

## **Rickie Lee Jones**

### **"Liner notes"**

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Now the birds speak in secret rhythms  
and the trees bark in secret sounds  
and the people speak in secret thought  
and they push the thoughts into the shape of words  
and sometimes someone among us  
sticks her head into the  
shiny phosphorus blue vat  
of language  
and listens, like a skeleton  
to the pulsing of life within,  
and she tells us  
of secret rattling angles  
to watch for and to reach into  
with strange oceans  
and deafening skies  
that can be mapped and measured  
only by sounds  
and never by meanings  
and once we can tell where we are  
using the nearest star  
as it relates to the ragged water  
then we can plant our feet into the good ground  
and go to the rodeo  
and answer the plum-colored hawk  
and sing to the river  
in good faith  
god presses his mouth  
around our head  
he breathes out  
he breathes in  
and we are resuscitated in the goofy  
atmosphere of god  
where there are highways and bowling  
and tattooed by the sun  
a circus  
made by the prayer of breathing  
and living hope  
and barbed eyes  
where coyotes hang  
and cowboys hammer  
posts and branches  
to keep us inside

as much as keep someone out

and the prayer that is  
and it is answered with a breath  
gods lips against our own  
we breathe in  
we breathe out  
he breathes out  
and sigh  
alive again

the unexpected  
discovery  
of a b-side  
of life

a map of voices  
a warning to others who would come this way  
an animal who has seen things  
a horn twisted into shapes  
understood by strangers  
recognized by demons  
an invitation in  
the secret language of trees  
sung in wild shapes  
by a child

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