

## Volume 61, Number 1

## In Praise of Noise

James Arthur

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The sound begins with a furnace  
 clicking awake in a two-room house, answered  
 by a few, then more, voices: gauges,  
 and old-fashioned watches ticking out of synch, in growing number,  
 so their tip-tip-tip fattens to a moan, joined  
 by a horn's upbeat honkity-honk, then ringtones and speakers  
 rehearsing drawn horsehair, air in a woodwind, mimicking  
 a hand slapping a polyester drumhead, but unlike  
 these coarser frictions, playing the same, every time.  
 A car door bangs, a jackhammer hammers, and a bassline  
 purrs through a wall. The sound congeals,  
 sucking in more, a mechanical syrup in an IV drip, the automatic  
 ruckus of a robotic ocean, a symphony  
 no one wrote, confounding every pattern:  
 teach me the song that no one can sing, someday  
 to be the song of everything.

## Discussion

4 Responses to *In Praise of Noise***Alarie Tennille** says:

September 15, 2011 at 3:05 pm

I'm delighted that Shenandoah has gone on line. So far I've only read Linda Pastan's poem of the week and this one, and I've loved both enough to pass them on. Reading your journal could take quite a while at this rate. Both these poems make me sit and ponder a moment after my first thought, "Wish I'd said that."

[Reply](#)**Rosemary Dunn Moeller** says:

September 24, 2011 at 8:05 pm