

ROWAN RICARDO PHILLIPS

*Echo*

Talking picture: silent poem—

the entire world is at work  
tonight. I work                    in a silence

that prays the rare turn to sound.  
I make nothing. I am fracture.  
I walk in the dark egg

of another September night  
that is cool, that is  
cool, as though the moon is a mouth  
that blows on its wound.

We are early in the life of the poet.  
He knows so little of light,  
so little of shadow. He knows down  
town as a metaphor. He knows  
that the constellations are at work tonight,

whoring again their stories of strife.  
He is in search of a friend. A poem  
is in search of its body. Down  
toward the river, the skyline  
broaches its phalanx of broken teeth.  
Up above, in the crueling sky, sky.

Up above, in the crueling sky, sky  
broaches its phalanx of broken teeth.  
Toward the river the skyline  
searches for its body, downed,  
damned in, beached, like the end of a poem  
walled up against competitive life.

The constellations are at work tonight.  
Betelgeuse. Bellatrix. The hunter's bow  
in elegy graffitied across the endless black gate.  
We know so little of light: it dies,  
though we are early in the life of it.

A beautiful night. Its large, lambent moon  
lets down a  
light  
that only happens in

September. Say it. *September*. Fragile  
as an egg now.  
Teetering. Parabolic. Broken teeth in the mouth  
that prays the rare turn to sound.

Tonight, I work in a silence.  
The entire world is at work

—silent poem: talking picture.