

Conversational Poetry

November 2019

[11:38, 11/20/2019]

Hi Sarah - it's Maija - Do you want to do an experiment with me? A call and response experiment.

I send you a phrase and you send it back with changes from your point of view or from an imagined point of view.

Like echoes revealing differences and similarities

for example:

I shaved my hair because...

or

The space between is...

So we end up with at least two lines on the same thread with evidence of divergent thoughts

and see what happens!

[11:45, 11/20/2019] sarah misselbrook: LOVE it!!

maija liepins: perhaps we could distinguish between normal messages and game messages by putting a name first...

[08:06, 11/22/2019]

Sarah: I left my home country in search of something other, an alternative. I am still searching.

[08:57, 11/22/2019]:

Maija: I left my home country like a horse bolting from the starting block (don't think horses have starting blocks hmmm mixed metaphor)

Maija: The first time I left my home country I was 8 years old

Sarah: I was 11. I've always known that I didn't belong. Why is it that I feel I belong where I 'shouldn't'? 'Home country' - what is that exactly? Where my family are? Where I was born? I came to live in a place where I couldn't speak the language, I had no relatives or friends here and yet...

Maija: I left my home country in search of my people as New Zealand didn't feel like my own (age 18)

Medusa: I left my home country to clear my name

Rapunzle: I left my home country in the dark of night, smuggled by hands unseen

Skadrite: I left my home for Austria the day before the Nazi's marched into my home town

[07:48, 11/23/2019] Maija: good morning xxx

[07:49, 11/23/2019] Maija: my day yesterday was demanding and today will demand more of me.

(show up, show up anyway?)

Maija says: there is a conflict between Inside and Outside
Rapunzle's tower feels so tempting today
Hunker down
Retreat
Withdraw
Anger burns up the walls
from the furnace of my heart
Come close and the flames will lick you
yes, Dancing in the fire
That's my idea of a good day today.
Alchemy transforming the elements at my borders
New crystalline mementos...
not gargoyle heads
not medusa heads
not lion heads
not papyrus or paint pots
flowers! yes, flowers
Blooming like the night lily
on the border between sky and pond.

Maija says: there is a conflict between inside – outside.
Do I keep up my walls
and perform, stoic as a buttress?
Do I dress myself in crocodile's
in a moat bordering my childish upswell
with a warning snap to give me time?
Time to feel
Time to think
Time to respond.

Aha, see, there is the conflict
Truly I don't fare well alone with my thoughts
Alone with my words
Alone with my ideas,
Running round and round in my head
like stale bread in tin.

There is the conflict:
How easy it would be to withdraw from the not me,
the not wanted, the not cool,
Paying the price in rigid conclusions
and stony constructions encrusting my mind with
a labyrinthine resolve to protect my ideas of self and other
Suspended like a moth in a specimen glass
Against my instinct
My training
My advice.

I need the outside, the other, the
input battering my keep
with the energy and colour of a summer rain
creating rainbows in the autumnal chill
To grow
To learn

To revitalise:
The phenomena of intra-action
The entanglement of multiple beings
Be-ing in this life
This ecosystem.

The place between this Inside mood
and Outside pull tugging at my skirts
like twenty cubs, or a vigorous wind.
How many mothers, parents, sisters, brothers
feel harassed by the pull of other world desires?
Two worlds meet in the space between.

I don't really desire solitude,
just a place to stand where I can be;
Be one of many on the lily pads
Drinking from the top and bottom
of an ecosystem that supports me
(too).

[09:06, 11/23/2019] Sarah says:

the ebb and flow
of belonging
or not,
the administration of a normal life
as a dead weight
pulling at my ankles
I long to float
Like your lily pad
Skimming the surface but deeply
knowing
What is not the way forward
With strong capillary action
connecting
or not,
depending on the day
I am precious, as all animals are
I, a lone tree, within this forest,
Swaying
In the November wind
For now,
but perhaps
not forever more
This valley with its trees,
And
abnormally large toads
Princes?
Wondering the valley looking for
their someone to save

And when I am on the rock
The soapbox
With nothing to say
I can merely respond
To your beautifully descriptive
prose
Which seems
Conflicted, yes
Rightly demanding space
Not the physical jutting for the
clinical
No, not the institutional
But the metaphorical
A harmonious co-existence
A balanced
Death and life
Do not search for resolution
Only the next question
In this series
Of existing
Ask the trees
Feel that wind
On your skin
Build the structure
Stand alone
They will listen
As will I

[11:13, 11/23/2019] Maija: your words are music to my heart

[08:39, 11/24/2019] sarah misselbrook: I read our 'words' to my niece and nephew over Skype last night. They were transfixed!

Rapunzle says: where is the border? Are you real or are you a voice in my own head? The words have become their own creation independent of the separation of I and other, today that is a gift to me, a year ago it was my prison.

Maija says: sometimes I just let the words flow without knowing what I'm saying. I was reading my poems and I found this phrase: zeitgeist non grata. I had to google the two words but was rewarded with discovering the combo is related to dissent. I wonder if it would make a good albeit obtuse title for a work

Sarah says:
'Zeitgeist non grata' is a perfect title
It is as if the voice is more defiant
A silent protest
A visual communication of this structured text
When reading 'my' words
Upon reflection I ask
Is this me?
Or are the words emanating from
a character
I am creating
A distant 'enigma'
A spirit of the times
Hope
Release
These words are in
The space between
the carbon copy lies here
an imprint
a legacy
a gift

[09:03, 11/24/2019] Maija: wow!! My inner word mistress is gleefully flapping like a black be-robed hag on a windswept rock, dancing with the gleeful steps of a happy six year old. Bubbles of yellow joy and rainbow light within her frame as a world comes alive with the rhythm and texture and shape of crafted letters.

[09:24, 11/24/2019] sarah misselbrook: Sarah says:

It is as if
By the mere act of typing
These words
I am defying
Those who always said
Could do better
Yes,
A gifted draftsman
But not a natural writer
And yet,
Responding to you
Is becoming
A new form of expression
In which
I, for now, belong
So thank you

[09:47, 11/24/2019] maija: Maija says:

No rules, no prescribed format, just the feeling of a word
of its order and combination in the text
Tumbling from the spout like water pumped from the well.

The mind is like the pump handle, not thinking the words at all,
just releasing the flow with invisible hands; releasing this sun sparkled
torrent. The water is sharply and breathlessly cold.
Cold as ice from deep within the earth;
from an underground lake of inspiration
No thinking needed to unlock the gate.

And when we get out of our own way,
no longer inhibited by ideas of what we should be and do and say,
the response is immediately present
Seeking articulation from the sparks of inspiration: moments of light
pulsing like stars in a map of isolated sky
drenched through with the waters
fertilising those glowing seeds that dream of a life in us.

I am a wisdom keeper
a life giver
creator in the space between a life and a death
Music maker in the living breath
animating worlds within perception
there is no world without the creatures
seeking expression of their natures.

It's lonely in the tower when it becomes untethered from the ground
beneath / and hair trails like roots from an upstairs window seeking the
soil like an upturned tree.
I guess then I must concede,
the fibres of my connections
deliver me what I need
To thrive
To contribute
To sustain
Yes, I always thought we'd do well to live more like the trees.

[13:24, 11/24/2019] maija: Rapunzle says: I didn't shave my head to reject anyone,
but to redefine myself and communicate my position.
I had work to do, I was undergoing a re-write of my story.

Maija says: like the trees withdraw their energy from their leaves in
the winter

(causing the fall of flame bright colours)

[17:09, 11/24/2019] maija: remembering to echo...

Maija says: It is as if
By the mere act of typing
These words
I am defying the idea

that I could never be understood
that the meaning is lost in translation
(rendering it nonsense)
as i realise my meaning is already fading
like the line in the sand that a retreating wave makes,
edging the sand with ocean spittle for pause
It's a memory and a ghost
a transient thing
Belonging to a moment past, to her
before the swell surges in again.

And I am soggy on my rocky outcrop
That is blackwet and sea kelp threaded
Listening to the roar of wave power
Marvelling
at the meaning co-created
revised
remastered
not to overwrite or underwrite
update or remediate

Rather we write like the surf marks the beach
A beauty to behold in the sound and the patterns
of life creating itself
in every moment fresh
as ocean breath.

[17:30, 11/24/2019] maija: remembering to echo...

Maija says: The ebb and flow
of belonging or not
the shifting plains of my heart
a whisper of wind
of voices
of feeling
trembling through me again
in colour
in motion
Touching me with impressions
lighter than the invisible
deeper than the incredible
A whisper in a
name
a song
an impulse
in a message.

Bodily known
Emotionally sown
touching and being touched by the world outside my skin
No one ever talked about how sensitive we are
how sensitive we can be
What it's like to feel it all and be
Sovereign responder
not sea sponge or people pleaser.

Gathering by the square
invited to claim the soapbox as our own
a common land
I see none of the youthful bolshishness of our first formation

There is talk of emotions,
anxiety and insecurity when faced with uncertainty,
tentative hesitation and frustrated complication
and all of it open like flags in the air.
An emotional ocean
finding a voice
Blowing in and tangling in my hair

A new zeitgeist of feeling?
Of emotional authenticity
And whole person welcomed in.
Dare we hope to call all our fragments home?
The child
The outsider
The tribal
The leader?
What world is this
and is it new?

[08:23, 11/25/2019] sarah misselbrook: Sarah says:

This morning
I am circumnavigating the bowl of nature
A natural amphitheatre at the mercy of
Drought, flood and fire
Which sculpts the land,
cremates the branches
and cracks the soil.

My body acts and reacts
Working with the valley and its forest
as a line of defence
Protecting all life
A cohesive community
You will save me and I you.

This virtual connection
Passing the baton
Almost echoing
My lone voice
Surging and swelling
I SHOUT in isolation
to your whispers
Disturbing the surface tension
In search for the genuine.

Am I now the 'prescriber'?
Have I adopted 'that role'?
Or is it enough just to ask?
Of myself, of you,
Constant questioning,

Flowing in with such strength
Then ebbing away with reassuring self-doubt.

[08:47, 11/25/2019] maija: yes!! freedom to think 🙌

[08:53, 11/25/2019] sarah misselbrook: Sarah says:

Something appealing in not knowing
In always asking
Of you, of myself
Never accepting
That it is enough
It's insatiable
There are moments of realisation that move me forward
But perhaps the self-doubt is where I learn more
About myself
About this place
About why
Or maybe it's an acceptance of something
I will never truly know
Liberating

[17:42, 11/25/2019] Maija: maija says:

There is something appealing
In not knowing
Also not showing my colours.
The uncertainty is like a drug
Soothing my unwillingness to comply
to decide
to choose one mark over another on the map of
Possibilities.
Paralysis medusa
She's another name for jellyfish, that medusa
In multiple languages:
Medusa.
I imagine there's a jelly that
Attacks the nerves
the reflexes
the body
Like the snakes attack
with psychic persuasion
Any thought form trespassing up the stairs.
Choose your potion wisely.
I think the greatest freedom
must be the freedom to
adjust
to try
to learn
to grow
To experience all the things
Not just one thing
- over and over -
in a repetitive loop

Like a child who hasn't seen it modelled:
The self soothing acceptance
The self supporting acknowledgement
The space to just be
Witnessed
Contemplating choices
without pressure sucking bias
exerted from without.
Within; retreat, self doubt,
Confusion.
An unconscious stare
on the face between.

[18:09, 11/25/2019] maija: Maija says:

Am i now the prescriber? the
Refiner, the decider
The describer?
Why did I reject that role
forsake that certainty
Running round and round my head
like a rabbit in a pen?
To SHOUT without isolation
would be to be HEARD by ears to
hear and then
My words aren't mine anymore and
sometimes i'm just not ready to
release them
share them
translate them
their WEIGHT I bear.

It's ok to doubt, Sarah says.

It shows a well rounded viewpoint
Drawing a circle that could be a
square with four faces
a red
a black
a white and
a yellow face
if I wanted.
This is where my thoughts
take me
Treading down the sand with
Repetitive pacing

a meditative dance
a process enacted
Face the directions and
feel what you feel
notice what you see
sound what you hear
speak what you think
move when you need to
and Be.

Maija says:
My body acts and reacts
silent spaces
morning faces
messy movements
fumbling for a new stride
she clammers into trees
and dances between earth
and sky
listening for the orchestra
of happenings
and I
Notice more these days
the opening
constricting
tensing
relaxing
waning
invigorating
deadening
re-member-ing.

[08:00, 11/26/2019] maija: good morning and welcome to Tuesday! xxx it's raining here with clouds hanging low. Some birds have just started cheeping (a wall of high pitched sound as if there is one hundred)

[08:13, 11/26/2019] sarah misselbrook: Sarah says:

It's as if there is a second Spring
in the valley
It is 24 degrees, warm and dry and yet
the North facing side of the valley is full of life

[08:14, 11/26/2019] maija: Rapunzle says: I watch the weather with Pathetic Fallacy like some people listen to music to find their mood in it

Maija says: Aaaaarg WHAT!? I just googled that and the literary term for personifying the weather with emotions IS Pathetic Fallacy! Judgemental fuckers.

[08:16, 11/26/2019] Maija: (its interesting how my writing mood has changed from whimsical to bolshy... i love the repetition of daily... thank you so much for that idea!) ... bolshy isn't the write word. grumbly?

[08:20, 11/26/2019] sarah misselbrook: Sarah says:

A trick of nature
I begin to awake
With the birdsong
Filing this amphitheatre
Chatter
Chatter
Chatter
Repetition is reassuring
Bolshy? Perhaps
Sharpening elbows at the morning market
Akin to the aging women in the village
Over coffee
Gossip
Gossip
Gossip
And so much love
The days are short like yours
But there is so much life
No leaves have fallen yet
That will take place in January
And even then only the fig bares its branches
Repetition
Cycles
Moonlight
Period.

[08:25, 11/26/2019] maija: Maija says: Blown away again. Wait, not blown away, *blown in*, into my my heart, intense as standing too close to a fire: this joy your words are in me.

[08:32, 11/26/2019] sarah misselbrook: Sarah says:

Pathetic Fallacy
I am learning each day
Something new from you
So thank you
Then to connect
Or dismiss
That is the freedom of this
I recall my words from blockchain
Whether the weather allows
It governs me
Not only does it affect
Mood and text

But daily activity
Chopping wood to keep warm
Preparing for the evening chill
Or
Sitting still
in summer in the shade
To draw with sweaty hands
I am guided
A large comforting hand taking
mine
And showing me the way
Naturally.