ALSO BY PETER GIZZI

Archeophonics
Threshold Songs
The Outernationale
Some Values of Landscape and Weather
Artificial Heart
Periplum and other poems
NOW IT’S DARK
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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
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,
wavering 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.
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
wished for 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 pronunciation 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.