Barren of Pines
- 15 Disenchanted Woods
- 16 Shorn Fur
- 17 In what world
- 19 Paper Trees
- 20 Unassuming, the Kitchen Table (Plate 8)
- 23 Brood VIII
- 24 It's trash night
- 25 Ongoing Experiment
- 26 (ROUSING CHORUS)
- 27 I'd rather stay here & argue
- 28 Substantial Atmosphere
- 29 Burn Pile

(ORCHESTRAL MUSIC SWELLS)

- 33 An Obsession with Dirt, a Desire for Order
- 34 The general geographic area
- 36 Like Rays, Not Like Speech
- 37 Confirming Your Various Assumptions
- 39 At Mercy Meadow
- 40 Congregation at the River

- 41 Seven Steps to Better Listening
42 Seed Sink
43 Sciences
45 The Lost Sounds Orchestra
47 Twenty Motels
49 Gloria
50 No Contradiction in a Virgin Hero
51 A Little InstÊction
52 Inclemency
53 With Dashes Fitted, with Intent Spliced
54 Relative Degree of Unrest
55 Misnomer
57 Belief or No
58 The quality of the air
59 Where the wall meets the river
60 I wore my dress
61 The Arson Prevention Program
63 Everyone’s asleep but the river
65 The Vulture

(INDISTINCT CLAMORING)

- 69 White Chrysanthemums

(ALARM CONTINUES RINGING)

- 77 The loops Ên simultaneously
78 Sincerely under
79 Eager to lose her winter pallor
80 Immersive Experience
81 Leisure Isn’t from Around Here
82 The term for this is biological ornament
83 Galileo Believed Us to Be Seas

84	Dropped Eaves
85	Science Fiction
86	High & Deprived
87	I need a solvent
88	Trick Ending
89	Hometown
90	The Driest Place on Earth
92	A friend laments
94	Memorandum pink
95	Gelid silver thaw
97	This isn't how it's supposed to work
98	When is pleasure a pressure
99	Pale Cricket
100	Town of Horseheads
101	Desert Valley in Bloom
102	(CREATURE SOUNDS FADE)
103	Acknowledgments
105	Notes

“A closed caption, (READING), is stamped inelegantly on her forehead.”

—*Reading Sounds*, Sean Zdenek

“The sagest time to dam the sea is when the sea is gone —”

—Emily Dickinson

1604 (We send the Wave to find the Wave)



The Eyes Have Woods

You woke with a line in your head
You tripped on a root realization

You lost the path deranging itself
from fact to conjecture & back again

You grew hairy with conflict
through the evergreens

You wore a cape inexplicably
in the warm evening

The woods resinous with amber terpenes
& something starchy-sweet like gourd

You didn't know where the trail led
You didn't exactly want to follow it

You forgot everything else
thorny, dark as pitch, pulsing

with the (MEWLING) of the mammal
snared in the loops

of your chest

Names for Storms

I can't hear myself
for the (HOWLING)
several dozen states away

the wadding stuffed
under the cap
of the decade.

It's tÊe:
I can't see my hand
in front of my face

because it's clutching
a stone in my left pocket.
An image of a windsock

at once fiercely & feebly
orange. The darkening
palpable. At the first

pelted drops we smell
the charge in the air
the same moment

we detect the quiver
in the skin of the dog
at our feet. The backs

of our thighs embossed—
a plush pattern of flowers
ganged up on the threadbare

armchair. The (BURSTING
OF GLASS) at each window
successive, percussive.

(A SILENCE EERIES)
between the (BOOMS
OF TOSSED TRASHCANS)

in the street. The (CRACK)
of a twig-snapped pole.
The (FIZZ) of the downed wires.

The television already
lifting its heavy feet.

Example Sentences

(RUSTLING, LOW CHITTERING)

The cedar apple *Êst* is a oddly symbiotic fungus, affecting only the cedar if it grows on the apple, and only the apple if it forms on the cedar. *Symbiotic's* not the word I mean. The gall of the thing. It has, of all things, tentacles, appendages known as spore horns. After a rain the horns extend, hot orange and gelatinous—alien even for deep forest.

It's gotten to the point I'm looking up things I'm already sure of just to experience the subtle shocks in their example sentences. In the woods today I stopped to read the plaques put up by the Conservancy. *I love the word deciduous*, I confessed to the trees. The littered spot where the stand of red cedars once bristled unsettled me, crowded out until choked for light. I *Êbbed* my aching

horns. You're probably expecting it—
just then five white-tailed deer (CRASHED) through,
flinging themselves headlong, bounding
in arcs. My slender tentacles instinctively
retracted, my spores packed up and put themselves
budlike away. (ONLY-BIRDS SILENCE.) Only trees.
The autumn olive bushes around me
in the breakthrough sun exhaled, sweet and high,
like no creature on earth is able.

Aurora Says

Give me some light.
This galaxy wants to know
who you're calling ordinary.

Everything gets tiered
in a weird way. A dying star
gets ripped apart by twin black holes.

But there are others,
fellow navigators,
and lots more ripping to do.

Just look at us:
in this destructive process
we shine at many wavelengths.

(CHIRP)

Dark Acres

Who dresses up as an image
That's no way to slip into a mouth

Not ache-tired but diffuse fading
in the tissues of every muscle

Well—the world becomes is reduced
binary territories a progression problematically

spatial The lids of our eyes shuttering
like insects kept overlong in a malcontent jar

We attempt to predict every day's worth
to capture it and keep it fed

Blanking in the sun we cannot alter
falter in a summer ripple so intense

it obliterates math down to your favorite number
Perhaps a face will rise for us here

a deeper deafness a loosening of the inner organs
wearing upon an expression some culminating word

(UNINTELLIGIBLE)

Barren of Pines

Inchoate the idea that I'll have
something to put down

to approximate the perfume
of eucalyptus my sludgy operations

I'm a zoo subsumed under a mudslide
A tossed trio of ships rising in inkwell illustration

awash in bounced wavelight Everything major
but the times I catch it Seldom the intensity

of the rescue a matchhead igniting
on the eighth or ninth strike

If I could build a city or thread a pasture with grasses
I'd admit I love the city but confess

I love the grasses more where thunder storms
rains flash kindling at the ready

& here I go pining for the end

Disenchanted Woods

(PINES CREAKING)

*I sought and found
my father's grave she said.
Alas it is still empty.
Ghosts, bed, the last tangle
of the perpetual dream
she writes most nights
 each tremble as she rises
like the leaves of the quaking aspen
flashing silver. I found in it
a spiral of rope she said
a jar of chalk.
Around her in the trees
she heard no doves.
Alas she said
there is never a body.*

Shorn Fur

My love I am a tangled I am choked & salted

My love I am feeling the itch of the buds soon to burst from my skin

My love I have emerged as a principal voice & I know you are listening
/ I'm making big plans to fix the end, to complicate as I clarify / Your
face is the forest

Your face is the font from which Thursdays spring amid freshets
of sentiment / your mouth like a deer hoof someone left hanging
in a tree

I trickle a creek when I want to boom

Geolocation's bounce my signal glances off the nearest star

The wisteria down-dangles its bosomy fangs over the white lattice of
the bridge while the river rolls unperturbed, standalone

My love might I breathe like a stand of oaks?

Pace like the beasts of the Middle Ages?

Bolt like the underinsured just after a crash?

My love I'm renewing to lock in my hot luck now / Ineluctable always,
each morning cinched like a belt, the aptest accent

Whatever you say, you cut a figure, my love

I will continue to snap your portrait, opportune

Tilt your chin this way toward forever my love my domain