

ASSEMBLY

STEVE LANGAN

As carefully, let's say, as mouthing a hymn
to deaf children,
this is how we assemble for the day.

A polychromic sunrise to be sure—
but not for the sun,
old one head, one face. For you and your stereo mind.

Or ask Ms. Wonderment dressed in maize,
poppyseeds in her hair,
polishing the metals, oiling the woods, whistling our anthem.

Repeat after me, over the traffic's
inconsequentiality,
the second and third verses, *from the beginning*.

—Ding-dong: that's the church bell shattering the wind.
She prayed to her God
and he prayed to his. It's half-past...the wounded recorder

overwhelms commonplace birds
content
to circle the churches on Church Row.

Enter, *enter*, and take some time to examine the altar,
to walk the Maze of Reflection
and bow to the Military Birds and our Seal of Plenty.