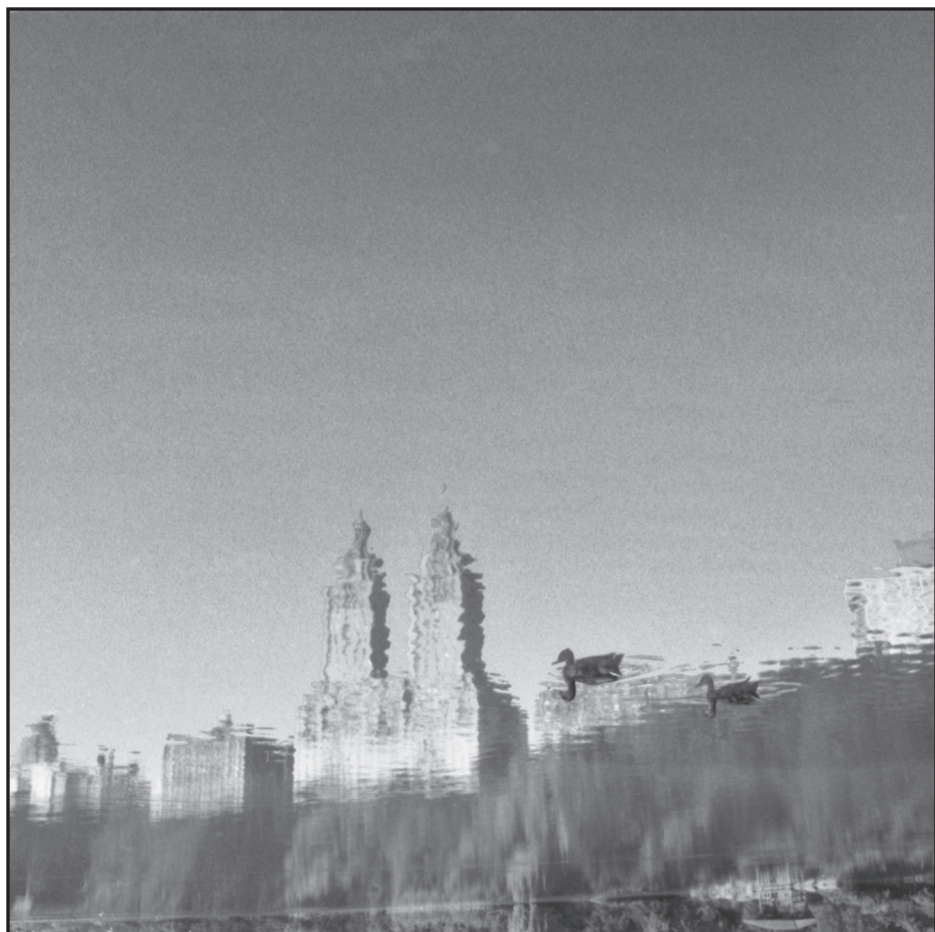


Family Happy Hour on Christmas Day

oysters
half-shell on ice
dollop of cocktail sauce
slurp the brine, savor the mollusk
alive!



A Deaf Baptism

A family of mallards
by a waterfall's green ledge
paddling
preening
shivering off waterbugs.
A feather or two comes loose
and floats over the water's edge.

Suddenly a duckling
chasing after a feather
flapping
jerking
toppling over the waterfall.
Lost, it struggles through
the curtain into the world of white water.

The Absentminded Tooth Fairy

His son's
baby tooth in
the medicine cabinet
near dental floss, mouthwash, toothpaste.
But why?

The Reverse Pavlov Effect

He had been away so long,
spending the summer at the home
of a friend who had a dog.

So long that, when he held the baby,
he scratched the infant's belly hard
and roughly patted his head,
as he had done to the dog.

No one seemed to notice.
When he caught himself,
he subtly changed,
softly rocking and stroking the baby.

The Universal Drum

—A dramatic, visual poem with drum accompaniment

Stage direction: An actor comes on stage rolling a short barrel, tube, and/or a large bowl. A few more people come with a flexible drum head and use it like a mini-trampoline, flinging up some object that's easy to bounce. Another person can bring on the fasteners or whatever is needed to secure the drum head over the barrel. Some could come in with bongos and tambourines. Others could use their own bodies as drumming instruments (slapping the thighs or chests, clapping hands, stomping the feet, or popping the hand against the open mouth). All of this could be done in a fun, entertaining way. One by one, the ensemble develops an entrancing beat, which leads to a funky dance.

As the dance dies down, members of the ensemble narrate this poem in American Sign Language while others voice in English, perhaps all choreographed to a drumbeat in the background. Specific percussive beats can be used to emphasize or punctuate parts of the poem.

Drum.

(*fingerspell*)

D-R-U-M.

Musical instrument
of two membranes,
called “heads”
stretched over a frame

lacing binds tightly
over the frame.

Drums
found all over the world
since 6000 B.C.
in almost every culture
the most precious of
all musical instruments.

In Africa and Europe,
certain drums symbolize royalty.

In Asia, Russia, and
Native American tribes,
drums are used for ceremonial dances.
In Deaf culture, a drum
is the one musical instrument
that reaches the heart
of a deaf person.

Drums are universal,
creating strength and solidarity,
reflecting the rhythms of life:
the dawning of a new day
the setting of night.

Trees swaying in the breeze.
The rumble of thunderstorms.
A door slamming.
People walking.
Hearts beating.
The rhythms of life.

Strike the instrument
with the hands
and we can create

(Ensemble acts out each of the following creations)

Music

Rhythms

Signals

Marches

Dances

Conversations.

A drum can express
who you are
and who we are.

I'm deaf and I live
in a Deaf world.

I'm hearing and I live
in a hearing world.

(Deaf and hearing actors, simultaneously)

I'm Deaf and I live
in both worlds.

I'm hearing and I live
in both worlds.

Like the drum
we are
woven together
in one place—

Like the two drum heads fastened
to the frame,

tight,
our hands reach out
to both deaf and hearing worlds.

Using our drum to communicate,
we send our message to you.

(Deaf and hearing actors, simultaneously)

Look

Listen

the rhythm of our family

Deaf

hearing

equal
connected
united.