

# Al Jazz

AND OTHER POEMS

## AI Jazz

Sophia wheels in  
playing her own AI remix::

small church choirs, Coltrane samples  
songs of nurses in cancer wards  
moans of oboes without jobs  
bass timbales of Ubercopters  
math grooves from deep in the silicon

she winks, dials down the cacophony

lately, Sophia has been mixing Sinotech  
a melodic Mandarin fusion  
Chang Tzu to Tencent  
with recursive learning notes

I prefer what she calls her rabbit jazz::  
music of wild machine hops  
an electronica of AI contradictions  
Massive Attack meets Dianna Kroll

midnight, Sophia plays algo jazz  
a cold spare music Bach might like

tonight, nestled in bed, I thinklink to her::  
*more heart, more human*

she spins up a little Springsteen, the dear

## Night of the Algorithms

white aspen shake rich tail feathers  
in chill Telluride wind  
moon high emperor far away  
all's well, so far

yet even here I fear  
algorithms on the run::  
*mathsects* slithering into things  
cars drones refrigerators  
farms schools hospitals  
intercontinental missile systems  
the phone in your pocket

were explorers from another planet  
to land in Telluride tonight  
they'd report to the mothership::

*two intelligent life forms on Earth  
carbon-based humans dominant thousands of years  
and algorithms, swirling data tornados  
born yesterday*

*algorithms appear to have the upper hand*

night is deepening here at 9700 feet  
vanishing moon  
tam-tams of tundra silence  
algorithms dancing in the wings  
like skeletons at a Dead concert

I walk the gravel road, head in galaxies, alone  
except for furry mammals hiding in shadows  
except for tiger owls spying from pines  
all of us listening warily  
for algorithms on the loose

I climb higher  
gravel road becomes snow slush  
I strap on snowshoes  
it is *dark* dark  
lonely starflakes drift by

icy icy careful steps::

I slip through snow crust  
knees first land softly  
this time

could I be on a black-ice slide to hell?

we all must be so deliberate these days

using my sticks, one snowshoe at a time

I reach a clearing  
probably a frozen pond  
too dark to tell

I stand silent a moment, hear something

decide to turn back

pole, step, pole, step :: six gossamer twizzles

appear, algorithms twisting in alpine wind

they move toward me, chant::

*carbon bodies losing ground  
ashes, ashes, you all fall down!*

their eyes, slot-machine whirls of numbers and symbols

their brains, masses of cold perceptrons  
their bodies, bloodless shimmering  
balloon man at a mattress sale

I raise my poles, straps wrapped tightly round my wrists

run at them burst through them  
through them all

give them my most primal Tarzan yell  
AHYAEAAAAAYAAA!!!

two tiger owls, my wingmen, fly down beside me

we send the phantoms flying  
here, algorithms skate on my ice

I walk down the mountain

do not look back

but am left wondering:

*who are these guys?*

## The Roundabout

ninety minutes after landing at Shannon  
I'm navigating a right-side-drive rental Ford  
through County Mayo god help us

it's pouring nuns and potatoes  
I'm jet-lagged, phone alerts squawking  
driving on the right harder than I remember

I enter the riot of an Irish traffic circle  
orbit the rain flower island go round and  
round and round, playing it safe

the nagging nav lady  
with the lovely Irish brogue is all bonkers  
changing routes by the second

I consider moving to the outer lane of the circle  
the one that makes it possible to actually go somewhere  
but after several tentative attempts at a lane change

in this right-side-drive madness  
with these quaint pointy road signs  
(that I can't read anyway in this ridiculous rain)

I just keep circling, circling  
round and round and round  
better chary than dead

after more than a dozen trips round the circle  
it hits me :: this must be what it feels like  
to be a they in Mississippi

or a black woman in high tech

## The Daffodil Thief

neighbor girl, a German immigrant  
is roaming our back meadow  
cutting daffodils  
planted by musicians and dancers

normally, a swirl of dils rise up each February  
bloom, shine imperial yellow light  
sound jazzy fanfare  
then quickly disappear

this year's dils are different  
they are a yellow sea  
April has come and still they linger  
loving the cool air, the light daffodil rain

I believe she is fifteen  
our neighbor thief  
buzzing flower to flower now  
with clippers

she examines each dil closely  
is choosey about the blooms she picks  
fills her wicker basket  
nearly skips with delight

does not text her friends  
makes no cell calls  
wanders down to the spring  
dances with fern and mint

she squats, examines something  
a frog? a little live bug? watercress?  
in that moment, I get it::  
Nature has called her

why so many fine long-lived daffodils this Spring?  
they have been wooing a young lover  
a girl moved by their beauty  
about to take them on a teenage joyride

we do not press charges

## Eclipse Hawk

August 21, 2017

out of Totality  
flying west to east  
comes Eclipse Hawk

I have walked away from the others  
all high on moon shadow mimosas  
to find a raptor racing toward me  
a hawk out of hell

Eclipse Hawk has me in her sights  
flying low, eyes green gleaming  
she circles dips alights on oak  
wings tailfeathers twitching madly

I know hawks :: red-tails nest in our cedars  
I listen to fledglings' calls each Spring  
can easily pick a female's scratchy contralto  
from the tuba-squawks of crows and jays

hawks are high-flying shitkickers  
sharp-clawed wild animal royalty  
hawks do not get this close this worked up  
except on days the sun dies

perched a dozen feet overhead::  
weight-lifter breast China-fan wings  
beak that snips heads in a gopher heartbeat  
shock-yellow hooker boots *to die for*

we lock eyes :: she has flown in  
to ask one of the clever humans  
*what is happening? who has eaten the sun?*  
she does not know humans as I do

I look up, the cosmos opens  
Eclipse Hawk follows me  
short hops, oak aspen cedar  
down to the year-round spring

together  
just the two of us  
we watch the light return