



I N F L O R E S C E N C E

Incise the beginning and end to all motion;
q w e r t y u i o p, in a line above your fingertips;
align river stones for a walkway;
halt at clusters of notes from swinging copper-green wind chimes;
shovel twigs and beer cans out of a ditch;
this wave of pollen light on your face is the end of summer;
rub Maximilian sunflower petals with your hands;
sniff red silk pine-bark patterned gauze unearthed out of a tomb;
splay juniper with an ax;
water brims her eyes when you stroke her wrist;
a *Bombyx mori* consumes mulberry leaves for seven days;
ponder a missing shade of blue;
sweat when you eat that Chimayo chili stuffed lamb;
graze patches of faint aquamarine paint on a bathroom door;
revolve a polygon inside a circle;
squint up at a magpie nest in the cottonwood branches;
survey a skater's mark left on the ice in executing a half-turn;
inscribe the beginning and end to all motion.

Arthur Sze
from *Inflorescence*, section 4

Arthur Sze

In the rose light

no red-tailed hawk, no crows,
no geese, no raccoon tracks
by the door; when a magpie
flaps across the road,
disappears beyond the window
frame, I ponder frames –
glasses, door jamb, beehive,
a moment of stillness – trace
an intimate geography:
son in Albany donating a cell
phone so that someone he
will never meet may call
911; clusters of wild irises
in the field; daughter glimpsed
through the doorway, arms
raised, in a ballerina pose,
then, in ten minutes, asleep;
though the pink and orange
bougainvilleas are not yet
budding, I incandesce to
our firelight, to the ten years
we have entwined each other.

Arthur Sze

The Press at the Palace of the Governors
Number Two in the Santa Fe Poet Laureate Series. Fall, 2006

Arthur Sze

29/60

QUALIA

“Oviparous,” she says, “A duck-billed platypus is oviparous.” Strapped in her car seat, she colors an array of tulips on white paper. Stopped at a light on Highway 285, he stares at a gas station, convenience store. A man steps out with a six-pack under his right arm, while she repeats last night’s queries: Why does the Nile flow north? Who was Nefertiti?

And as cars accelerate, he knows the silver one in the rearview mirror will pass him on the right before he reaches the hilltop. She sounds out “red”: what was the shape and color of a triceratops egg? Though a chart can depict how height and weight unfold along time, no chart can depict how imagination unfolds, endlessly branching.

As sunlight slants over the Sangre de Cristos, he notices Tesuque Pueblo police have pulled a pickup off the highway. At school, lined up for kindergarten, she waves, and he waves back. As classmates enter, she waves, and, again, he waves back, waves at apple blossoms unfolding white along a studio wall, at what is shed and slithering into pellucid air.

Arthur Sze

The Press at the Palace of the Governors
Number Three in the Santa Fe Poet Laureate Series. Spring, 2007

Arthur Sze

29/60

THE GIFT

The pieces of this jigsaw puzzle
will form King Tut's gold face,
but, at the moment, they are bits
of color strewn on the floor.

These moments of consciousness
have no jigsaw fit — heartbeat
of a swallow in flight, bobcat
prints across the Winsor Trail,
premonition that joy lurks inside
a match, uprooting sunflower stalks,
tipping an urn from a bridge
so that ashes form a cloud.

The pieces of a life stay pieces
at the end. No one restores papyrus
once it has erupted into flame;
but before agapanthus blooms,
before body scorches, razes
consciousness, you have time
to puzzle, sway, lurch, binge,
skip, doodle, whine, incandesce.

Arthur Sze

The Press at the Palace of the Governors
Number Four in the Santa Fe Poet Laureate Series. Summer, 2007

h. s. sze

Spectral Line

The stillness of heart-shaped leaves breaks
when a grasshopper leaps. I have never
watched so many inch along branches before.
Though they have devastated butterfly bushes,
they have left these lilacs unscathed, but can I
shrug, be marathoner-running-into-spring-light-
over-piñon-dotted-hills? The mind may snag,
still, weigh, sift, incubate, unbalance,
spark, rebalance, mend, release; when one
neighbor cuts grasses infested with grasshoppers,
inadvertently drives them into another's
organic farm loaded with beets, lettuce, basil,
carrots, kale, chard: we cannot act as if
we were asleep, do not entrench boundaries
but work to dissolve them. From light to dark
is a pass of how many miles? Together they sowed
dark millet and reclaimed the reed marsh.
As we entwine in darkness-beginning-to-trace-
light, dew evaporates off tips of grasses.

Arthur Sze
from *Spectral Line*, section 3