

SAMPLER

Shape of Faith

OTHER BOOKS BY JOHN PHILLIPS

Language Is (Sardines Press, San Francisco, CA, 2005)

What Shape Sound (Skysill Press, Nottingham, 2011)

Heretic (Longhouse, Guilford, VT, 2016)

CHAPBOOKS

Instances (with Roger Snell) (Third Ear Books, 2000)

While (Longhouse, 2000)

Path (Longhouse, 2002)

A Small Window (Longhouse, 2005)

Soundless (Punch Press, 2007)

Pages (Country Valley Press, 2008)

Spell (Kater Murr's Press, 2009)

Fault (Kater Murr's Press, 2013)

This (Smallminded Books, 2016)

SAMPLER

John Phillips

*Shape
Faith*

SAMPLE

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*for Jasna, Eva, Lana
& Roger Snell*

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LANGUAGE

Sometimes it
pretends to
deliver us
back beyond its
beginnings we
invent each time
it is used to

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FAULT

That word you were going to say
the word you did say
wasn't quite the word you wanted to
something small
a fragment fell from it
before you finished saying it
an invisible thing
that changed what you said,
that always changes it

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RETURN

Each place is
another place

each time
you return.

To get where
you've been

never is
possible.

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IF I REMEMBER

for Keith Waldrop

My daughter began to describe a room: books piled high in corners and a black iron bedstead. She even remembered the slightly acrid smell of stale pipe tobacco and how, on winter mornings, the heavy frost would make opening the one small window, high above the bed, difficult.

The room she described was the room in which my father had died; the house long since demolished.

Both events taking place several years before she was born.

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RECOGNITION

Towards five
in the morning:
My hand creates
the words
I write,
the words I write
create me.

Day breaks in my body.

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Each of us a sentence
in the process of being

said by someone who
doesn't know what

they are saying or why
they are saying it or

even whom it does or
does not concern

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PARADISE

Because words reveal
the separation

of what is
from what is said to be:

in Paradise
language would be a sin.

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LATEWORD

God not existing
proves what
to the contrary
worth doing
more than
steer clear of
History
yet to
unhappen

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No matter
what it is
I'm doing

I've never yet
got over the
idea

I'm pretending
to do what
I am.

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We look at what we think
is real knowing it is

only what we think it is
and any reality it might

have is a reality we have
made by thinking so. As if

we could do otherwise.

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