



# Is Music: New and Selected Poems

*John Taggart*

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**Is Music: New and Selected Poems** John Taggart

“John Taggart’s poetry is not like music, it is music.”—George Oppen

*Is Music*—a major retrospective of an American original—gathers the best poems from John Taggart’s fourteen volumes, ranging from early objectivist experiments and jazz-influenced improvisational pieces to longer breathtaking compositions regarded as underground masterpieces. There is a prayerful quality to Taggart’s poetry, rooted in music—from medieval Christian traditions and soul to American punk rock. He is also heavily influenced by the visual arts, most notably in his classic “Slow Song for Mark Rothko,” in which he did with words what Rothko did with paint and dye.

*To breathe and stretch one’s arms again  
to breathe through the mouth to breathe to  
breathe through the mouth to utter in  
the most quiet way not to whisper not to whisper  
to breathe through the mouth in the most quiet way to  
breathe to sing to breathe to sing to breathe  
to sing the most quiet way.*

*To sing to light the most quiet light in darkness  
radiantia radiantia  
singing light in darkness.*

*To sing as the host sings in his house.*

**John Taggart** is the author of fourteen books of poetry and two books of criticism. He was, for many years, a professor of English and director of the Interdisciplinary Arts Program at Shippensburg University. He lives near Shippensburg, Pennsylvania.

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