

SAMPLER

*What Space Between Us*

SAMPLER

David Rushmer

SAMPLER  
*What Space  
Between Us*

Shearsman Books

First published in the United Kingdom in 2022 by  
Shearsman Books  
PO Box 4239  
Swindon  
SN3 9FN

Shearsman Books Ltd Registered Office  
30–31 St. James Place, Mangotsfield, Bristol BS16 9JB  
(this address not for correspondence)

[www.shearsman.com](http://www.shearsman.com)

ISBN 978-1-84861-829-9

Copyright © David Rushmer, 2022

The right of David Rushmer to be identified as the author of this work  
has been asserted by him in accordance with the  
Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act of 1988.  
All rights reserved.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Some of these poems were previously published in the following  
journals: *Blaze*, *VOX*, *Epizootics*, *E. note*, *Great Works*, *Human Repair Kit*, *Molly*,  
*Bloom*, *Qaraq*, *Otoliths*, and *Shearsman*.

A poetry sequence (with added photographs by the author) was created using  
the italicized words from sections 1 & 2 of this book and published as a limited  
edition pamphlet, *The Empty Centre* by Aphonic Space, USA, 2021.

*Cover photograph by David Rushmer*

## Contents

### What Space Between Us

- A Matter of Memory / 9  
What Space Between Us / 10  
    The Way / 11  
    Intercourse / 12  
    Forming Principles / 14  
    Where We Vanish To / 16  
    What Matters / 19  
Rising in the Sap (after Sappho) / 20  
    The Gesture / 26  
    Dictate / 28  
The Death Sensations / 29  
    Particles and Atoms / 30  
    When Night Fell / 32  
    A Matter of Silence / 33  
    Place (for Wang Bang) / 34  
    Kindling / 35  
    Erased Matter / 38  
A Remembering of Soft Hair / 40  
A Book of Skin, or Liberation Through Seeing/Hearing / 42  
    Panes (after James Joyce) / 45

### Depth Charge

- Depth Charge / 49  
    Wounds / 53  
    Fathom / 55  
Tongue to Tongue / 57

Night Flowered / 58  
Behind the Eyes / 59

### **Returning Breath**

Returning Breath / 63  
The Filament's Heat / 69  
    Darkening / 78  
    Lightforce / 79  
    Still Time / 90  
    White Drift / 96  
Meeting Me Halfway / 102

SAMPLER

WHAT SPACE BETWEEN US

SAMPLER

SAMPLER



# A Matter of Memory

to *imagine*

a matter of memory:

our bodies

the archives

*a book* of flesh

its secret gardens

plowing speech

to penetrate the literal absent

& lend *your body* to the sky

SAMPLER

## What Space Between Us

*language*

a stone

total

weightlessness

*attachment*

the circle

one becomes

SAMPLER

violence

I was the *object*

the anguish of *disappearing*

pain of our speech

## The Way

from the *unfurling*

ignition of wings

the wind

takes our *breath* away

waiting for *the sky*

to remove its mask

exhale into stone

time buried in its folds

muscle *of* earth

showing its *scars*

the body's imprint

## Intercourse

Speak, then,  
of the disappeared  
of disappearance.

*a beginning*  
swells

this is your

vast abyss  
of loss  
stripped of certainty

in empty halls

*of language*

a moment of calm in white flowers

words dilute on the breeze  
detached from their brute

energy  
creating  
a world without us.

what makes you forget  
*this memory*

the vanishing point  
the tongue  
a singular event

*opening*  
the wind

forgotten  
drafts  
of light  
becoming

intercourse

SAMPLER

# Forming Principles

forming

principles of

*sublimation*

burst to give light

moments us

oozing

discourse

crepuscular

guttering

to drain the blood

SAMPLER

air

into flame

a vanishing sequence

*instead of being*

a skin

over surface

withdraws his fingers

to the touch

into film

a vision

in which vision

reflects

the disappearance  
*of the real world*

viscous universe

consuming  
substances  
of beauty  
that gathered  
fragrances  
to inhale the skull

SAMPLER

## Where We Vanish to

I

There is no

longing  
for a form

another way of seeing  
the shadow  
approaching

slow cancellation

eroded moment  
*skins* the expression  
endemic

hungering space  
will open up  
electrical forces  
featureless remnants

between two mirrors  
a whole series of absences  
spectral

the *touch* of light  
& ghosts remain  
undermining the present being  
collapsed  
by *the disappearance*.



II

There is no  
longer  
a state

exhausted  
insomniac  
eroticized

a figure of speech  
*vanished*

writing  
scraping my face  
away

SAMPLER