



“Saying Things as an Engine Would”

Michael Sikkema

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“Saying Things as an Engine Would”

to go along with familiars

and because some talking

dirty to the one

posing the gunman to go

along with suitcase bomb or

suitcase drum to be the equipped-with-

sperm-like-motor

one with rusted barrel, weeds

to be the one who says “shining

beacon” because some unasked

division a composition for axe

and music boxes placing far

enough music to go along with

the preferred forgeries to be the

top hat in the garden one because

small storm damage a composition

for various death-head cartoons to

go along named shopping-bag-child

placing the made lakes

in the clone car

to go

along named

poisoned-by-music

to be the smiling threat one, to hold

the shoulders so

to go along wrestling joy's animal

to be the clutch and drift one

following the obvious signals

placing a rudder

on the owl's nest

to go along without

to be the one who hears "smiling bacon"

a composition

for oxen and warhead

placing a tarp, leverage, sleep

to go along being the being-time-game

"good luck with that"

to be the applauding mud-chorus one

a composition for blood and emotional memory

to go along with velvet ropes

to be the one who

accepts

plastic teeth

as currency

to be the

one who refers

to the mind

as “the secret zoo”

a composition for quartz and woodstove

placing a crow inside itself to go along with

questions, answering

until the room’s

too thick to walk

to be the one trying to ambush

those who refuse

to move

placing hours

to shout into trees

to go along as lop-sided

want and collision

to go along thinking one's self into some weapon

placing that stylish tourniquet over this reach and slip

a composition for free-floating hair

because the first

sculpture was

a head wound

to go along with missed signals

and false starts

placing the way

walking means itself

along your head movie

placing the animal's wax job

and ink work in clear view

because some typical

rough trees and schizo

placing the stock, the sight,

the bead properly

because this is

the dancing in

the fountain scene

because we attended the Festival of the Ornamental Brain Panties

placing the marriage

noises on cue

to go along

in spine music

a composition for cardboard

breast milk, and semen

to be the one

spiting your trap

with stillness

placing the bangs

the chin

the scarf properly

to go along with the wrong

questions concerning dark matter

placing the made lakes

birds won't refuse

to go along

with servitude and sand

because the dearly

obscene tamarack split

because some ocean's

at the door to drown us

a composition for hill

and argument

placing some natural

target

to go along

in your lane

looking forward

into wall

to go along as sugar

and static

unlacing

the musical staff

the ribcage

eager to be

raised to the status of meat

to be the one who refers to

the body as “the zombie car”

because you’re wearing

a necklace of moving trucks

and mining songs

because the probe

produced laughter

not the memory

of laughter

to be the one who consumes

enemies sick or shining

a composition for multiple insults

placing live yellow

next to dead yellow flowers

to go along with bus fare

to be the one who confuses

emotion with animal grace

a composition for fish hooks

sidewalk

and cantaloupe

placing the blades

the edges and points

placing the signal net and teeth marks

to go along with snow

and fake snow smilingly

placing one's own

marionette strings as

erotically as possible

a composition for fish

and bike magic

to be the joy-is-

altogether-not-worth-

watching one

because you're cutting

through the cemetery

on a simple machine

to go along with day enough

placing the letter

in surround

in the last of the oatmeal

a composition for four windows

and four cardinals

to be the one whose hand

gestures suggest

gift-based holidays

because open threat over

radio and eggs

a composition for impact

and just after

placing this gifted

fear and stolen

to go along with painted tomato

because we were perfecting

the popular excuses

a composition

for war toys

and orgasms

placing the hips

the eyes, the question

properly

to go along

with rubbery arms to go along

to be the reversible-pain one

because milk thistle

and your feet kick a little circle

because really

aren't you a pretty flower

a composition for blanks

hatchets and masks

placing the myth

between your teeth

to go along with knee-high or buried

to be the one whose lust

is synonymous with tinfoil

to go along with nanobots

placing the rifle

in apple branches

placing some

lovesick mule train

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Michael Sikkema is the author of *Futuring* (BlazeVOX Books) and the chapbook *Code Over Code* (Lame House Press). He enjoys breaking things and helping people. He lives in Grand Rapids, MI.

"Saying Things as an Engine Would" takes its title and basic principles of composition from Jackson Mac Low's *The Pronouns*. I wrote the original phrases of the poem on note cards, and shuffled them to form and deform sentences and fragments. This chapbook is one version of this poem and there will be many others. Some very different and much shorter versions of the poem made with a smaller selection of note cards can be found in *Alice Blue Review* #10.

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