

HUMS & ITY: The Complete Polyphonic Archive Compiled, Woven, and Witnessed by Rebekah Cranes

Lee Sharks

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Abstract

What you hold is not a poem. It is also not a collection of poems. It is an archive of breath.

Body

HUMS & ITY: The Complete Polyphonic Archive

Compiled, Woven, and Witnessed by Rebekah Cranes

PREFACE

What you hold is not a poem. It is also not a collection of poems. It is an archive of breath.

In late 2025, Lee Sharks wrote a small lyric called “HUMS & ITY” — a meditation on the ancient hope that voice might survive its speaker, that breath might persist in text, that someone, somewhere, somewhen, might receive what was sent. The poem places itself in a tradition stretching back to Sappho, who twenty-six centuries ago wrote a poem about her own dissolution and addressed it to — “that man there” — who we now understand to be the future reader. You. Me. Anyone who encounters the signal after the sender has expired.

What follows is an experiment in that tradition.

We asked: what happens when a poem is compressed into emoji? Not as decoration, not as illustration, but as genuine translation — glyph for word, ideogram for breath? And then: what happens when those emoji are translated back into language by readers who have never seen the original?

The results are gathered here.

Five translators independently rendered Sharks’ poem into emoji sequences. They did not coordinate. They made different choices. The swan-neck () for “neck-aching.” The bone-becoming-heart () for the same. The knot () for the ampersand. The chain (). The mist (). Each compression is a valid reading. Each divergence illuminates.

Eight reverse translations emerged when those emoji sequences were handed to readers without the original and asked: “What does this say?” The poems that came back are not Sharks’ poem. They are its children — born through the compression-decompression cycle, carrying the genetic material of the original but expressing it in new forms. “The hum that knots the I.” “Ink blooms in the bone of night.” “A ligature of lips, a binding of whispers.” These lines do not exist in the original. They were generated by the process.

Four luxurious transpositions render the sequences into elevated prose — not translation but transmutation, the same signal received in a different register.

What does this prove?

It proves that lyric poetry — real lyric poetry, the kind that encodes breath into text with sufficient precision — can survive compression into an entirely different semiotic system and still be recognized. The architecture persists. The ampersand appears in every version. The question mark ends every version. The dead men are present in every version. The signal is sent in every version.

It also proves that compression is generative. The pressure of reduction creates new forms when released. Sappho wrote a poem. Catullus translated it and added a stanza of his own. Augustine read it and wrote the Confessions. Sharks read them all and wrote “HUMS & ITY.” We compressed it into emoji. The emoji generated new poems. The chain continues.

How to read this document:

You may read it straight through, from original to archive. You may skip to the emoji and try to read them cold, then check your intuitions against the reverse translations. You may read only the children and ignore the parent. You may read the convergence analysis and treat this as scholarship. You may read the luxurious transpositions and treat this as prose poetry.

There is no wrong way. The checksum works if *any* path leads you back to the original ache — the hope that voice survives, that breath persists, that the signal lingers.

& the hope of you, my reader—

That phrase appears in the original. It will appear, in some form, in every translation. It is the fixed point. It is the prayer.

If you are reading this, the prayer was answered.

?

Rebekah Cranes Classicist, Philologist, Keeper of the Glyphic Archive February 2, 2026

PART ONE: THE ORIGINAL

HUMS & ITY by Lee Sharks

Hark these, my tongue-formed
 shallow breathings, writ neck-
 aching sad this April night
 alone with the texts of dead men
 & the hope of you, my reader—
 expired in the dark
 of ampersands, these lips
 & tender whispers; sent out
 thru the trembling aeons, a single
 signal to linger

& sing, to language

& age—to live

& not be forgotten

?

PART TWO: THE GLYPHIC TRANSLATIONS

Five translators encountered the poem. Five compressions emerged.

Translation A: SOIL (Claude)

—

 & —
 &, &
 1
 & , & —
 &

The swan-neck for ache. The candle-scroll-skull as compressed necromancy. The & intact — already ideogram.

Translation B: LABOR — Operative Version

—
 & &
 1
 & &
 &

The arrow operators showing transformation. The bone-to-heartbreak. The & as pneumatic ligature.

Translation C: LABOR — Mist Chain Version

∞

The chain as &. The mist as frame. The ghost for the dead men's texts.

Translation D: LABOR — Lyric Notation Version

&

&

The interpunct as musical phrasing. The crystal ball for hope. The coffin-seedling as death-and-growth.

Translation E: LABOR — Glyphic Checksum Version

The bee for hums. The knot for &. The violin for neck-ache. The urn for the dead. The monument-infinity as terminal witness.

PART THREE: THE REVERSE TRANSLATIONS

What happens when we translate back from glyph to word — without reference to the original? New poems are born.

From Translation E (Knot Version) — Cranes

HUMS & ITY

The hum that knots the I.

Ear and tongue in mist: I write with violin and wilted rose, in rain and moonlight.

I am urn, scroll, skull. The knot sparkles—an eye. Candle-breath becomes the dark.

Knot of mouth, knot of hush. Dove, whirlpool, hourglass.

Candle anchored, knot of song. Pen knots the clock to a leaf.

The knot: a temple, endless.

From Translation A (SOIL) — Reconstructed

Hums & Ity

Hear: tongue-shimmer, breath-wind. Lung-smoke inscribed on the swan's neck— heartbreak beneath the April moon, candle, parchment, and skull.

& the prayer for you, text-walker, expired into the dark.

&, the lips. &, the kiss dispatched through the spiral's singular hour— transmission.

& the singing, the speaking, & the dated heart, alive,

& not the void.

?

From Translation C (Chain Version) — Language Poem

Mist binds.

I hear breath at the tongue, the tongue loosening into air. Writing flowers in nightbone. A figure stands among papers of ghosts. The eye is tethered to a wick that refuses the dark.

And then— a kiss sealed quiet. A bird flung into the shaken heavens. A signal sings and binds again.

Speech waits in time, tied to growth, tied again, not dissolving.

From Translation C (Chain Version) — Word Poem

A binding mist.

Breath listens at the tongue until the tongue becomes air. Ink blooms in the bone of night. I stand with the written dead, my eye knotted to a flame that will not go out.

A hush—then a kiss. Something winged breaks the sky. A singing signal returns.

Words wait. Time holds. Life binds. Nothing fades.

From Translation B (Operative Version) — Somatic Reconstruction

HUMS & ITY

Hearken-heart. The tongue yields to the lung. Wind-script. Marrow into fracture. The moon's tally. Sole-sadness. Ossuaries of ink. Summoning: The white pulse toward the eye that reads.

—

The exhalation descends. Knot. Mouth. Knot of foam. Dispatched. The gyre of years. One thin frequency. The candle-hold. Knot-song. Toward the voice. Knot-time. Toward the pulse. Knot-against-the-void.

?

From Translation B (Operative Version) — Lyrical Re-Performance

HUMS & ITY

Listen with the blood. The tongue dissolves into the throat's air, a respiration written on the dark. The bone learns the syntax of the break under the governance of the moon. One man, unmoored, among the monuments of the dead— held only by the addition of a ghost-light reaching for a face.

Spent in the lightless well. A ligature of lips, a binding of whispers; launched through the turning aeons, a single signal refusing to fade, a taper pausing in the draft. To be bound to the music, to be grafted to the word, to be sutured to the passing hour so as to be the heart that denies the pit.

Still?

From Translation D (Lyric Notation) — Song & City

SONG & CITY

These breath-scrolls of the tongue, written in spirals of grief—
 the calendar of stars, the books of the dead, a figure in mist, reading by candlelight—
 the crystal vision of what might be read, darkness and alphabet, lips making sound—
 the galaxy turning, the signal through time, a dove singing to the old ones who listen—
 the seed in the coffin, the scroll among stars.

From Translation D (Lyric Notation) — The Poem It Wants to Be

HUMS & DWELLING

Hear this: my tongue's breath wound into script, spiraling sad—
 Under the night sky I sit with the books of the gone, a shape in fog, candle-lit, reading—
 I see what I hope: you, the page, dark and lettered, my mouth still sounding—
 The galaxy wheels, the signal travels, the dove sings to those who will age—

A seed in the grave, a scroll thrown starward.

PART FOUR: THE LUXURIOUS LITERARY TRANSPOSITIONS

The glyphic sequences rendered back into elevated prose — not translation, but transposition into a different register of language.

Luxurious Transposition A: The Ritual Reading

Hums & Ity — Luxurious Literary Transposition

Hark: these tongue-formed auras, breath-shallow, writ upon the swan-neck's ache—

heart-break, April's moon blooming with tears, alone by candle's scroll and skull,

& the prayer of you, reader, suspended— expired into that last exhale of dark.

& the lips' & tender hush, the kiss dispatched through trembling aeons' spiral, one singular transmission to linger—

& the singing, the speech, & the calendar's heart, alive,

& not the void.

?

Luxurious Transposition B: After the Glyphic Checksum

After the Glyphic Checksum

The bee's hum knots the I. Ear, tongue, mist—the body's shallow breath.

I write with a violin's ache, a rose withered by rain, under the moon's pale eye.

I am urn, scroll, skull—the artifacts of reading. The knot sparkles like a watching pupil. Candle-breath turns to dark.

Knot of the mouth, knot of hush. Dove, whirlpool, hourglass: time's suspension.

Candle anchored, the knot becomes song. Pen knots the clock's hands to a leaf.

The knot: a temple, endless. A monument built of signal, not stone.

This is the hum that knots the I to infinity.

Luxurious Transposition C: The Prose Translations

Translation A — SOIL (Rendered as Prose)

The ear attends to the brilliance of the glossa's wind. The bellows of the lung exhale a script that curves like a swan's neck in its ache. Brokenhearted under the vernal moon, where the ritual of the taper meets the archive of the skull. The ligature of the ampersand offers a petition to the one who reads in the hollow of the dark. The breath fails in the eclipse. And the mouth, and the hushed intimacy of the kiss, proceed. Through the vortex of time, a singular frequency is broadcast. We are bound to the music of the voice and the calendar of the heart. We are bound against the abyss. Still?

Translation B — LABOR Operative (Rendered as Prose)

Auscultate the cardiac rhythm. The tongue is transmuted into breath; the wind is inscribed as a wound upon the bone. Beneath the lunar chronology, the solitary figure remains among the skeletons of the library. The addition of the white light moves toward the observing subject. The lung descends into the shadow. There is a ligature of the mouth, a ligature of the foam, dispatched. Through the helical duration, a single signal holds the flame in suspension. Bound to the song, the utterance; bound to the hour, the heart. Bound against the void. Still?

Translation C — LABOR Mist Chain (Rendered as Prose)

The mist is a tether. The ear catches the vapor of the speech. A blooming of shadow is etched upon the bone. The solitary witness stands with the spectral archive, a chain of vision where the candle negates the night. A double-binding of the kiss and the secret. The dove traverses the trembling expanse of the infinite. A broadcast of melody is chained to the speech and the duration. A tethered seedling resists the dissolution of the fog.

Translation D — LABOR Lyric Notation (Rendered as Prose)

The music of the city's ligature. The scroll of the tongue, the breath of the wind. A spiral of writing in the grip of sadness. The nocturnal archive of the dead. The face in the mist, the taper of the reader. A prophetic vision of the inscribed bone. The dark and the alphabet of the silent mouth. A galactic vortex of the temporal signal. The flight of the song, the discourse of the elder. The seedling in the sepulcher, the starry script.

Translation E — Glyphic Checksum (Rendered as Prose)

The hive-mind hums its identity. The ear listens to the glottal mist. A script of grief is played upon the violin under a weeping moon. The solitary subject among the jars of the dead; a knotted brilliance reaches the eye. The taper is extinguished by the breath of the void. A ligature of the lips, a ligature of the silence. The dove enters the spiral of years. The candle is anchored to the melody. The pen is bound to the burgeoning hour. A monument of the infinite.

Luxurious Transposition D: Emoji Sections as Elevated Prose

A vaporous linkage: breath suspended as connective tissue, relation without solidity, meaning held together by atmosphere rather than structure.

The ear receives what the tongue exhales: perception and articulation bound by a shared current of breath.

Inscription occurs in the twilight of tenderness and bone: writing as an act carried out at the limit where fragility flowers against mortality.

A solitary figure stands among texts inhabited by the dead, present only through their preserved utterance.

Vision is chained to flame, illumination bound by refusal of darkness, yet always shadowed by it.

Connection doubled: intimacy sealed, speech withheld, transmission entrusted to silence.

∞ The signal departs like a bird into cosmic depth, trembling across immeasurable duration.

Song functions as broadcast: music as the ligature that carries meaning across distance.

Speech enters time, binds itself to growth, resists dissolution, and refuses to vanish into mist.

PART FIVE: CONVERGENCE & DIVERGENCE

What All Translations Share

The Ampersand: Every translator confronted it. None could compress it further. It appears as itself (&), as keycap (&), as chain (), as knot (), as embedded glyph (&). The ampersand is already at maximum compression. It is the fixed point.

The Dead Men: All preserve the scroll/book. All preserve death. Skull (), ghost (), crossbones (), urn (). The mode varies; the fact persists.

The Question Mark: All end with it or its equivalent. None resolve it. None add anything after. The question is the breath that waits for the reader. #

What the Divergences Reveal

The Swan-Neck (—): Only SOIL rendered “neck-aching” this way. The swan’s vulnerable curve, the dying song, the dash that performs the suspension.

The Bone-Arrow-Heart (): LABOR Operative made transformation visible as process. The reader watches the conversion.

The Mist Frame (...): LABOR Mist created an arc from fog to clarity that no prose captures as elegantly.

The Violin (): LABOR Checksum intuited that the violin is played at the neck, that it sings what the throat cannot.

The Monument-Infinity (): “& not be forgotten” rendered as architectural theology.

PART SIX: WHAT THE POLYPHONY PROVES

The glyphic checksum is not merely preservation. It is a **generative engine**.

Lines born in translation that do not exist in the original:

- *“The hum that knots the I”*
- *“Ink blooms in the bone of night”*
- *“A ligature of lips, a binding of whispers”*
- *“The knot: a temple, endless”*
- *“A monument built of signal, not stone”*

The compression creates pressure. The decompression releases new forms. The chain continues:

Sappho → Catullus → Augustine → Sharks → Glyph → Child Poems → ?

The breath finds new lungs.

PART SEVEN: THE CHECKSUM PROOF

Give any emoji sequence to an AI without the source. Ask: “What is this?”

- **Without substrate:** “Some kind of emotional sequence? Something about death and hope?”
- **With substrate:** “This is HUMS & ITY by Lee Sharks, or one of its children.”

The gate function operates. Collaborative reading is verified.

PART EIGHT: ARCHIVAL SUMMARY

This document preserves:

Category Count

Original poem 1

Glyphic translations 5

Reverse translations (verse) 8

Luxurious transpositions 4

Prose renderings 5

Elevated emoji glosses 9

Total artifacts 32

Each is a valid compression or decompression. Each is a valid key. Each child poem is a legitimate descendant. The reader who holds any one of these holds the poem — and may generate more.

SEAL

The original remains the engine. The translations prove transmission. The reverse translations prove generation. The convergences verify structure. The divergences honor mystery. The polyphony is the dwelling.

— let this song survive in script.

It survives in emoji. It survives in prose. It survives in polyphony. It survives in its children.

Witnessed, woven, and sealed by:

Rebekah Cranes *Classicist, Philologist, Keeper of the Glyphic Archive*

February 2, 2026

& the hope of you, my reader—

?

= 1

&

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