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14 Sonnets (For Ted Berrigan)

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14 SONNETS (For Ted Berrigan)

SONNET I. *The death sentence*

The death sentence is justified at the margins,
Even at both ends.
The line bends across the page,
Must walk the lonely street,
Like your thighs upon the sheet.
There is no punctuation: the feet
Step heavily on the white field,
Accused by silence: excited by rage:
The only "stop" signs are at the margins.
The only other sign is: "yield".
Even as the poem bends
And twists like a wind-burnt tree
It cannot be free.
It must stop at the margins.

SONNET II. *Even at both ends*

Even at both ends,
Even as the poem bends,
It cannot be free.
Accused by silence: excited by rage,
The only "stop" signs are at the margins,
It must stop at the margins.
Step heavily on the white field.
Like your thighs upon the sheet,
The line bends across the page
And twists like a wind-burnt tree:
There is no punctuation: the feet
Must walk the lonely street:
The death sentence is justified at the margins:
The only other sign is: "yield".

SONNET III. *The line bends*

The line bends across the page,
Accused by silence: excited by rage:
There is no punctuation: the feet,
Like your thighs upon the sheet,
Step heavily on the white field.
Even as the poem bends
The only other sign is: "yield":
The only "stop" signs are at the margins:
Even at both ends
It must stop at the margins,
Must walk the lonely street.
The death sentence is justified at the margins,
And twists like a wind-burnt tree.

SONNET IV. *Must walk the lonely street*

Must walk the lonely street
Like your thighs upon the sheet:
Step heavily on the white field:
It cannot be free.
Even as the poem bends
There is no punctuation: the feet,
Even at both ends,
Accused by silence: excited by rage.
The only "stop" signs are at the margins.
The line bends across the page.
The only other sign is: "yield".
The death sentence is justified at the margins,
And twists like a wind-burnt tree.
It must stop at the margins.

SONNET V. *Like your thighs upon the sheet*

Like your thighs upon the sheet,
The death sentence is justified at the margins.
The line bends across the page,
Must walk the lonely street.
Step heavily on the white field
Even as the poem bends
Accused by silence: excited by rage,
Even at both ends.
There is no punctuation: the feet,
the only "stop" signs, are at the margins.
The only other sign is: "yield",
And twists like a wind-burnt tree.
It must stop at the margins.
It cannot be free.

SONNET VI. *There is no punctuation*

There is no punctuation: the feet
Accused by silence: excited by rage,
Must walk the lonely street,
Even as the poem bends.
The line bends across the page
And twists like a wind-burnt tree:
Like your thighs upon the sheet.
Step heavily on the white field:
The only other sign is: "yield",
Even at both ends.
It cannot be free.
It must stop at the margins.
The only "stop" signs are at the margins.
The death sentence is justified at the margins.

SONNET VII. *Step heavily on the white field*

Step heavily on the white field.
There is no punctuation: the feet
Even as the poem bends,
And twists like a wind-burnt tree,
Like your thighs upon the sheet,
Must walk the lonely street.
The death sentence is justified at the margins.
Even at both ends
It must stop at the margins:
The only "stop" signs are at the margins.
The only other sign is: "yield".
It cannot be free.
The line bends across the page,
Accused by silence: excited by rage.

SONNET VIII. *Accused by silence*

Accused by silence: excited by rage,
It must stop at the margins:
It cannot be free
Like your thighs upon the sheet.
Even as the poem bends
The only "stop" signs are at the margins:
There is no punctuation: the feet
Step heavily on the white field.
The death sentence is justified at the margins,
And twists like a wind-burnt tree,
Even at both ends.
The line bends across the page:
The only other sign is: "yield":
Must walk the lonely street.

SONNET IX. *The only "stop" signs*

The only "stop" signs are at the margins,
Accused by silence: excited by rage.
It must stop at the margins,
Like your thighs upon the sheet.
The only other sign is: "yield",
And twists like a wind-burnt tree,
Even at both ends.
There is no punctuation: the feet,
Even as the poem bends,
Must walk the lonely street:
The death sentence is justified at the margins.
The line bends across the page:
It cannot be free.
Step heavily on the white field.

SONNET X. *The only other sign*

The only other sign is: "yield",
Like your thighs upon the sheet.
There is no punctuation: the feet.
Even as the poem bends,
Step heavily on the white field.
It must stop at the margins,
And twists like a wind-burnt tree,
Accused by silence: excited by rage.
The only "stop" signs are at the margins:
The line bends across the page,
Even at both ends.
The death sentence is justified at the margins:
Must walk the lonely street.
It cannot be free.

SONNET XI. *Even as the poem bends*

Even as the poem bends
And twists like a wind-burnt tree,
The death sentence is justified at the margins.
Even at both ends
The only "stop" signs are at the margins,
The only other sign is: "yield".
It cannot be free,
Must walk the lonely street:
It must stop at the margins,
Step heavily on the white field.
There is no punctuation: the feet,
Accused by silence: excited by rage,
The line bends across the page,
Like your thighs upon the sheet.

SONNET XII. *And twists*

And twists like a wind-burnt tree
Must walk the lonely street
Accused by silence: excited by rage:
The only other sign is: "yield"
The only "stop" signs are at the margins
Like your thighs upon the sheet.
Even as the poem bends
The death sentence is justified at the margins:
Even at both ends:
It cannot be free.
There is no punctuation: the feet
Step heavily on the white field.
The line bends across the page:
It must stop at the margins.

SONNET XIII. *It cannot be free*

It cannot be free:
Accused by silence: excited by rage:
It must stop at the margins.
The only "stop" signs are at the margins,
Even as the poem bends,
The line bends across the page:
The death sentence is justified at the margins.
There is no punctuation: the feet,
Like your thighs upon the sheet,
Must walk the lonely street.
The only other sign is: "yield",
And twists like a wind-burnt tree.
Step heavily on the white field,
Even at both ends.

SONNET XIV. *It must stop at the margins*

It must stop at the margins:
Must walk the lonely street:
Even as the poem bends:
There is no punctuation: the feet
Accused by silence, excited by rage.
It cannot be free,
And twists like a wind-burnt tree.
The only "stop" signs are at the margins.
Even at both ends
The death sentence is justified at the margins.
The only other sign is: "yield".
Step heavily on the white field:
Like your thighs upon the sheet,
The line bends across the page.
L. Eric Greinke