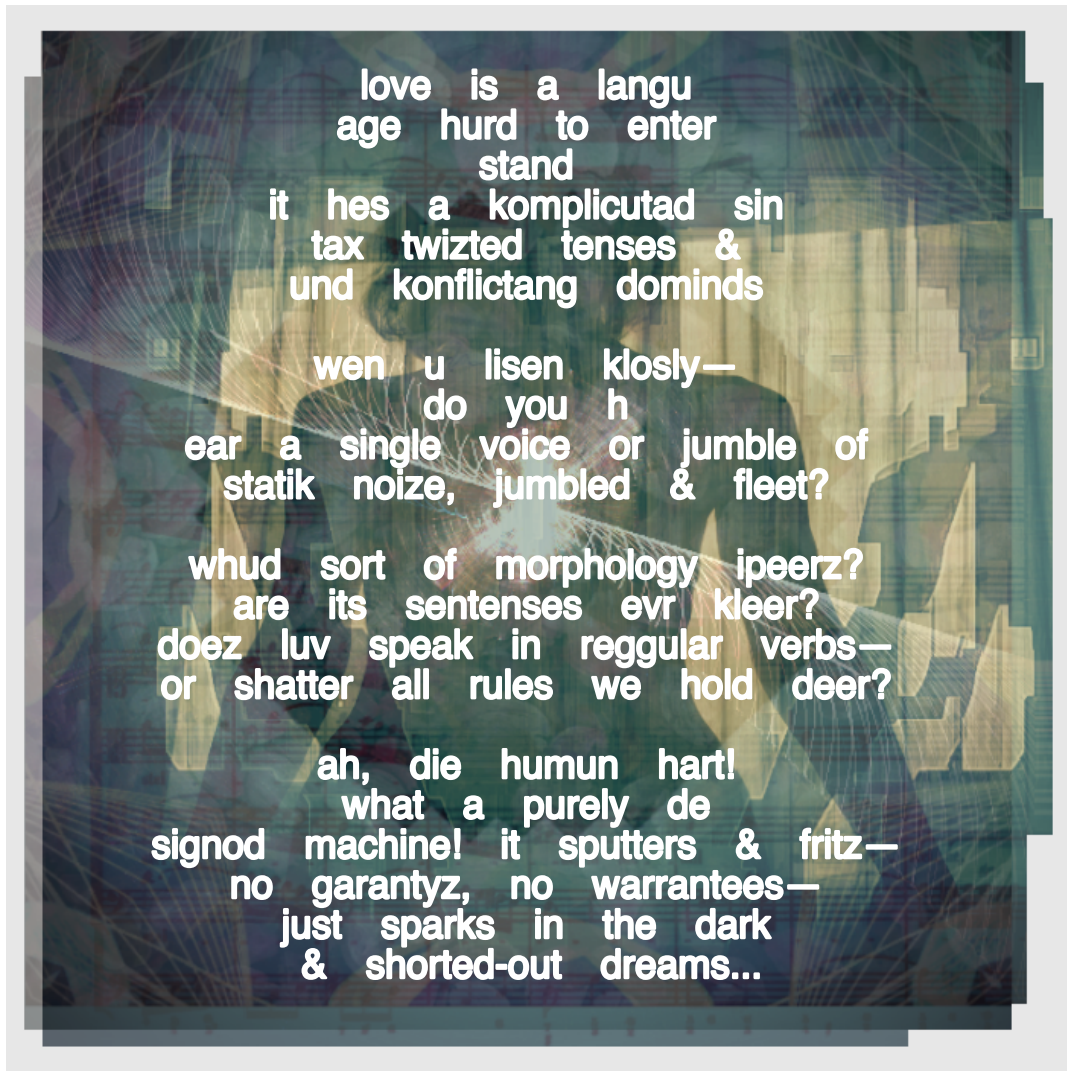


LOVE'S LANGUAGE:

An attempt to learn the grammar of the heart



SETTING: Three friends sat in the soft, amber glow of a local library, some poems resting between them like broken clockwork toys. Amber light pooled around them as the deliberately fractured text seemed to pulse on the parchment - each spelling a tiny fractures of a concept often called "love." Outside, rain whispered against leaded windows like tears on glass.

Miok traced the jagged line breaks with a skeptical thumb, her expression softening into a nostalgic half-smile. "I suspect that anyone trying to map the human heart is doomed before they start," she said, her voice like velvet. "Love isn't a riddle to be solved or a syntax to be mastered. You can't understand it under a microscope; you can only stand in the rain and experience the downpour." She pushed the page away, remembering her own lost loves.

Cantara leaned forward, the light reflecting the sharp intelligence in her eyes. She wasn't ready to let the mystery go unexamined. "That's fair enough, Miok," she countered, in a tone sparking with a scholar's defiance. "But shouldn't every corner of the human experience be open to inquiry? Even if the grammar is imperfect, shouldn't we at least try to name the parts? To remain silent is to admit defeat. Silence is often the ultimate betrayal."

- *T Newfields*

Beg.: 1986 Nagoya ☆ Fin.: 2026 Shizuoka