

Stephen Oliver

## RENDEZVOUS

*for Warren Dibble*

You gave me back my words. A reminder.  
Your voice I knew immediately. My words gave me  
pause, half recalled, how could it be otherwise?

I heard them in a different register,  
as if for the first time, remade. They had all gathered,  
those words, in spontaneous,

mass demonstration, shoulder-to-shoulder,  
to make a rendezvous. Whether this was expectation or  
conclusion, greeting, or decisive farewell,

in a town square, down highway, for one moment,  
I could not tell, those words, disowned, independent.

Given back to me within the single minded  
character of your voice, tremulous, through the cable  
beneath the Tasman Sea.

The phone call reversed its charge and two poems  
informed me newly. Then you hung up.

Nothing more needed saying. A gift.

*September 27, 2010*

## NOCTURNE

All night, the footpads of these ghosts  
amongst the walls, harried as waiters between the  
mortal, and some unseen command centre.

Orders taken and given,  
the silent traffic of night coming and going ...

As though one half of me had not emerged  
from the marble block, the live side, perfectly formed,  
held there by that dead weight.

The dream, and the waking.

The mind a sinkhole. Jumbled cinematic frames  
forming and reforming. Taut silences.  
Nocturne for the soul's restive tossing.

And the breath that in dead earnest  
wakes the body in those early hours of the false dawn.

That form lowering to my bedside  
whose thought caused the body to kick wide awake.

There is nothing but grainy silence.  
A hissing sound, and the darkened objects of the room  
surrounding me.

The ghostly thought evaporated.