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W. Scott Howard's *SPINNAKERS* (re: sails) present a book of shelves and object-words collected, organized idiosyncratically, and transmitted anxiously from beneath the suburban expansion of an endless war-on-terror. In this bunker one may find boxes of fabrics with which to clothe the body in algorithmic text / tiles rather than what at first appears to be streams of random data.

By listening through and across fields of newspeak and jello moulds organized in english and morse, the reader faces the poetics of making verse fall into place, and then out of place, through the sudden absence of language on each alternating page. This reminds us that all language is a form of code, that each code is a container, and that small containers hold complex notions, double meanings, and illegible nothingness all at the same time.

The morse code becomes thick with dead air, with clouds passing between retribution and understanding, countered by words that shrink and break and form ideophones—sound patterns that cult-mimic the dots and dashes or the flags and arrows of signification. The arrhythmic valleys and vantage points do create a sort of music though, or to take a phrase from the author, a “windup ode” requiring force and friction to hear what is hidden inside an aluminum tinker toy.

Moving through the text, pedaling across the google-asphalt, one may begin to see the dots and dashes not just as a coded version of the words situated above it, but as a prismatic device, unveiling the fact that the real cipher is in the words themselves, and in their fractured placement. Read this book two times, even three; read it backwards and upside down, connecting neuro-political jargon back to its many vocal manifestations.

— Ryan Wade Ruehlen

The author is grateful to the editors of the following journals in which some of these poems have appeared or are forthcoming: BlazeVOX, Denver Poetry Map, Visible Binary, and word for / word.

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*Sonictexts from SPINNAKERS are available on SoundCloud,
<https://soundcloud.com/user-781003816>*

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SPINNAKERS

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