

1-30-2013

## Phonophobia

Kerri Meyer  
*Grand Valley State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/amaranthus>

---

### Recommended Citation

Meyer, Kerri (1996) "Phonophobia," *Amaranthus*: Vol. 1996: Iss. 1, Article 6.  
Available at: <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/amaranthus/vol1996/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Amaranthus by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@gvsu.edu](mailto:scholarworks@gvsu.edu).

Kerri Meyer *Phonophobia*

Not having heard the sound of his own breath  
since the moment of his birth--  
some indescribably small and precious thing inside his head,  
not whole, not quite beautiful--  
he knew nothing of the words that passed aloud  
between his mother and the physician.

He clapped his hands together without knowing  
the sound of skin on skin and threw his head back,  
his mouth open in mute laughter at the notion  
sung to him by his mother's deft hands.  
The doctor smiled and mussed the boy's hair  
like a proud uncle at a nephew's first step.

Too soft, too sweet air fills the nostrils of the child.  
His hands twist spasmodically in an eloquent expression of fear.  
His mother smiles and pats his forehead,  
and just as the sterile green drape lifts over his head,  
his eyelashes drop. The healer takes in his practiced hand  
the white-hot light and begins to fix what has been broken.

Eyelids tremble open to find a ceiling of blue balloons  
and a wall of flowers and his mother there with the surgeon.  
The ache in his head makes him whimper.  
He cannot know yet that the quiet is unbearably heavy  
as the doctor slowly unwraps the swaths of thick cotton from his ears.  
Mother smiles, draws a breath and whispers the boy's name.

All-hearing eyes widen in terror; he crumples like silk to his pillow  
as he hears the voice and the sound of his own first scream.  
The noise of his own sobs sets his body to shaking uncontrollably  
as every word of comfort that falls from his mother's once safe and peaceful lips  
accosts his new ears like an alien howl, like light after the darkest, smallest room.  
The triumph of medicine leaves the fragile masterpiece in tears, clutching his shoulders.