



ALSO BY PETER GIZZI

*Archeophonics*

*In Defense of Nothing: Selected Poems, 1987–2011*

*Threshold Songs*

*The Outernationale*

*Some Values of Landscape and Weather*

*Artificial Heart*

*Periplum and other poems*

**NOW IT'S DARK**



# **NOW IT'S DARK**

## **PETER GIZZI**

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for my brother Tom

*also gone*



**NOW IT'S DARK**



*I'll meet you where we survive.*

– Jason Molina



# 1. LYRIC





## **SPEECH ACTS FOR A DYING WORLD**

A field sparrow  
is at my window,  
tapping at its reflection,  
a tired  
antique god  
trying to communicate

it's getting to me

as I set out to sing  
the nimbus of flora  
under a partly mottled sky

as I look at the end  
and sing so what,  
sing live now,  
thinking why not

I'm listening and  
receiving now  
and it feeds me,  
I'm always hungry

when the beautiful  
is too much to carry  
inside my winter

when my library is full of loss  
full of wonder

as the polis is breaking  
and casts a shadow  
over all of me,  
thinking of it

when the shadows fall  
in ripples, when  
the medium I work in  
is deathless and

I'm living inside  
one great example  
of stubbornness

as my head is stove-in  
by a glance, as the day's  
silver-tipped buds sway in union,  
waving to the corporate sky

when I said work  
and meant lyric

when I thought I was done  
with the poem as a vehicle  
to understand violence

I thought I was done  
with the high-toned  
shitty world

done with the voice and  
its constituent pap

call down the inherited  
phenomenal world  
when it's raining in the book,  
lost to the world  
in an abundance of world

like listening to a violin  
when the figure isn't native  
but the emotion is

when everything is snow  
and what lies ahead  
is a mesmer's twirling locket

I thought I was done  
with the marvel  
of ephemeral shadow play,  
the great design and all that

I thought I was done  
with time, its theatricality,  
glamour, and guff

gusting cloud, I see you,  
I become you  
in my solitary thinging,  
here in partial light

when I said voice,  
I meant the whole unholy grain of it,  
it felt like paradise

meaning rises and sets,  
now a hunter overhead  
now a bear at the pole  
and the sound of names

the parade of names

## THAT I SAW THE LIGHT ON NONOTUCK AVENUE

That every musical note is a flame, native in its own tongue.

That between bread and ash, there is fire.

That the day swells and crests.

That I found myself born into it with sirens and trucks going  
by out here in a poem.

That there are other things that go into poems like the pigeon,  
cobalt, dirty windows, sun.

That I have seen skin in marble, eye in stone.

That the information I carry is mostly bacterial.

That I am a host.

That the ghost of the text is unknown.

That I live near an Air Force base and the sound in the sky is death.

That sound like old poetry can kill us.

That there are small things in the poem: paper clips, gauze, tater tots, knives.

That there can also be emptiness fanning out into breakfast rolls, macadam, stars.

That I am hungry.

That I seek knowledge of the ancient sycamore that also lives in the valley where I live.

That I call to it.

That there are airships overhead.

That I live alone in my head out here in a poem near a magical tree.

That I saw the light on Nonotuck Avenue and heard the cry of  
a dove recede into a rustle.

That its cry was quiet light falling into a coffin.

That it altered me.

That today the river is a camera obscura, bending trees.

That I sing this of metallic shimmer, sing the sky, the song, all  
of it and wonder if I am dying would you come back for me?



## EVERY DAY I WANT TO FLY MY KITE

Give the world  
to the world,  
time to the flood,  
give ash to gardens  
and grain to trees.

I am not cowed  
by the superlative  
nature in trees.

I am lifted  
and see petals opening.

Give the freckled ground  
to sun,  
give sepulcher  
to sky,  
to song.

I am not one  
to disregard thrush,  
diminish sparrow.

Give the arrow  
to lovers,  
night to lavender,  
lavender to sleep,  
to wing  
to want  
to wound  
to wonder  
the night's watch,  
the optical dawn.

Give water to stone,  
stone to echo.  
In the mosaic  
the dove's wings  
are made of bits  
and stone.  
The world is like this.

If I saw it  
I felt it.  
If I felt it  
I learned from it.

And when the moon  
opens the horizon,  
that's Tuesday gone.

The moon  
the silk  
the corn  
the rail.  
I felt this and  
it stuck to me  
one midnight.  
I was mewling.

I was alive with fancy  
and silk and stuff.  
I was stuffing for a chair,  
a doll.  
I was blinking  
and crying and.

Now the word  
falling.  
Now other rains.

Now organics  
cyclones and seeds.  
The deadly swoon  
in strength and  
with color  
and the sound  
of crows and  
their platinum sheen  
feeding the sky.  
Flames and greatness  
towing the names.

Give home  
to the horizon,  
horizon to mystery,  
mercy, meaning.  
I thought I  
might try to  
head out  
the door.  
The door.  
It doesn't  
matter.

I go as long  
as I go and if  
you're there  
to sparrow.  
Sparrow.

## THE PRESENT IS CONSTANT ELEGY

Those years when I was alive, I lived the era of the fast car.

There were silhouettes in gold and royal blue, a half-light in  
tire marks across a field—Times when the hollyhocks spoke.

There were weeds in a hopescape as in a painted backdrop  
there is also a face.

And then I found myself when the poem wanted me in pain  
writing this.

The sky was always there but useless—And what of the blue  
phlox, onstage and morphing.

Chance blossoms so quickly, it's a wonder we recognize  
anything, wanting one love to walk out of the ground.

Passion comes from a difficult world—I'm sick of twilight,  
when the light is crushed, time unravels its string.

Along the way I discovered a voice, a sun-stroked path  
choked with old light, a ray already blown.

Look at the world, its veil.

## NOW IT'S DARK

Not the easiest day I'm having, clouds banking  
and I dropped my signal.

I was trying to find my shoes and thought  
I am overpowered by the gigantism  
of commercial governing.

As I looked for my shoes this morning  
the thought was where am I going?

There isn't a place I can walk out from  
under this chemical sky.

So I thought I would write a poem.

I thought I would try and make art.

But the chemicals seep into everything.

Reader, if I could I would bring back for you  
a sun made in crayon.

A sun unformed in the paper sky.

I wonder the paper that made me.

Being human I know that paper makes my mind.

Strange pulp reminding me I am far away.



When my brother could no longer speak  
I said Tommy I got this  
even if I don't want this, I'll sing for you.  
When my brother had no voice there was only the couch  
and a wooden floor  
the ceiling and the TV with nothing blaring.  
When my brother lost his voice I lost my childhood  
lost the sun over sand in some place I can't remember  
in Rhode Island summer.  
So far from myself in a body I can't remember.  
To no longer remember my body as a child.  
To no longer remember today all that was.  
Van Gogh was tormented by the sun and why not.  
A constant blade-searing light that kills and cures.  
I am not comforted by the cold stability  
of universal laws  
though one day I'll die and think, that's ok.  
At least I'm writing and it makes a party in the dark.  
A zombie feature that connects me to the undying.  
I read every moment is an opportunity for grace  
and think every moment is a possibility of art.

I tie my shoes and now I am standing alone  
in some inky light.  
Yesterday I passed a Budget Motel next to  
the Peoples Bank.  
If there's some connection it's lost on me.  
My heart lost on me.  
Weather like thought dissolves into static,  
a wiggy keepsake like nesting dolls of my  
spiritual blank.  
Sky opening into blank.  
I thought grief is a form of grace.  
Then someone said the thing about money  
is that it's money.  
I live on the edge of an expanding circumference  
alone in some inky light.  
Now rain turns the world to constant applause.  
The day is uncoupled.  
All there is is thunder as the house decays  
into a sound like me.  
Freezing rain with silver seems to be speaking  
and isn't asking me anything.  
Just doing its thing in the gray morning.

I was down with materialism but  
wanted mystery.  
I've asked myself a lot of questions like  
why the day's cascade  
swiping left for life, right for lose.  
All of it a dumb show.  
All of me invested in poetry and the  
arrogance of this.  
Wanting to transpose loneliness.  
Why not take on the next life  
with its silence.  
On my desk there are small plastic creatures.  
The light on them is unrealistic.  
It uncouples me.  
Or the sight of serious windows opening out  
onto serious lawns.  
This must be a government building.  
This must be the anodyne room of  
a hospital beeping.  
Every pronouncement on the feed, alien.  
I'm in this corridor wandering a mind.  
But the day is past caring.

The rhythmus is blooming at the beginning  
of the way back when.

I am sick with tradition and its weak signaling.

Sparkling eclogues drift and contribute  
little to the cause.

I am an incident trapped in thick description.

Just google it.

Dust jacket shows some rubbing,  
near fine in cloth.