

Rickie Lee Jones, Liner Notes

Now the birds speak in secret rhythms
and the trees bark in secret sounds
and the people speak in secret thought
and they push the thoughts into the shape of words
and sometimes someone among us
sticks her head into the
shiny phosphorus blue vat
of language
and listens, like a skeleton
to the pulsing of life within,
and she tells us
of secret rattling angles
to watch for and to reach into
with strange oceans
and deafening skies
that can be mapped and measured
only by sounds
and never by meanings
and once we can tell where we are
using the nearest star
as it relates to the ragged water
then we can plant our feet into the good ground
and go to the rodeo
and answer the plum-colored hawk
and sing to the river
in good faith
god presses his mouth
around our head
he breathes out
he breathes in
and we are resuscitated in the goofy
atmosphere of god
where there are highways and bowling
and tattooed by the sun
a circus
made by the prayer of breathing
and living hope
and barbed eyes
where coyotes hang
and cowboys hammer
posts and branches
to keep us inside
as much as keep someone out

and the prayer that is
and it is answered with a breath
god's lips against our own
we breathe in
we breathe out
he breathes out
and sigh
alive again

the unexpected
discovery
of a b-side
of life

a map of voices
a warning to others who would come this way
an animal who has seen things
a horn twisted into shapes
understood by strangers
recognized by demons

an invitation in
the secret language of trees
sung in wild shapes
by a child