

SHORTER THIS TIME

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A: The laugh slams out of him and is gone. They throw their voices up to the cave.
How does language move?
Write a sentence with an example.

B: Language moves through one like Boudicca's chariot – there are swords on the wheels that cut him/me/ you down at knee.

B: All language is a verb and that verb is a wish and that wish is God.
Example: Make me into a breaking thing; break me into a making thing.

B: Inherently. Any sentence would do.

B: Language moves like water in the wind, it finds the simplest route while simultaneously turning into vapour and also being thrown off its gravity path.

B: Language bends in ways that light cannot.
In the cave, darkness; in the dark, words.

B: Between me and you, my love, language moves like a cloud.

B: Motionlessly, like a crocodile waiting for its prey in the water. You remember how after your mother had called to say C_'s breast cancer had come back; you stopped in the street and shook your leg. As if something had grabbed hold of it. And it wouldn't let go.

A: What are two things you need at the moment?

B: A cigarette and adoration – but I will settle for adoration.

B: Money and time.

B: Energy, fruit.

B: Sleep and eggs

B: More time, twice.

B: I need nothing. I need them gone.

B: Mercy and my grandmother's hands. But maybe those two things are the same.

A: Something you've lent out:

B: My time, my time, always my time. My soul too but that can be returned.

B: Prescience, that providence which strikes fear into the heart of any family.

B: Books.

B: Books and sanity

B: Two books (there are others).

B: I lent her my copy of *The Edible Woman*. Decades later I saw her in a different city. I asked her if I could have my book back. She said, 'I don't know what you're talking about.' I knew exactly what I was talking about.

B: A promise I couldn't keep.

B: My sister. I lost her. Everything else I have lost, I realised, was losable. She was not and I realised sometimes one loses part of oneself that lives in another and that can never be found again.

B: Privacy; except in my longing I have nowhere to hide.

B: Books, delusions.

B: Some superpowers but gained others

A: What have you lost?

B: The first of the two books, borrowed years ago. On the front page, an inscription addressed to someone with whom the borrower shares a name. Perhaps mistaken as a gift.

B: I lost the turning moon and the sun on the blue face of my watch in a wave that washed right up to the top of the beach where I lay.

B: The language I grew up speaking.

A: When did you first write?

B: With my wet finger tip on a hot stretch of slasto around my granny's farm in the transvaal. What was I then – three? Two? But that fat damp finger knew what it was jabbing.

B: In my room alone with a book on my bed and no words but images and the patter of my feet.

B: In high school, very depressed.

B: Lifetimes ago

B: At school, a copied phrase for every letter of the alphabet.
Beginning: *A man can stand in God's hand.*

B: I was four. I couldn't write. But I wrote. I told the stories of all the sadness to myself in front of the mirror, wearing a wig. At night, the stories were told back to me in my sleep.

B: At age 10.

A: No, when did you first write?

B: I write first thing this morning – a sunny cold Saturday in London – in response to your questions and I am thinking that it is always the first time. One never knows how one did it before or how one will do it again. But one does

B: The first time I said, “What’s that light over there?” and my mother said “I don’t see anything.”

B: As a young kid, I used to yap on to my dad about my dream house (with a river running through it.)

B: Hmm, maybe 2017, maybe 1986

B: At school – curlicue cursive.

B: Alright, I was two. I was in the bath. My father was looking after me. Someone came to the front door. My mother opened and spoke to them. They came inside. Then they left. Who was that? I wanted to know. No one, my father said. When I came out, the cockateel was gone. I wrote without words: betrayal.

B: At age 10 after finding condoms in my mum’s purse.

A: How does language move?
Write a sentence with an example..

B: Language moves slip-sliding – a spy looking for a way into the heart. Like water that works its way through concrete and will one day flood you and destroy the world.

B: All language is a problem and that problem is a place and that place is God. Example: Not a woman but an otherwise; not a man but a chance to be.

B: Language moves, inherently. Attempting to take control of its movement involves a series of choices, marked through punctuation, textual point of view, grammar, and all manner of formal considerations. The amount of control it is possible to take is subjective, and the relation between intention and the meaning the reader receives is composed of slippage. Writing is only about trying. Tomatoes, beans, honey. Tomatoes and beans and honey. tomatoes beans honey.

B: Like a spice route, so

B: Language moves as water does. In floods – or rising damp.

B: I will touch your skin with the words from my lips and my tongue. This is not metaphor.

B: Rhythmically, like my brother J_. dancing to MC Hammer back when we were little. We were my grandmother's sons. Make of that what you will.

A: What moves you to write?

B: There is a pulse deep down in my pelvis that moves like sex sometimes can move one, that throbs like the womb does when a child is born – violent but making new.

B: I am one of the deluded who thinks that life ought to be represented imaginatively.

B: I want to be in conversation. I want to do it well.

B: Stories land in me from other places, me as a place becomes a transmutation vessel from swirling words and feelings to written words and feelings.

B: A restless unease.

B: What writes, moves. What moves, rights.

B: To live the same time twice.

A: What moves you to write?
Shorter this time

B: When I don't understand. When I must understand. The writing explains

B: Delusion.

B: Relationship.

B: A duty, a gift

B: Un-

B: Making better.

B: To stop time.

A: What moves when you write?

B: My hand – my beautiful hand – shaping words in crow black ink on the cream pages of my notebook. I love the sound (skritchskritchskritch) and the shape – these black letters like birds that were not there before.

B: The heel of my palm shores up against the arc of my pubis.

B: There is deep satisfaction (and frustration) in engaging content and form as a cohesive thing. Everything can be said in infinite ways. And every way changes the thing being said. Writing is addictive because it moves.

B: The veils, gently but sometimes with power, and they move everything else

B: Eyes tracing sentences. Fingers, time.

B: I move. All the legs and the arms and the head inside me move. I swim. I walk. I run. When I write, I move.

B: Time.

A: What voice does your writing sound?

B: A ventriloquist voice – others write themselves through me.

B: The voice who writes is a narcissist. The voice who writes thinks she's God. The voice who writes speaks from the future and when I listen to her it is because I am impatient to get on with my life.

B: This is not a question for me.

B: Like every protagonist

B: A soft, persistent humming. Then, consonant staccato catch-in-your-teeth-at-the-tip-of-your-tongue. Your tongue, which is also your mother's.

B: The Revenant. The Necromancer. The Worshipper. The Mute.

B: A madman screaming, punch drunk, in the middle of the night.

A: The bombs are being dropped in your name

B: Yes, they are. Always. I am resigned to that. I cannot stop them.

B: Each day I wish anew that I had not been born in America.

B: Which bombs?

B: I trust not even one, not ever

B: Blood be on us, and on our children.

B: No. Never. Not in mine. Fuck that.

B: At the bagel place on Harrington street.

B: always a heart

B: Call my name my name is the sound a head aches. Call my name my name is changing.

B: Being silly. Or "TEG" in cursive.

B: a line that moves

A: What is your signature?

B: Incomplete sentences; semicolons; imprecisions.

B: A loop of approval.

B: X

A: How is your mother's language?

B: My mother's language is a strangled silence but sometimes her rage comes out. And sometimes her need. And even, I have found in recent years, the truth. I never believed her, but I now know she does not always lie. Perhaps she never lied. Perhaps I could just not take in the truth of her.

B: I could hear the sound of my mother coughing from ten miles away.

B: Thriving (too big, too fast.)

B: Wild, composed, detached, involved

B: Kept warm in her moist mouth.

B: My mother's language soothes.
My mother's language laughs.
My mother's language avoids pain.

B: Silence is our daily bread.

A: The shape of a conversation between you and someone very close:

B: I am like a snake charmer playing my word-enchantment flute and they can't resist because I know words better than many people. They are my army and they are subtle and I could make anyone feel anything just with words. So I don't believe myself and if I want a conversation to be true then I am silent and let the close-up person fill it with their more halting speech. That is what I intend but usually I fail and rush in and fill the world with my snake-charming language in order not to be seen.

B: Take this longing from my beauty broken down. Take this inscription as if a kiss on your finger. Take this body revealed but dismayed. Take this time which is my greatest and my only gift.

B: Loops, returns, rehearsals, reruns, choruses. Until it sinks in, and then again, forever.

B: Watery and also stiff like clay

B: Child's fist-clutched crayon scribble.

B: There are no sharp edges.
There is no avoidance.
What we have to say billows.
It is all slow.
Slow-slow.
We have no haste.
And nothing can cut.

B: The slow bloom of a flower.

A: Let there be no fuss.

B: Amen to that – no fuss and no sound and no words

B: Except for the plates, the linen, the floorboards, the cockroaches, the correspondence, the legacies inherited and reputation frayed. If there be no fuss, let it be in my ashtray.

B: We must fuss.

B: Even though there always is

B: Let us keep our peace.

B: My higher self to my lower self: no fuss. No need.

B: Allow the world to mend you.

A: I have run out of questions.
Anything else you'd like to say?

B: That I have known you a long time and that there are words in you humming like bees at a gate and I am glad they are being unleashed into our world.

B: Infatuation is canonical but true love is a project.

B: Which bombs?

B: I am watery and stiff like clay

B: I keep my silence.

B: I can hear the girls from the girls' school practising their war cries in the misty morning. Now I am thinking about wars and about crying.

B: Go where you don't want to go. Then you'll go where you want to go. Some fella said that to me once. We were drunk somewhere, and the bar was about to close.