

## Alex Johnson

### Evolution Conclusions

Life is form  
Form is music  
Music is feeling.

I sit  
Thoughts streaming  
Through melodies  
of past and present,  
Past is present  
in every deliberation,  
Thought,  
Idea,  
Past is form.

Wheel, reed, skinned drum,  
Animal strings, synthetic hums,  
Ivories pounding,  
Ivories to plastic  
Plastic to digital,  
Past is form.

Life is feeling,  
Some natural  
Some digital rhythms,  
Now is composite,  
Sankofa.

Past is present  
Present is form  
Form is music  
Music is feeling.

## J.M. Beach

### Wild Flowers

He spots a growth of flowers out of reach up a hill  
And decides that he would rather hope than kill  
Even though a hope is like the wind and barely felt  
Until moments when against, the current melts  
All opposition someday will subside  
Only for new powers to mobilize.

We all but push and push against  
Either builders or destroyers of relent  
Nothing bent but broken comes of use  
For to forge a healing from abuse  
He spots a growth of flowers, dreams away  
Takes arms against injustice come what may:

To defy the grand tyranny of petty violence  
With a frailty that will not quit or silence.

## J. M. Beach

### Creeping Shadows

How naïvely he believed  
In tales told by bedside  
Nights of wonder, of light  
And darkness, of overcoming  
Evil with good, of right  
And wrong.

But when the story ended  
The light went out and  
Darkness descended  
With all the force of fate;  
Creeping shadows by the moon's glow  
Sowing the seeds of doubt:

Fear in the wake of stories closing  
Not knowing what happens next.

In the absence of light  
Wanders through the corners of the covers  
Feeling for words of comfort,  
Praying "if I die before I wake..."  
For the sake of filling the void;  
The story's spell is broken.

He will rise from fallen words and empty  
In the night, shattered nerves still shivering

Knowing without light this present darkness,  
A darkness not easily overcome.

## J.M. Beach

### She Dances

In the silence between the distance  
She hears her name,  
It is cold and unforgiving, foreign,  
Seems not to fit.

Her hand grabs the hanging syllables  
Tearing sound from sound her name  
Apart, it is a destroying art  
To clear the space

In preparation for the work ahead.

Step by step her life becomes  
More a way to cope than anything,  
A broken window, smashed hand,  
The petty violences done between

The moon and rising sun,  
Endured, her character is armor,  
Her strength to keep on walking  
The promise of chance encounter.

She hopes to work some magic  
Out of sleight of hand, chicanery,  
A little make believe  
Until a pattern forms, a purpose.

And when the movements back and forth  
Become measured by the determined  
Beats of her heart, then she will find  
Her way: a life will be her art

A music all her own.

## J.M. Beach

### Voltaire, It Is Not So Simple

Across the tended garden flowers bloom  
Pruned, watered with care by his hands

He makes a wish upon each new growth and  
Weeds and weeds to see his stalks grow strong

Fenced in with a stone path, isolated perfection  
Etched into the unknown terrible outside

The gate, a squeaky hinge but no lock  
He trusts enough for it to protect

He waits and waits to see his garden bloom  
Against the vermin crows bulldozers angry men

Moving endlessly in the distance coming closer  
Petal by petal blade by blade his heart colors

Porous seeps the sweetness, a fragrance  
Almost brings a smile to his closed eyes

If he were not choking on the looming air,  
Oh Voltaire, how impossible it has become.

## J.M. Beach

### The Ultimate Ground

She climbs a tree to see if she can't see God  
face to face.

Limb by limb her assent is not so tough  
a scratch or two.

Sweat and odor cling and mat her hair  
sticky sweetness.

The flesh a tangled movement and a will  
she calls it spirit.

Past the spider webs and thickets body squeezes  
a bite begins to swell.

The stability of the lower trunk gives way  
tree top sways.

She holds on tight ever up she glances  
God must be there.

As high as she can go but not on top  
the view is heaven.

A gust of northern wind her body breaks the branch  
the fall she swears intended.

She waits with baited breath a hand to save her  
but flesh and will are torn.

Limb by limb broken and dismembered  
she lies in peaceful slumber.