

The Tethering of Mind  
To Its Five Permanent Qualities

## ALSO BY GAIL SHER

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*For Brendan*



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NEW YEAR'S DAY SWIMMERS

*i*

In fir trees in sky, bathers on grass in no particular order. Towels strewn in no particular order.

Swimmers mostly standing in water, in sunny pool though light is muted.

Muted sounds from low benches at certain distances (air the color of crisp blue).

Clouds, sky, day, in perfect symmetry of day.

Image of boy now fading under water in shadow of darker blue water.

Pale day occurring above cold pools. Day is there next to white water and waders' bird heads.

Is white completely calm (sober) water.

As token of figure bathing and what she *feels* about bathing without reference to motion and breath.

Without reference, motion and breath *are* the composition.

A photographer sees breath as blue shadows on the bottom of a pool. The pool has no sides, no bottom, so it spills over.

Motion is outside breath in language bonded by the requisite of death in the picture.

Swimmers tread water waiting in waveless drift, as if volition (or feeling) is the karma of water.

Death is blue waterless waves in moments of preparing the picture (loose clear bodies of boys in cold swim water; bland postures of bodies wading at water's edge).

Bodies wade *inside* the water without reference to themselves in the water. Only the language of themselves wading.

In time *before* as if wading in advance. Years pass in the person wading before the water.

Proportions occur in composition of boys, water, red-and-white ball and the pool's various surfaces.

An image breaks in the internal place between two bodies.

To place herself beneath the weighty water, being water and the brain of water, is being *back* 'in' water, as in 'mother water.'

Being queer is not being the thought of oneself as that.

Being queer is the same as if one is occurring.

A field of sealed bodies limps mentally toward water.

Is repeated but is thin (what occurs lapses).

*If* she occurs is separate.

The sealed bodies of waders drift off-shore submerged.

Which is not that occurring either as it exists, ceasing and occurring.  
A length of sea, *down* in her.

Immersed in water—*being* time—suited or in the cold flesh of water. As if  
time around the water, which when occurring, is being ceasing there.

An Oranda's bulging eye perceives the pale flow of water as *fingers* of  
water, time around its head.

*Mere* voice spins on its tail toward familiar sense of twisted water, eons of  
them *wearing* water.

A syllable in the foreground is a serendipitous presence. (Others watching others in water somewhere else.)

One's hands shed sound (the intelligence of sound).

Two swans in the twist of their necks. One's hearing is the silent swans under them in the lake.

One's hearing is adjacent to the sound of them (now lit in slinky under-lake, honks simmering in little shore peep-hole).



A year ends below water. Several bodies appear surrounded by gray light.

In portentful time of being *in* the time of that which is as yet unmanifested.

The time of a wave, say, in the advent of sound before it is heard by those with hands in parkas.

Gray dawn as sound is placed on faces treading near-motionless water and expressionless bodies standing in boots at the sea's edge.

Also the experience of facing water is her facing water whether herself inside incipient sense of water.

Hearing is passed through the heads of those staring. Is an expression of sea—hearing form (entropy).

Others say nothing but in their minds is the hearing of those watching.

Which is indistinguishable from sea. And from time.

Water hearing water in the windless waiting of cold day. Its internal sound is an object of water's mind.

The heads of those immersed in water is also sound. One's hearing is also below water.

One is *being* hearing and at the same instant hearing.

One's interior sea is an object and at the same instant the mind that apprehends an object.

There is no silence in one.

Sea and words are sea hearing hearing. One imagines oneself facing hearing as aspect of hearing's sound.

On a plain there is water. Somewhere far off I hear wind or sea shattering.

A person sees direction and space without the intelligence of space (so that she is its mute face).

Faces stare at water being primitive and without location vis-à-vis water's actual boundary.

Water is there, not *for* but *being* repeating. Staring repeats the aegis of a view inclusive of itself.

A body hangs from the topmost place of water.

Inside a wave fades, e.g., there is no interior to the wave.

Yet she resides in 'no interior.'

Seeing *inside* the water's legs which is hanging.

Headless legs stand in seafoam. Others look out being on legs  
though the dripping in between is dry.

New Year's air is dry and solemn today bent near legs. A sheer leg.

*iii*

Looking through grass toward young sea water. A structure holds sea in and out of green sea-water.

Long slab of gray cold water, bodies lashed to themselves. Nothing occurs simultaneous to itself, in deep awareness of precious-moment's disappearance.

In the barren waste of vast, thin water, a falcon wears sea wild at its edge.

In slab of sea that is Dead Sea, kiosks are seen by one looking at the water.

Seen-through water, a shelf of water. The sense of sea pulled back.

Mind is green, then alone. A girl's mild body holds up like a slip.

A man is thin where he grows without hearing. Thin bird, moving against falling.

Like craziness repeating, a mind realizing hearing (the *stakes* of hearing) in the context of women asleep.

She glances at the sea, though *she* is its body. *I move but day too moves along with its falling.*

The long day slides below low clouds. White lines cut the hill horizontally.

Falling below falling, the falling of day clings, but it moves down the hill like a second pair of shoes.

A slow dog moves slowly with the blossoms' light, falling with day down to the cold sea.



A dog trots through sky, albino skin a beautiful borne white.

It shimmers in a line though it is alone. Other dogs are its borders.

As if she were day, a blind dog stops. At first it is sight, then low sight, then *she* is the sight.

Islands of rock stand in dark blue water made to appear as distant person in yellow vest.

*Do you reside? Do you not reside?* Energy, like the water, is low, seemingly bland, unruffled.

Bather's flesh is real. Mermaid's flesh glows in creamy ground of water, frosty-blue tail, sharp flapper, pointy.

Shadows on walls, like flesh, in passing moments, *is* each moment.

A full moon hangs but it is separate from night and does not spread its light anywhere.

## BARN YARD

A woman sees cows from behind slated blinds. (One slow green-lit cow.)

Luminous tiny birds in dark green columns are still-small, low-flying across the meadow.

The sound of a bird is the girl's *feeling*, not the empty bird.

One's hearing is in a mass of birds struggling (invisible scurrying touchable-but-outside the occurrence of their bodies).

Nothing moves (being destitute of hill in 'flat' hill at the ravine's bottom).

Nothing moves. Cuds move in undercurrent of dark motionless stream.

A photographer sees sky/hay/hill as composition of linear fields, muted colors divided by thin bars of black.

A tree's interior edge holds sky.

A rooster crows in thick gray air that rises then falls away rhythmically.

If I can replace myself then, taking back something from before I  
appear ordinary.

The shame of the familiar, like an ordinary barn.  
A slum in light has perfection of the afternoon.

There are lines, she is told, of carefully wrapped people.

People are dead in different colored shirts.

In the sky's translucent provenance, an elder piece of her, crooked in  
its arms like a waltz.

Trees are black in aslant nature of coming together as trees. (Dog in sweet complexion of light.)

A woman eats cheese and says her bread, which is wood, wafts from the mouth of a young girl.

Seeing imbues the loaf with food.

A girl in birds, in black sea light, rides along a canal of light.

I am their teacher so I am hurrying to get there. I begin to run.

A woman eats holding her mouth above her.

Figures emerge in rock moving normally in awareness of shorn fields.

Blackbirds rest on someone's hands in cessation of being in a particular field of sight. (Is endurance of hands or the property of folding one's fingers to make a perch for the bird's claws.)

A photograph of birds are the same birds omitted from their form so that the print is not *of* them but cut out from them and from the cessation of them.

Form without the appendages of form is an image of pure sight (omitting that action).

A red one, say, in skin narrower than herself.

If she's confined letting the skin loose. A girl is a chair sometimes in expanded position of slingback. If she's washed herself.

Where she would be fully sleeping next to it. Feeling its walls.

An empty mouth like sun comes where she does it, though its layers and layers smell like the inside of her body.

His pee in the gush of some riverless doorway there.

A 'we' suspends out, being outside water peeing or inside to feel the warm drift of legs.



*iii*

Mute in sun. Of bare air in day. Dog in sand spreading time through tall blue summer.

A man sees time from before or during himself, days of himself in continuous parallel lines.

A road veers off to unseeable distant landscape known by him once.

Waiting is touching. Still-summer air inside seated person in blank moment of dog.

A woman faces dog, though light becomes something modular.

Emptiness and light compose the luminosity of her voice beyond the composition of any structure.

Emptiness and light compose the luminosity of *his* face. He looks at the grass and this knowledge makes the grass warm.

Trees listen like grass, the *other* of myself, interior line of time  
endowing hearing with time.

Trees soak through time.

So she's dead. *There*, in morning light. The *other* of time spanned  
over light.

Not as in death but simply ceasing, though she continues to be alive.

Day falls and if she thinks it is her mother, a bell rings in her skin.

Light falls like a mask while she eats her bread. *I am dizzy with bread*, she acknowledges.

What is the connection between resting as a *place* where light is a place and the immanence of the place like a dark (dissociative) fugue?

What is the connection between her face in the sky and the never-never land of her being my mother?

The immanence of her face, flat as water, though I have never known her at all?

Slowly she becomes my mother. Night falls on black branches of something generous.

## HALLOWEEN

A child reads. Winter sun pours through the salon windows.

*Is that a skull? I mean on your big toe. Can I see your toe?  
Would you show my daughter your toe?* she repeats to the girl  
applying peachy-orange polish on her child's.

*That is cool! O my god. That is so cool.*

*Would you like one? You can have one. I mean I'm just saying  
you can if you want. It's up to you.*

Oneself as a child with those who frequent the salon being absorbed.  
Sun drains from the sky into the salon's flattening skylight.

People are not visible, barricaded off, so that she can be arriving  
there, slowly behind her mother.

Her agency cut off. Her mother's agency also cut off.

A man alone gazes at sky. He is writing. Light pours through the window.

Before dawn a man stands at his stove silently filling a thermos. Watching sky someone thinks of him writing. So that the day is expunged with the exception of his writing.

A man writes looking at sky. The day is cold in mind of person imagining him writing.

The gray lug of sky only appears interiorly.

Things ahead of one occurring.

A dog seen from its side is not the dog's profile but 'as if' cut out from its side. The dog is itself, not overlaid on its side.

Seeing the dream's sound, being boisterous automaton of dog overlaid on its side.

Hearing-behind-hearing is simultaneous occurrence of before and after hearing *how* hearing exists cut out from its own side.

The rose is from a former dream. It could be blue. Many windows open, exposed to the sun's heat.

I dreamed the dream *before* dreaming it, standing in sun imagining the rose alive.

Imagining oneself abandoned in the sense of alone on a street with or without flowers.

Its beauty outside the purview of one.



The wing of her foot in dream of blue-lit space where a peacock squanders herself. A nest of small birds also squander themselves. A child squatting before the nest stirs the nest with a stick.

It comes to one there, the sequence of who she is.

If eating there, being ahead of one's thorough eating, her back to eating as in the dream before the tree.

One's dream is not later, e.g., tall wing of peacock squandering is whole (may not be crushed or heard outside itself later).

One remains behind, which is a direction of force. Staying *in* 'behind' as if one were exterior to oneself, in a 'hole' of oneself.

Being 'there'—in the imprint of seized—the thought seized.

The smell of cold as minutes pass.

To sleep or to sleep back where *is* is *in* sleep or dreaming he is allowed to sleep.

DEAD

*i*

In morning light reading. A woman sits informally, elbows on chair, in square of light from window to her left.

Porosity of light holds resting in silent form.

Day too is quiet like a river drifts, arcs over her hearing.

A woman holds the color of herself, height of room and quiet, as if time and mind exist because their origins are fallow.

A woman in light merges with light which is postureless.

She is young inside her sitting spread in morning light.

A woman in chair is necessarily alone. Shadows bend wood against its destination.

Matter dissolves in undercurrent of herself drifting away from her harmless body.

Is it flowers or my mind emptying of them, though they remain in sight?

She may also be old. Her neck is old bent over a book. (Bathing cap and girl with octopus staring at sand, not moving.)

So dying arises. A viewpoint uninscribed.

A place utterly familiar dissolves inside you. Time dissolves, carved out of snow.

Yellow is how, in the fury of night, while daylight on land is, like a woman in the morning.

*ii*

In darkness behind something, can of something.

A building glows as if it were teeth.

Naming the mother out. Naming her outside beauty.

Like the stillness of a flavor, finding it in an old can.

I wind myself around the can's sweet edge.

The synapse between light and light's real life.

*I am real*, she thinks. Like a gash in sky, a dune is not washed of lit  
dune night.

From beyond light, the deep act of *being in light*.

It rocks in a tree she fears may be stolen.

So it's *singular light*, its own knothole of light that slips through the flower's markings.

A color is heard. (Net of warmth, through the grass to the tree's edge.)

Wilderness accrues in great spots of white.

The dog is my mother rotating on earth white-skinned.



O she is dirty. Like the end of memory, some form on her body  
beyond her own grasp.

A tourist at death impersonates someone trying to be her again and  
again.

Another person keeps her. In latent light the rescinding memory of  
that boundary.

Another person is a memory of sound retaining the physical latency  
of having once heard sound.

*iii*

A woman is bare in bare bowl of wind.

Lips green, pain the shape of day. She divides pain into sections.

A man waits for death watching birds' concoctions from their throat.

Fresh wind blows waking birds in net of family bowls.

I draw wind in my mind. Your beard creates little steps for it to rest.

Stepping over stones where rocking animals sleep. (She'd thought the leaf had them also.)

A buzzard begins, swings its heavy, lazy body. *It's the leaf's death.*  
*Inside rocking's skeleton.*

It is young-dead, waiting in the coverlet for birth to happen.

A big bowl opens. A vulture easily in distant sky fills around my being.

The placelessness of birth dawns in her mind. *May you belong here. May you swing over from death's outer edges.*

Crickets hearing death grow still. (And underneath, as if the chirps were water.)

Like a fledgling's open throat. A fledgling seeing a flower knows her throat after that day.

*iv*

A word touches you after me and before me.

Something appears blue, scrapes the backbones of this color,  
wishing that I am a blue person in the supreme daylight of blue.

The shadow of your word falls against my home. Who you are in the  
dream of my mother whose tongue has touched a lighted field.

Rushing sky she will touch other animals who face downward.

So I begin in words. Sitting down and emptying her, like a tourist latent in a guesthouse window.

*Will I recognize her face? (Because my mind preempts her face.)*

Once I forget. I race down the entire dream, imbricated, scales loosely dangling, like the mother-tongue of a stranger.

Hearing forms a line (a column in the mountain whose groin is the mountain).

My hearing is a sea of birds pressed inside their voices.

My hearing is a world shed as a locale once qualified to constellate  
mind.

Like a paper doll I lay flat.

Her eyes follow my voice, seeing my hearing back to its loosened  
page.

Who are you mother? Where, among myself, can you plan who I am?

You are born inside my body, lusting after my thigh.

A body parts from where it's left off. An ace or queen, a paradigm  
which can be touchless.

If you fake me, who will I be ?



If you appear my image of you shifts. (Not having readiness for a person shifts the mind in which the potential person exists.)

Which shifts the language creating that person. I translate you to being *in* and *out* of your presence and the translation is like your presence within the boundary of a word.

The thought of clean air is a foray toward a word, as if a word were a place for her to store herself. Inside the word's claw.

A woman shaves words picking up one at a time from a little bowl.

The word's 'other side' exists prior to the word.

There is no hearing outside *being* hearing, thinking one's sound is that.

A word's sound is separate from its wordness. The 'action' (karma) of a word's sound being also separate.

Reading sound, recognizing a notation as conveying one's interior sound simultaneous to hearing in one where 'one' is the same.

Outside one is also the same.

There is no same outside time. A sound repeats but it is not the same (though its label is the same). Time doesn't repeat.

A person doesn't repeat.

A crow caws, which may be interior at the same time as hearing in one.

Jays caw. Jays won't eat plums though there are millions of fallow plums.

A line spreads to the indefinite distance altering with every shift of light the millions of redwings on phone wires.

Already her skin occurring in the phone wires, dark in dark night.

The *result*? Sound hearing itself as sound or hearing itself as hearing with or without sound.

A cello at dusk makes the blue sound of a river.

A crow's caw is itself throbbing.

A woman bird struts across the green.

A woman's wooden bird is violet-colored (loud) in the smooth cream of a dream.

Her crow is full (empty of sound) carried in her violet dress.

She groks some sound strutting through leaves near the riverbed.

In the pearls of her feathers is a head being her enjoyment.

The young throb of her body is pure mahogany throb of young bird then (as if birds were, already occurring, in moment before now).

Snow birds in exotic black flap then.

*Telling who telling who in mirrorlike shaft of moon.*

One fox in late light empties like sun. (White head in snow spilling herself into us.)

Suddenly swirling so that snow scrapes snow, continuously, like a tuba.

Fingering these years of snow, fragments of snow, suddenly (where I am).

I wash myself in thin night land, like night on a pony, skin scratched of light.

A glint of fog makes them be together in a pile.

A pile of horses neighs, stops in weatherless hill, eye-whites in mud.

Stepping backwards into water, nostrils bleached in odd pattern of children.

One horse empties into red Mongolian arrows.

Washing herself like a black bead.

Washing themselves into white sand.

A meadow is where their thin black shawls dissolve into water. Wild birds dissolve into scaffolding of water.

Water glows flat. A brown girl enters a river in late light.

Among her is a swamp. Now present in a dance as if she is waking  
(first) between herself.

A girl enters her body first.

Sisters occur. (I am borrowed together with my mother.) As if  
hearing the cry of her own future child imprinted in her femur.

A fetus moves, birds, trees, former pets.

Wool is made from parallel sheep in arbitrary cubicles in sky.

He sings to them such that his voice is like a large mother's palm.

Here is a lamb from where it was once. (Because she saw him once.  
Sky on clean line of ceiling, rafters holding up ceiling.)

Though her condition arises from touching, she cannot imagine  
herself as an object.

He lays the bird aside so that his children may see it but not know it.



A proprietor is thin. Her arms are shaped like paper. Which she folds like a doll's paper.

Drawers full of paper are of different weights and textures like a man she knows that reminds her of a city.

He plays horn. The gold in her cloak becomes the color of his skin waiting.

The time of his voice seems separate from the steady *sotto* voice that could be a doll's voice.

She takes place in his legs like the legs of her husband. (Legs fold in manner of his countrymen.)

She thinks, *Good. Now I can be like a line moving forward outside present time.*

The edge of her in her clothes is so thin it might break in her clothes.

Not a fetish but still knowing that the fetus is buried.

A child breaks up. Is intensity not-yet-worked. (Repeatedly becoming an object of *formed or shaped intensity*.)

A brass's ethos retains. It places anywhere in a formerly-worked object.

Hearing the stark name of a previous person. One may write the person.

Entering memory (an object in her mouth), ladling it up, placing it slowly where it belongs.

Your willowness enters song. You delicately twist your hair to a feeling that's like a country.

The pain of sight together, now in a specific setting, where a person's capacity for song (metonymy) fits tight.

A dog gobbles flowers. Space retains his passing.

A child waits, like weeds wait for flowers, retaining the passing of former names.

THE PALLIATIVE OF MIND

*i*

A rock drinks an animal's life, easing it into the mountain. If a sentence goes on, it's her mind stringing pieces of her eyes.

Seeing the movement *before* the animal and hunt and hunt, as if its skin were alive.

*Before the air, that was the air of the people, lilies were private flowers,* she was thinking. (A flower's skin may be public skin yet lay beneath private air.)

An eagle turns, *repairing* air, like a squirrel turns to face a flower, as if some band affixed him to the flower and he is sure it is *that* flower.

The gallop of a squirrel is mixed with air, *carved air*, yellow like  
cowslips.

Throwing itself after air (but the cool flank of air). *I know air  
already*, you murmur.

The way light hits a flower or stone at dawn. Night *behind* night,  
blood in sunlight rising.

An animal, young in sky, washes back from sky. So I memorize sky,  
at the same time *think* of sky.

Wind becomes sky, light through distant tree trunks if sky were there, or, light with trees with no sky allowed.

A bird hops on grass, *weathering* the grass, leaving little igloos of white.

Lines of a bird grow down the bird. *Will grass survive its wing's blue tip?*

An old jay caws but its caw lacks the shrill, coarse modulations of a jay's caw.

A bird in flight brushes a flower's head.

Waiting rests as day passes in the flower's knowledge.

How the day as it rests admits further day. Like a flower is alive and its secondary life, encapsulated off, will not be allowed to overflow into it.

When the day ceases to be day because, you say, *it's fixed*, I know this.

A quip of birds from the far river rise. A hill slides into the valley's dark night while someone reads pressing himself open.



A gull circles a wedge of water, marking the water with her eye. The memory of her skin is limitless, like the memory of her cry, before a kill or later for the sake of others.

Wind, too, gains qualities by its forcefulness with things, its *hand*, say (a piece of sun cut off).

A crack in light, like a painting of light.

*The palette of wind is gold, she mutters, the boundary of a man playing chess in light being the dead person.*

A flower emits voices behind falling sun.

A flower is soft and the pain of soft reminds her of a sea of heads.

As if her life dreams its own violence. If a bird disappears, she may have asked for this to happen.

She begins to think that mountains wash out mountains. That the sea of heads form a land on which to walk, which she calls the *isthmus of larks*.

So a bird flies flat and what is it about its sleek blue mind.

*Is a bird a bird or quality of place dawned by the bird?* you mutter.

You look at a chirp, though it could be surreal. A tree *comes* just at the point of sky.

Phenomenology of the tree rides not so much on the stature of the tree but like the tap of a cane, where it goes after it is hidden.

A sycamore branch in late light sheds, as if sun splashes scattered shards of larks through needles of light-fall.

Time is little drops like from a spout drip-dropping the bough.

*Its stem is underground*, someone says, and I have a memory of a double stream flowing deep beneath the earth.

You tap on the stream to *awaken the stream* so that the leaves stop shaking their light out of it.



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