

ELLA STANDAGE

rosetta

you find me sandblistered.
maybe i am the thumbnail of a giant.
maybe i am a map in braille leading to the vault
where every lost language sleeps, or maybe i am the key.
or a dislocated tongue, & you put me in a mouth that isn't mine
& let me garble out alien shapes; you put me to your ear & hear god's
fingerprints coming down the phone, hieroglyphs dancing like soundwaves.

decide. you want to turn symbol into sound, to pronounce geometry's hidden equations? you want to transliterate a handprint, or to know the phonetics of colour, or to lip-read an echo? do you want to reconstruct unravelled syntax, or glimpse punctuation in a movement? here, take me apart for answers. i could drip-feed you ciphertext until you decrypted my jigsaw-piece syllables, words encoded, meaning lurking behind each grapheme. if you let me / if you help me / it's conditional, you see. i want you to speak me back to life, to inject me with morse for a pulse. i want to be read, to be heard, to be understood. i want an eternity in my symbols. i want you to dissect language & give it its heartbeat back.

but / i fill your mouth with dust. my definition hides itself in the ashes of a burnt library. semantics: noun, three vowels, six consonants, a collection of sounds arranged without meaning. letters deconstructed, sentences undone. your tongue falls asleep, silent alphabets nestle behind your teeth & all the airwaves go quiet. so you never speak my sounds out loud; so my name //////////////// comes apart in your mouth, & your lips part, / & all the syllables fall out. so i looked for a voice & found—only this—myself—language—unwound—
only a sound / only a sound / onlyasound / nly s nd