



# 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*

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*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*

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# THE GIFT

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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.

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Arthur Sze

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## 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