

Four Poems

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Lungscapes

The fricative reclines in its resonance
across languages and landscapes /
landskappe en tongskappe /
vibrating at the frequency of speech

The thing about expansiveness
is that it never comes to an end / *einder*
being a placeholder for the line of sight
circling around continents / consonants
thrill-seeking and trilling

Each word sinks beneath the horizon
of its throat. Oral moon leaves one last ovum
glimmering in the nighttime stratum
of the sentence. Straddling grammar,
the egg / *eier* / *eie* / *ei* / staggers inside its own
weight, the shell needling its decline
with the technology of a crack

Crack the whip of vocab. *Eina*,
roep die sin / sinful / *sonde* / *sondage*.
See, a survey of sounds
shows a sensational reliance on similarity,
on familiarity, intimacy, coitus interruptus,
on a firm verbal handshake shivering

across the surface of poems, loanwords,
and dictionaries in all languages

Dipping in and out of relevance /
reverb fricative / returns with daybreak /
line break / crisps diction with gruff
crackling of spikes, spittle, and frills

To separate a sound into functionality,
then to reunite it with gentle endlessness /
langskap einders of / lungscapes

Landskappe (Afrikaans) landscapes
En (Afrikaans) and
Tongskappe (Afrikaans) tonguescapes (neologism)
Einder (Afrikaans) horizon
Eier (Afrikaans) egg
Eie (Afrikaans) own
Ei (Afrikaans) used in "vir 'n appel en 'n ei" for a mere song
Eina, roep die sin (Afrikaans) ouch! the sentence exclaims
Sonde (Afrikaans) sin
Sondage (French) survey
Langskap (Afrikaans) longscape (neologism)
Einders (Afrikaans) horizons
Of (Afrikaans) or

Shine a poem / poets 'n gedig

Past tense *ge-*

Present tense *gedig*

Present tense *dig*

Past tense *dug*

*Ge-*dig

Dig the poem / *gedug*

Dug the poem

Gedugte digter

Daunting poet

Poets 'n gedig

Present tense *dig*

To compose a poem

Past tense *gedig*

To have composed

Present tense *gedig*

Past tense *ge-*

Ge- (Afrikaans) prefix for past tense formation

Gedig (Afrikaans) poem

Dig (Afrikaans) to write poetry

Gedug / gedugte (Afrikaans) daunting, formidable

Poets 'n gedig (Afrikaans) polish, shine a poem

Mouthing mouth thing

The mouth is a land-locked organ	<i>mond</i>
with an opening into air,	
in other words,	
the mouth is a coastal organ	<i>monding</i>
expressing itself into the water known as air,	
in other words,	
sky inlets enter the body	
that is land that is being,	<i>mond ding</i>
in other words,	
words and air trade	
is	
for	
<i>is</i>	
in the soft airstrip of in-between	<i>mondig</i>

Mond (Afrikaans) mouth
Mond (German) moon
Monding (Afrikaans) estuary
Mond ding (Afrikaans) mouth thing
Mondig (Afrikaans) of age
Is (Afrikaans) is

-ing / ge-

Breath becomes breathe
and spit becomes spirit.
Just like giving up the ghost *gee die gees*
lets the geese take wing
as if wings were for the taking

One wing is
-ing and and the other *ge-*
Verb becoming noun and *gees gegee*
noun becoming past
continuity, an asymmetry

of wings and lungs
lunging along the migratory
patterns of the chest. *heilige gees*
Wings grafted to the back,
breathing the outer air

Gee die gees (Afrikaans) give up the ghost
Ge- (Afrikaans) prefix for past tense formation
Gees gegee (Afrikaans) gave up the ghost
Heilige gees (Afrikaans) holy ghost

The preceding poems are excerpted from a new and still in-progress manuscript written in collaboration with Khashayar Mohammadi. Composed trilingually in English, Afrikaans, and Farsi, the manuscript hinges on the shared x (or g) fricative sound prevalent in both Afrikaans and Farsi.