

how we

hold

together

Shelley Washington





What does heat sound like in the late Summer? What can a memory sound like? What does love or a coffee shop or hugging someone or contentment or walking at night or time passing sound like? Let's find out.

How We Hold Together will be a catalog sound poem that we create together, right here and now. You might know the person standing next to you, and you might not, and that is okay. Today, we are neighbors.

We are meant to drift in and out of each other's lives for very long or very short amounts of time, finding shared interests or feelings or experiences or memories together. Let this music do the same.

You are holding a map and calendar. Using whatever you feel called to, we will create chaotic noise and grooves, we will sing soaring melodies, we will sit in silence. No choice is wrong, as there will always be someone who feels as you do.

This music can be performed with any instrument, any voice, or with any objects you may have in your pockets. Regardless of what instrument or object you may be holding, you should also sing or hum or talk as well from time to time. We will begin by breathing together, observing the room, and observing the page.

When we feel comfortable in each other's presence, we will start in the season of our choosing, and together progress through the year taking as long as we'd like.

how we hold together

When the first note sounds, find it either with your voice or instrument when you feel called.

After we have become acquainted in stillness, continue through the year weaving in and out of what you hear nearby or far away, and contributing what you'd like to offer of your own.

How long can you hold a single pitch? What is the nearest, farthest, loudest or quietest sound you hear? Pause and listen. What sound you make needn't always be a brand new one.

What you hold is not a puzzle to be solved, but an archive of possibilities. Throughout the year, you have many paths to explore through the text, images, colors, or notated music.

The text is sometimes sequestered to a single season, but some of it may span longer. You may organize them as you see fit and repeat them as many times as you'd like, but remain aware of the harmony that may shift around you as time progresses. You may use notes from the nearby phrases or chords to create a melody. The harmony may expand outside what is written, and if it feels right, go with it.

I feel your voice and want to know it
How do we hold on?

With our palms up.
With our hands out.
With arms surrounding.

With our palms up.

With our hands out.

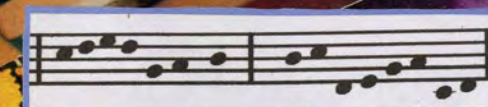
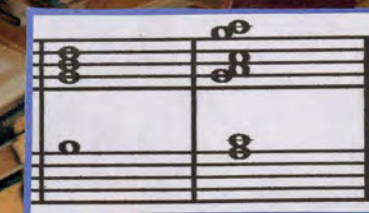
With arms surrounding.

autumn

Are you my neighbor?
Are you my family? My brother?

My sister? My elder? My child?

With our palms up.
With our hands out.
With arms surrounding.



Are you my friend?
Are you my lover?

We find each other in the everyday

winter

summer

we find each other in the sacred mundane
we find each other in the holy boring
we find each other in the divine contentment
we find each other in our hallowed bliss

Hands outstretched reaching out towards us all
illuminated through whatever towering night we face
by a light we have found That we have made

are we miles apart or just nearby

in line at the grocery store running errands
going to work going to school coming home
we travel together and to each other chasing
the same sun and stars

In coffee shops and parks
Your living room cuddled on the sofa
A day in the sun by the water
on sofas in your garage

spring

O, cloud keeper
O, dusty evening
O, fleeting glances
O, mighty night

Our thoughts ever
plodding forward

are you my life? Are you in it? Could you be?

With our arms encircled intertwined laced
together in a single loop a cul-de-sac a
turnaround

Each day a step in a new direction finding as
we seek



How We Hold Together

was commissioned by

Wild Up

2026