

Honoring Our Stories

Listen, the stones speak to you;

Fossils speak to you.

The mastodon bones in the valley speak to you their story.

Listen, the blue and striped fish in the aquarium speak to you when they dip and rise, spin and peck and hide;

The dancer is speaking to you in the shape of her hands.

Listen, the man with the sign on the street is speaking to you, a different story than the sign tells.

Listen, the pot is speaking to you about use and beauty, and the painting is speaking to you its blue heart.

Listen, the poem is telling its story and the story is telling its writer's story.

Listen, the newspaper is telling the story of its reporters-- watch out!

The song is speaking to you, the violin is telling its maker and musician's story and the story of its composer, and the story of music.

The bird pecking bark is speaking to you, and in a few weeks, cranes will travel through speaking, speaking in tongues.

Listen, even if you don't speak Spanish, the Spanish is speaking to you, and the German. If you don't speak English, still, it is speaking to you. Listen. And speak.

The tags on passing train cars are speaking to you.

At dawn, go out early, and hear the stars speaking their story of the night and the beginning of time as they fade, and the sun speaking as she reappears, and watch the earth speak her story as her curve bends away from you, speaking horizon, speaking origin, immigrant, and memory.

Listen, your teacher is telling her story. Wonder: What has she lived that has brought her to this?

Listen, your students are telling their stories with their eyes, with their being-on-time-ness and their lateness, with their questions, their missed classes and their excellence.

Listen, your college is telling you a story about its founding, and its fears, and its hope.

And your roommate who has in his earbuds (but you can hear the music tinnily banging his ear) is telling you his story with his lost socks and his papers and his books and posters and the crusty easy mac cup.

Listen, your story is speaking to you, the hurts and the gifts that have brought you here.

Listen, these stories want to be heard, these stories want to be told.