

**Beth Bretl**

**Figure Poems**

**FIGURE 1: The Real Fabrication Of The Story Of My Life As If It Were Me**

The Real\* Fabrication† Of The Story Of My Life‡ As If§ It Were Me

\* slur = crow flies

‡ she says, yes, the rain is coming so you will remember

whole and some tilt a corner, spill us out where

§ salvific

† remind me of South Dakota, we pulled off and the clouds so quickly

**FIGURE 2: How It Is I Cannot Say You**

you say	my fated moonlife tricky slopes	say i
i say	like and as if it were and i know	say you
you say	you mistake me lunar and near	you said
i said	i must take you now and wide	cleft
said you	here you mismake me then	you said
i am saying	yes i see you not there when	you were
not said	write me between where i	i say
caption	this space begets moons and	you say

**FIGURE 3: The Nation-State Moving Successfully Forward**

hammer	labyrinth	to note	olive
chanson	sieve	to rinse	throat
corm	compote	to divvy	chintz
novena	grits	to promote	Chevy
solstice	injury	to insist	shoat
radium	Terra Haute	to inure	hiss
lilac	absinthe	to soak	slurry
rust	livery	to cinch	spoke

## Examination On The Summer Of 2005 When There Was Little Hay To Be Had

Q. in mornings shaving of light

A. this boy's touch makes the leaves translucent

Q. many reveals personation and narrator

A. once alluded

Q. partita

A. blue you can move across the fingerboard—

*A. by string you mean page?*

Q. what faculty of body

A. slight willows through an afternoon's reach

*A. show the mind's center of attention*

Q. july 2<sup>nd</sup>

A. we go to memory

Q. all the real living/

A. scuttle of wings overhead: pantomimic thought

Q. in her dream the bird's color is lost?

A. *the boy again*

Q. obsolete

A. afterbirth near the gate

Q. a certain thickness of oppression

A. sky presses!

*A. her horse by the white pine*

Q. acknowledge an insufficiency

A. we never could

*A. there on the cement slab, your hula hoop*

## Modulations of Voice One

### 1. Pause

if my hand precedes

itself cited there

against the light

patina of forethought

    might you suspend

    subsequent

### 2. Touch

she says if she were

a writer, she would

narrate Monopoly dog's

life, he would be surprised

by his extensive vocabulary,

say, "Monopoly car's been

spinning his wheels

all this time"

### 3. Inflection

grass plots

weighted into darkness

that hours ago

*well, that all  
    slightly*

O. shrugs her mind

against a subject

*I was just about*

**Beth Bretl** teaches writing and literature at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Her writing has appeared or is forthcoming in *Aufgabe*, *Free Verse*, *North American Review* and *American Book Review*. She is currently working on translations and collaborative writing projects.