

Marsh Hawk Review

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JONEL ABELLANOSA

Thirteen Ways of Looking

1. rain singing all week
heart's hermit thrush
voiceless
2. taste of tea
white as perched
serendipity
3. fiction writing –
indoor branches
for angelic beings
4. insight:
elusive
flowerpecker
5. raindrops
too many commas
for a fruitless day
6. smell of coffee...
memory
drinking from its feathers
7. chirps in the downpour –
mind full
of parables
8. curtain turning like a page...
where's the pterodactyl
in the mirror?
9. window
with tricks of trees –
foretelling sparrows
10. hot cocoa...
metaphors following flocks
searching their songleader

11. I don't know which to prefer, woods for my winged beings or a poem with moon in the pond. I rummage my drawers for the winter we don't have, well-versed in the monsoon's dialogues with our summer sun glowing like Mandarin orange. To imagine the dry spell, I try iced and milked blends: cantaloupe-papaya, apple-soursop, dragon fruit-mango.

Odus the Owl...
darkened room
for nestled warmth

12. Butterflies on my vision's
hibiscus: echoes
of the storm's beauty

13. Maybe the songbird
was the orange light
on the field of grass

**Odus the Owl is part of the popular game Candy Crush Saga*

[First appeared in Four Seasons from Kind of a Hurricane Press]

KIMBERLY ALIDIO

a place gets boring and the dream world starts

the observing stops finally
anti-tourist, anti-sensation
the clouds, the weather, the moisture, the critters
the morning birds on the telephone wires
give signs of forgetting
a place not there but there
here and also many heres
hermeneutics is hygiene haywire.
a place never leaves
even when it becomes routine and falls to disuse
only a passing thought
only a negation of other cities.
return circling
a place another place
wars here and far away
languages understood but not spoken
used for thinking not with the currency of the place.
all the flags flown over this place
the old names and contested names
uneven patterns of body
devalued in and by a place
an accident
a right without claim
the being elsewhere
south or east or north or west
longing to be other and
alien in the familiar mobility.
a desert makes you see-through
a memory of itself
a way to think about anticipating a loss
from one nation hard to love to any city
carved by receding sea.

mine

milk-brow mirror sediment
flecked glint

[emergence]

the aleatory scheme goes off
in your absence

dream
slipping out of language

[furnace]
[infernial]

wring out desire not belonging
the convex
grinds

teethe on sentimentality
mouth-water

remaindering

[named mineral]
[sequin]

When they appear to be on break and everything's casual

a face
is pretty blank
a torso

in all yellow balance

suede pointy booties to the springy beyond

//

all scarves and red

a Didion Sunday of
public opinions
that mustard turned out
top knots punctuate

//

one cupped knee

traps

exit
rolling away

sign with another's limb
one sidebraid

WILLIAM ALLEGREZZA

The Autumns

the autumns never spoke to
me as to others.

and now
i dream the uncurved
back as my own,
and this sense of flippancy
that i claim rides through
what one says to speak
as fear.

in our section is
every section, a line
pointing into the cosmos
expanding, not stopping
as we do with hope.
what we have said we must.

in water

my story is in bones
fortune cracking or
boats slowly turning above rooflines.

when i can,
i watch as rain fills
the ditches with memory.

i could settle with eyes, with
hair out under skies,
with the strings pointing
numbers i cannot sing,
 but i am here with
 toes dangling as driftwood, as
 symbol, trying to build grottos
 with story.

URVASHI BAHUGUNA

Revolve

Turning a marble over and over
a green light waiting to go out.
In the center of me a prayer.

In the center of you when I reach
a cathedral unspooling into thread.
Our children are blue from waiting

in the distance for us to happen.
In a different view we are waving
ourselves off behind railings

we are certain we held tightly once.
Driving on the free-way we gulp
air we create like candy floss

milling in hands as we stare
at the same hill cut like a diamond
turning and turning into light.

TOM BECKETT

Two Triplets

The ghost
in our refrigerator
said "Miaow."

So we
named the cat
"White Noise."

JAMES BERGER

I Fell for the Bread Nurse

I fell for the Bread Nurse,
inert, motionless;
I felt I could not rise
until she kneaded me.
Along the shelves she walked,
healing and nourishing.
I can disassemble
my rigid theater
and the tics
that colonize
my extremities.
When the Bread Nurse smiles,
no architecture
of ligaments can hold
its cantilever.

I fell for
 the Bread Nurse

I fell
 in pixilated wounds

I fell
 in round excessive fermenting--

 The room is yeasted.

The Bread Nurse formed me

then she baked me.

I rise in joy

through the oven's orthodoxy.

Now It's Night

Now it's night
and all that freight
of stored conceit

fear and hunger
starts to stagger
toward a new wager:

What can be shown
in such fine grain
that may make clean

but not be known?
There is no whine
there is no wine

that can untrance
retract from wince
knock down its fence.

But if it were not
then day were bait
and blind to bite.

Is Your Mirror Up to the Task?

I search for a language that sets the terms
for its misunderstanding,
so you must misunderstand in a particular way.

It gives pleasure; there is a coherence;
there is a map of nonchalant intensity
that directs you to a similar address,

but not the right one.
This language's disjunctures are very "dis,"
its euphemisms very "euph,"

its disfranchisements very "junct."
This joining is good, and spells revulsion.
Its degree is beyond category,

like a gymnastic disaster--
but illustrative; we see a proverb
in mirror writing: "*A bird in the hand*

when the cat's away he stands on legs
to broth the merging chest
of a possession not earned

and as the triangles of roofs
shed sunlight to the flower beds
too much sleep is spoiled."

Place the Columns in Their Places

Place the columns in their places, these columns
of imagined marble put together at seams
as I saw them on the Parthenon, never a single cylinder

but sectioned, fitted. Imagine them standing,
from base to fluting, awaiting
the placement of the roof-supporting beams

and the friezes and cornices that reach around the structure
and tell some evidently important, probably sacred,
but not fully comprehensible story of humans, animals and deities,

of rituals, sacrifices, combat in war, judgements in peace,
childbirth, dying, the regulation of farm land and commerce,
scenes from a school room, the long day of a medical practitioner

during a plague, the conquest of a neighboring polity, the slaughter
of men, enslavement of women, the burning of its temples,
the giving of the sacred books of Law to the great Legislator,

the failure of crops, the explosion of the mountain,
the long sea voyage to somewhere else– perhaps to here;
perhaps the narrative was of some other, prior place,

now in ruins, or now conquered, inhabited, occupied
by a happier, stronger people.

Time is Passing and I'm not in the Groove

There is the aging
of the universe and
there is the universal

aging.
There is the time it takes
to decide

to move and the delay
between then
and the beat.

I'm bad... imprecise in the "&,"
never finding the "1";
someone tells me every two bars

the cymbal will hit it,
so listen:
find the latch, get the key,

be in the pocket.
But I can't hear the time—
I think oracular, play static.

JOHN BLOOMBERG-RISSMAN

From *In the House of the Hangman* (Volume 5)

So let us recall Milton Ellis. Who the hell is Milton Ellis? Mr Ellis, as reported by the Associated Press, asleep in his wheelchair on the porch of a vacant Hooters in Florida, woke up to find Josephine Rebecca Smith on top of him, biting off chunks of his arm and cheek. "Years later, he was to lend me Hinton's treatises which attempt to demonstrate the reality of four-dimensional space by means of complicated exercises with multicoloured cubes. I shall never forget the prisms and pyramids that we erected." But now buzz-worthy restaurants are moving back, museums and performance halls are nearing critical mass: so the story kept right on going from manhunt to mourning, *the word 'Trust' hovering over his head, and his sun-glasses, one lens red, the other blue, pushed down past the ridge of his nose so that you can see his eyes, which are slightly off center.* p.s. Hey. Sorry, as always in these cases, for the slow loading time. Not that I've read 'Wonder Boys', but I did see the movie, not that I remember it. What's-his-butt, the first 'Spiderman', was in it maybe. Thanks for making the goodreads page! I've had the image of you standing on the back of a moving tractor since I first saw this comment last night. Literally, it was like when I fell asleep last night the tractor carrying you went into a tunnel, and, when I woke up, you and the tractor exited the other end of the tunnel. 'Resident Evil 4' is amazing! We're already beat from the goodness, but we don't get a day of rest til a week from Wednesday, so yikes. It's cool you have ... I wish I could. I don't know. "Some things are reserved for the dead and they can't imagine them". Somewhere down near the bridge I pick up a brick. I drop it again and it breaks into two pieces. I pick up those pieces. I drop them again. I keep doing this. Each of them sounds like the noise I imagine a comet would make as it slammed into the earth, and smashed into roughly the same number of pieces as I have blood-cells. I pick up another brick. I am, as the saying goes, "worried but outwardly calm". I lean against the wall of the elevator as it carries me up to my 6th floor apartment in this more-or-less modern building in this still more-or-less working class part of Kreuzberg, and I wonder about the sounds the dead would make if they could imagine the light that surely does reach them from whatever future still remains to us. I open the door to my apartment and turn on the television. Ahhh episode 9. ELF waves and the Schumann resonance. I don't know. My brain is sleepy. It seemed as if we were beginning to walk. It seemed as if we were going to go as far as the earth was good. But others are affected in a more subtle way. They are not destroyed. They are not removed from view. And yet these colors, lines, shapes, and forms are all of a sudden and for unknown reasons treated by some artists, writers, thinkers, and others as though they had been affected physically. Though they have not been physically destroyed, some sensitive people treat them as if they had been destroyed. Let me give me you an example: a painter paints for years using only a particular shade of red. She paints monochromes with this red. Monochrome after monochrome. We are familiar with such painters. But one day she stops using this shade of red in her paintings. Were you to visit her studio, you would find it filled with the red paint

tubes she has always used, as she did not stop using this shade of red because the color is no longer being made. Considering that artists tend to go through phases, she might simply be in her blue phase, or her yellow phase, or perhaps she just does not want to deal with colors anymore. But then dozens of years later, and tens of artworks later, this shade of red still does not appear in any of her artworks. Now her family begins to worry. They think maybe she is getting old; that her eyes are weakening. So they send her to consult an ophthalmologist. The ophthalmologist tells her that her eyes are fine, and that maybe she should consult a therapist. She consults a psychoanalyst, and after a few months her analyst tells her she is as healthy as anyone else. However, I am convinced that this woman, this artist, must have sensed all along that the blockage was never in her eyes. It was never in her psyche. The block was in the color. The color has been affected and is no longer available. That's all. And the artist may know this, or, rather, she may feel it. But then there are instances — as you can see with the accompanying plates — when some colors, lines, shapes, and forms can sense the forthcoming danger. And when they sense it, they deploy defensive measures: they hide; they take refuge; they hibernate, camouflage, and dissimulate. Of course, I had expected that when they hide, they do so in the artworks of past artists. I had thought past Master paintings, sculptures, drawings, and buildings would be their most hospitable hosts. But I was wrong. Instead, it seems that when some colors, lines, shapes, and forms sense the forthcoming danger, they somehow just leap, or jump, or drift, or somehow “abandon” their present location to take refuge in certain documents that circulate around artworks. They are no longer within those artworks, but in documents that circulate around them. For example, they might go into a dissertation. In fact, they seem to be quite fond of academic dissertations, especially the ones written by foreigners on a native culture and in a foreign language. They love to go there. For example, take one of the first dissertations written in English on Lebanese modernism by an American anthropologist at an American university. Many colors came here. From time to time, lines camouflage themselves in budgets, especially those that itemize the costs of cultural exchanges between two Arab cities: Cairo and Beirut for instance. Shapes hibernate in letterheads, such as this gallery's letterhead for instance, which is on a letter written by a Lebanese gallery to the Lebanese minister of culture requesting the first Lebanese National Pavilion in Venice in 2005. Shapes hibernated here. Forms are drawn to the graphic logos of companies that support the arts, providing condition reports, floor plans, business cards, price lists, catalogue covers, indices, appendices. Now, if we observe the budget, do we find numbers? Absolutely not. These are lines disguised as numbers. The condition report? No. This is a shape taking refuge within a condition report. And this is not a book, but a form dissimulating as a book. And of course, this is not blue. This is not yellow. This is not black. WOULD-THAT-THEY-ALL-KNEW-ALL-THESE-SONGS. So I propose, instead of trauma, to talk about catastrophe. The difference between the two is that one cannot really recover after a catastrophe, as one normally recovers after a trauma. Catastrophe is meta-traumatic. It happens absolutely: at the beginning there is — there was — always already the end. Catastrophe defines the borders of a collective and the true sense of what we call history. By catastrophe I mean, of course, what people do to other people or to nature, and what nature or

gods do to people: wars, genocide, bomb explosions, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, but also certain legendary events, like the expulsion of humans from Paradise, the Flood, and of course, the Apocalypse. Above all, I am thinking about the catastrophe of one's own existence, this apocalypse of the now — the irredeemable nature of a single present moment. You cannot change anything; the worst is what just happened: your beloved just died, your child just died, a giraffe in the zoo just died, god died, too, you yourself just died or woke up in your bed in the body of an uncanny insect. Which is not in the least what the Buddha meant by suffering. *The walls of the vast room which were streaming with calid moisture, were built with grey slabs of stone and were the personal concern of a company of eighteen men known as the "Grey Scrubbers". It had been their privilege on reaching adolescence to discover that, being the sons of their fathers, their careers had been arranged for them and that stretching ahead of them lay their identical lives consisting of an unimaginative if praiseworthy duty. This was to restore, each morning, to the great grey floor and the lofty walls of the kitchen a stainless complexion. On every day of the year from three hours before daybreak until about eleven o'clock, when the scaffolding and ladders became a hindrance to the cooks, the Grey Scrubbers fulfilled their hereditary calling. Through the character of their trade, their arms had become unusually powerful [...] and [...] Through daily proximity to the great slabs of stone, the faces of the Grey Scrubbers had become like slabs themselves. There was no expression whatever upon the eighteen faces, unless the lack of expression is in itself an expression. They were simply slabs that the Grey Scrubbers spoke from occasionally, stared from incessantly, heard with, hardly ever. They were traditionally deaf. The eyes were there, small and flat as coins, and the colour of the walls themselves, as though during the long hours of professional staring the grey stone had at last reflected itself indelibly once and for all. Yes, the eyes were there, thirty-six of them and the eighteen noses were there, and the lines of the mouths that resembled the harsh cracks that divided the stone slabs, they were there too. Although nothing physical was missing from any one of their eighteen faces yet it would be impossible to perceive the faintest sign of animation and, even if a basinful of their features had been shaken together and if each feature had been picked out at random and stuck upon some dummy-head of wax at any capricious spot or angle, it would have made no difference, for even the most fantastic, the most ingenious of arrangements could not have tempted into life a design whose component parts were dead. In all, counting the ears, which on occasion may be monstrously expressive, the one hundred and eight features were unable, at the best of times, to muster between them, individually or taken en masse, the faintest shadow of anything that might hint at the workings of what lay beneath. That's what shit work does to you. Still,*

Several words seem to form mysteriously meaningful phrases & sometimes even whole sentences & many mottos & exhortations ...

A meta-present, total living, with the lights on twenty-four hours a day. Any time 'I' is used

in this poem it comes from – wherever it comes from. Still,

“_

Why should we be moved by

finding that sharks probably do (or probably don't) have a take on the world
that is recognizably like our own?

i was right,

i was right,

there's no dot on your tongue at all. but it is a peculiar color. Do not look for
your face in your neigh-

bor's, you would see neither [the as such or the in general]. My

instinct tells me that my head is an organ for burrowing ...

And the wagging of a dog's tail, the perked ears of a cat? – And a tiny speck to
the West rising upon the horizon of the sea? –

KAREN JANE CANNON

The Baby Watchers

I see them as I do my rounds, the baby watchers,
eyes like beams of light, sucking
the colour from their own cheeks

to give to you, tiny lamb, helpless
in your crib. If they could breathe
bubbles of air into paper lungs, they would,

offer their own feet for heel prick tests, attach
monitors to their own heartbeats, pulse
a constant rhythm through fragile veins. They've watched

for so long their eyes are hollows,
blown eggs.
There is mud on their shoes, I wonder

at the life outside here— a hillside maybe
where lambs are nosed into life
on bells of heather, ancient paths.

Clipboard ticked, I update charts, slip
into the shadows, out of the glare of fluorescent lights
and those staring eyes.

(First appeared in Acumen)

GENEVA CHAO

Never After

so much
patient
diplomacy,

constant
gardening,
sorting

through
ashes for
peas,

rubble for
gold; we
reward industry.

In the telling
of tales we skip
to the finish,

triumph,
an conclusion,
forgetting

every ending
closes
the book.

I want to
keep on with it,
on and on.

I blacken
my fingers
and live.

Expose, Expunge, Erase

All my effigies hang at my waist like a set of keys as I shuffle down the hallway opening door after door to rooms I have no business in, not turning on the lights, just checking to see that the rats are in their beds for the night

& everything in its right place. But they hear me coming. There is no stealth for a warden with my accoutrements. The screaming bald man on my SnapChat bangs against the blocky assurance of my Instagram. The series of cards with their bar codes

& worn corners bear my name or my face, logo, brand. So many hairstyles, so many fonts. I can't actually open the doors or peer in the windows. I lie down in the dim hallway, ear to the floor, and listen to the clicking and scratching

of a thousand little paws, a thousand links. I cover my eyes with my hands in case a rat might jump. I can't look anymore, not for shame, not for vanity, just for the lassitude of overexposure —

my face is like the Hollywood sign. I wonder what would happen if all of this poured out of a time capsule, but there is too much to fit, and everyone, now, everywhere has a time capsule, and our fungible memories

are too numerous, too densely stacked, too flimsy to look.

M.A. FINK

Clouds grace the Moon a mustache;
bushy, black, and master smart,
but awful quick she shaves it.

THOMAS FINK and MAYA D. MASON

CONSTRUCTION

How are things going with the
building of the town? The name seems
woven to me. Jews were not allowed
to buy six apartments. We
couldn't catch the bruises;
you cannot get away with that desecrated
face. What if you

have to replace it
in toto? This took so much more
paint than I thought it would. There might
be some chemical that melts
through. They throw things out
on the market red hot. Then it
freezes down before you can really
start to use them.

Everybody stops.
One big diamond.
All for nothing.
Nothing for all.

You twisted it. It's beginning to turn.

ASSERTIONS

Her voice sounds like a complaint
even when she's praising. They care about others
only if they can objectify them
for cuteness.

I like knowing who in the world
hates me.

As for those who loathe us
most, if they're sober, we never
penetrate the social fakeout.
Alcohol doesn't produce
racism; contempt has
been waiting, waiting,

latent.

RALPH SEMINO GALAN

Hanged Man

To be suspended upside down
from the truncating Tee of Tradition
is the high price I have to pay

for being different, for worshipping
the gods in the hidden temples
of forbidden desire. Wearing red

and blue, the primeval hues
of fire and water, I am just a motley
fruit or flower, quite strange

to the eyes of many. So you assume
I am lonely, dangling on air,
left leg perpendicular to the right,

arms tied behind my stiff back,
a premier danseur prancing, dancing
to a faerie tune only I can hear.

You must confess my Straight One,
the world from my perspective
you have not seen from where you stand.

(from *FROM THE MAJOR ARCANA*)

AILEEN IBARDALOZA

Rooted

(A Ducktail Haynaku)

Not
my native
land, but here

I
pick up
my pen, wield

it,
lay it
down, from this

heart to this land.

LUISA A. IGLORIA

Strange things pleased me:

paint pearls that dried along the edges of wainscoting,
everything too hot or humid to neatly work in place.
And so that one summer when a rash of *budu-budu*
plastered the limbs of trees with their rust and chestnut hair,
our bodies prickled at the thought of touch. Was it why
the river always seemed so enticing? Rocks with their slip-
skins of moss, whips of grass that lined the banks.
Who passed around that dipperful of rice wine
and how many mouths drank until the sun went down?
The flavor of that day is mostly lost though I can finger
its edges—The sun scorched everything in its path,
confusing boredom with desire, lassitude with thirst.
No wonder it was easy to drink. No wonder it was hard
to tell why we did things we once said we'd never do.

Under the rosebush, a patch of blood—

and in the yard, no evidence but dumb mud,
the lid off a daffodil. Someone said bees;
did Hannah see bees? Hannah did. No lion oil.
Improbable versus impossible? That old riddle,
disguised as metaphysic. We sew, we sew—
that is our nature. Did I cite operas are
poetic? I did. We piece the parts together,
cobble a makeshift quilt from things that lie
side by side. It's hot. I want to sit very still,
but there is no cool overhang of rock, no little
oasis even in this pebbled garden. And sex at noon
taxes. O stone, be not so. We saw the red root
put up to order. When did the moon last rise?
Seven eves ago? I might kiss you again,
when no one's looking; but you must promise
not to ask too much, you must promise
not to ask me difficult questions with no
answer, like *Do geese see God?*

MARY KASIMOR

red slash

you are a blank mind moving around another disclaimer about
a blank spirit and smile we meet in words sounding like lemongrass
and fungus the refuge of tamed life inchoate and bulky the forest
birds a gray dirty sky another red slash killed you say it's a clumsy
last night the fragile morning awaking and sodden milk of blue sleep
coffee the buzzing flies scatter sugar dabs of butter tastes new
textures of light frost in the refrigerator old ketchup lettuce flops
on its face fading tongues yes by chance my body is graffiti

just roses growing out of guns

the dog wound its way through the stations
of the cross
it was wounded on tough talking corners
singing in latin caves
more dogs gather in the sanctuary
next to the men
mostly words
of god fearing triangles
we quit nature and its pointed blue
and squared danced with dead freedom
from the circles
god is found on the internet
god wags its tail
and it doesn't work like a waterfall
our lady of mercy protects us with her plastic gun
(no batteries)
her baby's fingers and eyes next to the hyacinth
in our abused purity
only she guides us through no more
than motion
at night when dogs dress as god and have sex
with the earth's one mystery
god is blank in the darkness like a snake
or a prisoner

actors of cannibalism

bright eyed mysticism--
we mated in the sky
how wide it is in this place
with so many gods to herd stars
planets are unmovable
noise in the background
if I could give you tulips
and the noise of pinkish words--
I volunteer ambiguity reworked
on this burial table
clocks in nanoseconds
the earth stiff with iron
on a pastoral cliff we descend like sheep
the wool unlocks words and tendrils
and strange actors of cannibalism
the house holds us conceptually broken
disappearing bones age like wrecked ivory
our covered bodies for god--
a skilled artist makes the illusion
results are
through mercury's glass
nothing holds water
penetrating the disguises of wind
a belief that continues sand
shifting death into purple 5 am
pouring
out of the funnel
the dwarf grows jewels falling out of her wound--
planted and blooms

BURT KIMMELMAN

The World at Dawn

*I wanted so ably
to reassure you*

[...]

*and got
up, and went to the window,
pushed back, as you asked me to,*

*the curtain, to see
the outline of the trees
in the night outside.*

— Robert Creeley, from "The World"

Lying still
on my bed,
I look through

my window.
Outside, trees
stand into

the sky, their
branches and
leaves above

roofs, chimneys.
The dawn is
white. I am

looking out
on the world.
There is its

light. A car
goes by not
far away.

I might say
something like,
if I were

dying, "I
will leave this
world." The word

world is so
important
for poets —

some knew it
was a word.
Stevens, Bronk

and Oppen,
Creeley are
all gone. They

thought about
words. They knew
how very

desperate
words are. Their
words are mine.

I lie still
and I say
that the world,

its light, is
out "there," and
I want it.

Iris Lee

A Survey

Do
you own
your own home

or
are you
just a renter

or
do you
have a roommate

or
do you
live with family

even
though you're
old for this

way
of living
but oh! finances

preclude
having your
own living space

one
more question
are you homeless

as
in having
less home than

every
human being
ought to have

perhaps
you sleep
in your car

but
if you
have no car

you
must sleep
in the subway

and
eat wherever
and shit wherever

thanks
for responding
to this questionnaire.

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SUSAN LEWIS

Reckoning

Once again his dinner escaped its plate, stranding him at the table, as diminished as he was exposed. It wasn't long before his fiancée rejected the fundamental implications of his DNA. He might have forgotten this new insult to his emotional infrastructure if the dog hadn't gone ahead & left him in favor of a perfect stranger with no sign of interest in non-conversational mammals. *You shouldn't have assimilated his backstory*, said his former sister from the safety of her adoptive frame of reference. *Maybe it depends what is meant by should*, he wanted to say. But if he couldn't swallow his own intentions, who would? Unable to bear the prospect of another botched attempt at consummation, he tied a scarf over his most revealing features, grabbed something versatile, & began the search for someone who would hold him accountable.

On the Way

to our final beginning the birdsong seemed to escalate like rebellious adversaries in love. Or perhaps it was the scent of misapprehension tickling the toes of mistrust. There were digital festivities & gilded mammals trading analog fur for virtual tears. You tried to whisper the algorithm for a secret handshake pried from the subconscious horizon, but your agenda crumbled before it could broach the stretch of assumptions between anywhere & here.

Lost on the Way

to chiseled anarchy, they thought to soothe the dependents whose legs had been hijacked. But no one likes to lose what they have known in the Biblical sense. For what seemed like an ant's eternity, they pumped secret fluids in apparent unison, imagining a comprehensible universe. *I wonder what we'll breathe when the misery runs out*, he whispered in his signature blend of caramel Latin & organic Greek. *Not to worry*, she tattooed on his hard-to-get heel, *I've got this*, tapping her stash of circular morality to slake the bloody thirst of biology & its discontents.

MARY MACKEY

Rough Cut

see this knife this stone
see how the edge has been honed by our grief
until it shines

Troops of Brightly Colored Monkeys

troops of brightly colored monkeys
hang from the branches of the Chicon trees

under the Barrigona palms
orange fishing spiders
with venom more toxic than cobras
are weaving gigantic snares
that billow like silver sails

why these strange creatures?
why this fevered nightmare?

the jungle says *eu sou grande*/I am vast
você é pouco/ you are nothing
no one is going to save you
no one is going to helicopter you out of here

Suspension

At nine in the evening
when the light was long
and the air still tasted of dust
hot as ashes
we went into the river together
open-mouthed and naked
to consider the proposition
that air was not worth
breathing

that night our lives
were shadows on the bottom
vanishing in fish
and reeds

think of this the next time
you let water hold you
how love was once
a short summer night
sweet and despairing

Vertigo

a cama vira/the bed turns over
o quarto vira/
the room turns over

look how quickly
we can fall
into darkness

SANDY McINTOSH

W. H. Auden at Columbia University

"Of course," W. H. Auden began our writing workshop, "one knew other poets when one was at University. But," he paused significantly, "one would never expect to meet them at something called a Creative Writing workshop."

That day he wore blue jeans, plaid shirt and fuzzy slippers. I see him sipping his Martini from a little glass, speaking, as his olive balances on a liquor wavelet, stopping, as it rolls to the rim, a graceful spondaic closure. He would not instruct us in writing anything but traditional forms, he declared. "Go away and write a sestina!" He ordered. "At your age what matters is not what you say in your writing but how you say it."

And then, his hands conjuring: "Have you ever tried writing a *cywydd*? It's the classical Welsh medieval meter..." And here he demonstrated.

We modernist students, borne from Whitman, were offended: What could we learn from this strange gaunt, ungainly man, a visitor to our age, almost a tramp from the subway?

He spent his last classes mostly alone, writing on the backs of sorry student verse. Curiously, I wandered back to his classroom, to the nimbus of blue smoke around his shoulders and hair.

"Come here and let me show you what I'm devising," he motioned, unconcerned that I had not brought an assignment.

"This whole MFA idea. Tch! Well, someone should set it straight." And he handed me the pages he'd been writing.

"If the university must offer some writing program, if it insists on paying actual poets to teach, at least it should put on offer something relating to the way poets mature in nature, absent academia's slithy, grasping hand."

He had headlined "Bardic College" at the top, and below, a schema of a curriculum.

He had written:

- In addition to English, at least one ancient language, probably Greek or Hebrew, and two modern languages.
- Thousands of lines of poetry in these languages to be learnt by heart.
- Instruction in prosody, rhetoric and comparative philology.

- The only critical exercise would be the writing of pastiche and parody. All critical writing, other than historical or textual, would be banned from the college library.
- Courses in mathematics, natural history, geology, meteorology, archaeology, mythology, liturgies and cooking.
- Every student would be expected to take personal charge of a domestic animal and a garden plot.*

“Still, my ideas are probably for naught. Remember what Pound wrote in his “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley? That “For three years, out of key with his time, / He strove to resurrect the dead art/ Of poetry to maintain ‘the sublime’/ In the old sense.

“Well, right here I see old Ezra’s skeletal hand pointing from the sepulcherous closet of the mad house: *‘Wrong!’* he damns it. *‘Wrong from the bloody start!’*”

STEPHEN PAUL MILLER

**In Jordan They Just Found
7,000-Year-Old Opium Pipes**

And nothing else.

The Nerve of That Cockroach

A cockroach is nothing but nerve.

Tap Dancing Potential

There's nothing wrong with it but the identity theft.

We always ask if a time machine is possible

but is anything else possible?

It's Hard to Explain What You Really Like about Rick Perry Anymore

It's hard to explain what you like about poetry anymore.

My Messiah

I think I'll keep him.

DANIEL MORRIS

Jackie Mason Set A High Bar

A Jew, an Irishman, walk into a bar.

The Jew: "Jackie Mason's brother
Was Rabbi at my father's funeral."

The Irishman: "Jackie who? Little Jackie Cooper?"
"Jackie who? The Broadway Comedian."

The Irishman says: "Yeah, but Jackie
Mason the Comic is an only child."

"No, no, no," says the Jew. "This is no joke.

I frame it as one, but this is a confession.

It happened to me. Most Jews don't drink,
But I was born Jewish, started to drink when I
Was 11 and haven't stopped yet because

When my father died they got Jackie Mason's
Brother to officiate and he wasn't funny or
Especially empathetic. In fact he was depressed.

Here he was, merely a Rabbi, but looked and sounded just like
His brother. His heart wasn't into his work.

He told bad knock knock jokes and fat jokes
And gay jokes and Republican jokes, all of
Which were especially insensitive given my father
Was a fat closeted Republican. He knew

Nothing of my father's double life or if he did he performed
The ceremony in ignorance out of spite. Jackie Mason set a high bar—
One I've exploited for years claiming he's why I can't leave."

VALERIE MORTON

Paper Boy

I wish I'd known the boy
who delivered our papers.
He was bicycle tyres on gravel, the clunk
of a letter-box – signals to begin
Sundays in bed.

If I woke early,
I'd catch the blur
of a rearing horse, its front legs whirling
in a Lippizaner dance.

But I never heard the screech –
a red motorcycle coming from nowhere –
or saw the upturned wheel
of his mountain bike, its warm saddle
tossed in the gutter.

I wake earlier now,
walk in faded treads;
shadow a pony tail that always remains
just out of reach.

Reversing

someone's rewind the film:

he backs up the street
into the kitchen – reclaims
the moment of departure

passes it back to her

harsh words still hang on air –
hands used to arousing passion
fidget for purpose

until something soft

steals between them –
the warm nose of their dog
nuzzling fingertips

into touch.

The Word Kitchen

was my mother's theatre.
She walked the boards,
 chopping – an onion here,
 a potato there

skinning for her famous fish pie
in rhythm with *The Ancient Mariner* –
 she set us a feast,
 cracking eggs

from side to side, dropping them,
sizzling into the frying pan.
 On that stage
 I became

The Lady of Shalot flowing down
to Camelot, decked with garlands.

Fires burned, cauldrons bubbled
as we were finger-fed hors d'oeuvres
 of Shakespeare,
 teaching about

love comforting like sunshine after rain.
Our only fight was over
 who licked the spoon
 from her cake mix.

Weaned on poetry in that warm corner
we drank it all in –
 never doubting
 this was how it was.

ROBERT MURPHY

The Bottom Line

I'm sitting at the table where everyone is
Talking at the same time, or trying to,
With their mouths full –
Nobody getting a word in edgewise.
And not a few are smacking their lips,
Even licking them, as dogs do.
So who can be blamed for not being able to hear
The bawling of the cow in the steak tartare,
Or see with startled eyes the prefiguring stain
Emerge from the boeuf en croute
Giving face time to the Shroud of Turin.
Or feel the echo of the lamb's last bleat
The moment the hammer comes down,
When there isn't a slitting of throats.
And what with all the wine being served,
Well, you can imagine . . . red as blood . . .
Most here have already forgotten
The dreams they dreamed the night before
Where the potato is both near and far sighted
And corn has its hearing in the music of the spheres,
And fish their scales beyond weight and measure,
Silent arpeggios, with a story to tell about a golden ring,
And not just another fish-tale where the Big One gets away
To pull you hook, line, and sinker into the salade niçoise . . .
Your spoon, along with the Flying Dutchman
At rest on the "bottomless bowl"
Of the bouilliabaisse.
 God's truth,
It was almost like the wedding at Cana
Where Jesus asks his mother,
What does this have to do with me?
And, I'll admit there was some concern raised
Over the veal cutlet and the foie gras . . .
But, Ah, the côtelettes d'agneau,
My friend, now *those were*
A plate-full of Lamb Chops to die for –

[First appeared in Beans and Rice, June 2016, editor Deborah Diemont]

RENE NAVARRO

Watching the Incense Burn: Instructions for a Devotional

Today, it is two joss sticks for us.
Yesterday it was one: for the Wu-Ji,
the One, where everything is birthed, even
Time and Space
and Eternity. Tomorrow,
it will be three, for the Trinity
of Heaven, Earth and Humanity
and the Three Treasures of the body.
In the dark, the two sandalwood incense
are like a pair
of eyes glowing, hardly giving
out any light as I am seated
in a half-lotus right
in front of Guanyin's altar.
The two flicker as the ash
falls inside the brass dragon urn.
Smoke coils up from each stick,
souls liberated from matter
Yin and Yang reaching out
to each other, embracing
as they rise, white plumes touching
the Goddess of Mercy. After the three,
there are the 10,000 Things,
the Myriad Objects in the world.
No incense here: it is the prayers
you offer, the life you live,
your destiny in the present
incarnation. You are
the incense
burning,
the return
back
to the
One.

I've known you

As a child I believed it
when I saw those fearsome kapres
rising from the fog by the railroad track
just outside of town, when I saw
a ball of light rolling on the grass,
vanishing into the roots
of a banyan tree. I felt that
I was only half-human, that I could
levitate if I only knew the secret
words and the mudras. I believed
that I'll meet you again across
the millennium when I saw
your face and name
in dreams over the years.
I believed that we'll be
together even as you took
that plane back to your homeland
and I am here in my mountain
retreat in the foothills
of Huangshan.
I've known your name, I've seen
your face through the ages.

Treating Father with Acupuncture

Lying in bed at the shelter, during
the first of his three strokes, Father looks
at me puzzled, and opens his mouth
to speak but no words come out
and he shakes his head in anger
and defeat. I tell him I'm going
to give him a treatment and show him
the needles in my bag. He smiles
as I press a point on his head
and winces as I insert one needle
on his crown, another on his forehead
between his brows,
two on the webbing of his thumbs
and big toes. He keeps quiet
as I finish that stage of the treatment
and he leans back, sinks his head
on the pillow and naps.

I hear his labored breathing, the cobwebs
heavy on his lungs, and feel the cold
sweat of the loose skin on his face. I palpate
around the misshapen navel and sense
the emptiness there as if a void
had opened in the earth. I rub his feet
with ginseng oil and notice the ingrown
nails and thick calluses on his toes. He knows
I'm here to make him well, but doesn't
understand why I'm needling certain points.
He doesn't realize I'm trying
to retrieve his speech, nourish his pulse
and activate his brain, make
his left arm move, restore his balance,
and when I pull on the fine,
thin needle like a golden thread,
I am hoping, praying,
to call him back
from the labyrinth
where spirits inhabit
the earth.

I have no other longing

Except to see the beginning
of this life again and to remember
it in the next incarnation.

There is no dream
more important than to
seek the place
where we started
to find the bridge
that will take us close
to the time where
we heard our first scream

The voice of genesis.

The bird that brought us
down from the sky
and gave us life.

I have fasted, my heart
is empty of desire,
attachments and craving.

I am devoid of longing
except for the beginning

GEORGE QUASHA

From Newscasts at Home from Nowhere (Preverbs)

9

creaming the coffee to rouse the dragon

Some music burns into bone beyond accounting.

A thing just said takes territory in the surround.

Trust the vehicle now skirting on your edge.

A change in reading is an intricacy in world space opening as we speak.

They just tripped the syntactic swing switch.

I'm picking up the portions in laying down the notions.

The garden is laid up intricately for possible discovery but is it happening? No.

Garden means always not quite yet.

Picking up on promises still trying to get through.

Here we are creating a time of its own, takes more than one, and moving, spacing.

Mapping as it goes like smoke viewed large. Worldly proportion.

It can kick you over to a strange outer time rim, stop, go, up, over, like nothing else.

It's always about getting your head or some other part in the door.

Then slipping not heading home.

Effort distances.

Mind mirrors dragon intimating scale to feel.

I find myself not reaching her but reaching her away. Seems she flees.

Full transitivity interrupted is not arbitrary in any relation. Hot gap.

Enter the creamy billowing to know its scale invariance.

*Things are not what they seem,
nor are they otherwise.
Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*

The squirrel walking the high wire balances the thinking field.

Every minute change takes its toll on the past.

Look away and it's long gone, listen away and it's gone wrong.

The sadness of not being heard is a core figment of the human conditionation.

Drop nation. It has no standing, sadly. Ask the squirrel to make it fall.

I catch myself in the act of tearing at surfaces for meaning.

I eat earth for flesh proving evolution.

The cream puts tongue in the dragon coffee mouth, hence linguality's reach.

Inside she's a molten pool waiting to stir.

Facing into the matrix between the spread legs enfolding matter tastes through.

Sculpting speaks.

Listen up and around please. Fingers out of ears.

Why so few reports on unidentified flying subjects?

Step away from that comfort zone, Sir.

Ever looking for ways to stir up all the doubt I still don't know I have.

The hard part is faith in the whole release.

The lighted finger within the page starts in the ear.

Anything done before this moment is still to be done.

The dragon dances for the drinking eyes.

MARTHE REED

Left Behind

ENDANGERED: Pearl Darter

In sand pools below shallow riffles. In swift shallow water over gravel. Water over cobble. Extirpated from the Pearl River drainage, from the Pearl, Bogue Chitto, Strong. In deep runs, streams running over gravel or bedrock: *Percina aurora*. Pearl darter, fleeting, tiny black-flecked and gold-bodied fish. Present only in Mississippi. Threatened by the proposed Department of Energy Strategic Petroleum Reserve project. Threatened by riverbank erosion, timber cutting, sedimentation. Threatened by population fragmentation. Threatened by instream sand and gravel mining. Threatened by urban effluent nutrient loading, oil field brine water releases, municipal dams, agricultural runoff, industrial effluent, dioxin. Threatened. In shallow riffles. Over gravel and cobble. Strategic. Pascagoula Pearl :: Extinct in Louisiana.

ENDANGERED: Florida Panther

Concolor coryi: Puma, painter, panther. Catamount. Crooked tail and cowlick, a cougar, this wild cat "formerly part of the established biota." Possibly still. Still. Only one hundred (one hundred wild) remaining. Possibly wetlands, swamps, saw palmetto. Upland forest. Possibly any will do. Wild hogs, raccoons, reptiles, white-tailed deer. Feeding in shadow. One-to-three. *One-* mottled kittens nestle in forest debris. Not all survive. Kittens. Panthers. Painter. Marking with pheromones a 250 square mile territory: highways and habitat loss. Roadside carnage. Critically imperiled :: Extinct in Louisiana.

ENDANGERED: American Burying Beetle

Sexton, six-limbed corpse-nurse: American Burying Beetle, sextons with shovels. Orange-banded shiny black carrion beetle, male and female plow the soft substrate. Orange pronotum, orange thorax. Orange patch between their eyes. Mouse body, mouse burial, incubation chamber. Host feeding and tending, mending. Down to. Nothing-but-bones. Mouse bones, mouse burial. Feeding the young. Adults flown, flew away, shiny black and orange-red beetle. Flown. Nocturnal dotted beetle, tending graves. Sexton among corpses, moldering mice and doves. Tilling the fields. Common ground dove, golden mouse, cotton mouse burial. Habitat fragmentation—critically—increases predator density—imperiled. *Flown. Nicrophorus americanus* :: Extinct in Louisiana.

ENDANGERED: Red Wolf

Canis rufus rufus, a reddish pelage. Coastal prairie marsh wolf, Pocosin wolf. Loblolly and pond pine habitat wolf. Wetland wolf. Hunter, scavenger. Generalist. Lost to Louisiana. Reintroduced, North Carolina, Alligator River wolf. Audubon, the same "sneaking, cowardly, yet ferocious disposition." The same competitor/predator contempt. Sister wolf: long and slender limbs, long-eared. *Wa'ya*, Cherokee Wolf Clan canid. Critically imperiled. Perhaps 300. Possibly 300 remain. Calcasieu, Cameron, Grant, Lafourche, LaSalle, Madison, Natchitoches, Terrebonne, Vermilion, Winn Parishes :: Extinct in Louisiana.

ENDANGERED: Dusky Gopher Frog

Dark-spotted pond dweller, *Lithobates sevosus*. Fewer than. Two Mississippi ponds, 250 adults. Longleaf pine woodlands, wetlands, stump holes and burrows, ephemeral ponds. Two ponds. Critically imperiled. Loss of habitat, sprawl, fire suppression. Declining gopher tortoise (burrows), declining upland forest. Dusky Gopher amphibian. A stubby frog with warts, a bitter white secretion. A defense and dark dorsal spots. *Lithobates'* long "snore" underwater, calling. To call aside. Glen's Pond, Mike's Pond. McCoy's Pond (known from a single male call). Underwater, sounding. Longleaf pine forest habitat. Two ponds. Two ponds. Fewer than 250 adults. Extinct in Louisiana.

Critically Imperiled: Ringtail

Miner's cat, ringtailed-cat: ringtail, omnivore resembling a marten. In dense woodlands, riparian forests, chaparral or rocky deserts. Nocturnal and solitary, "clever little fox" listening in the dark: white-ankled mice, cotton rats, woodrats, rock squirrels. Insects, passerines, and Texas persimmons. Bassarisk. Agile climbers up limbs and narrow ledges, cliffs. Stemming, cartwheeling, ricocheting. Long, black and white banded tail. Balancing act. Down mineshafts, bounding wall to wall, a loud and plaintive bark. Caddo, Catahoula, Franklin, Lafayette. Riding railcars. 2-4 cubs in a litter. *Bassariscus astutus* ::

Critically imperiled in Louisiana.

JARED SCHICKLING

Poems from "torture suite"

• • •

the inequality-producing, mechanisms of the market
exchange, the main lines of struggle
focused solely on, distribution

a backlash, to even the redistributive gains
of labour, in spite of
the poem all this

growth
still seen as
the solution, to our problems

in a current, notion
of wealth creation, and commitment
to its growth,

our relationship
with the damage, the pursuit
of growth, wealth

especially as measured
in monetary terms
poetry today, few consequences

for people's feelings, once it is,
sufficient, to meet their needs

• • • • •

a fundamental thing proposed
that the elementary stuff of light
and atoms should possess the property.

Of particles and waves extending the body
body duality the life-death-thing to
where the pointless codes for things

living and dead in the life
after the death even
in humanitarian terms, how the particle writes

to its wave
functions in the brains
the memory

“saves”
a pointless proof

•

When we consider here and now

comprehensible physiques
beyond should be the infinite certainly
much bigger. What it is!

tied to, the blanks here
encompassed, surrounded now
in the beyond already the

“the”
goest out field
continues

in this way
blank was immortal

•

The novel types of there was

now, a central system of the organ
multiple bodies. Of time were occupied
in the spaces things shed

shed things, removing physically
from engagement
with the spin’s science.

•••••
••••

In the mouth goes the noise of what stopped working
sitting in the future, waiting to happen.

Touch was the barrier to each

manner of familiarity, in the eye.

Nosed the only real hint.

Nose the mouth touches in

the eye, the scene said this

Could sound otherwise. Tasting like a corpse

and smelling like time. Too few trips around this sun

scooped the sockets

Of the odor.

Skinned.

BARRY SCHWABSKY

Blinking Out

When first you found me pinned up
Against a wrapping paper sky
That was the start

You took a picture
I might have seemed exposed
But still your "no" was stripped so bare

Undiscovered by clouds
I stay loyal to the fog
from which I watched you unwind me.

Afterthought

These gardens of the ruined world
sadly used yet still very good
in a twilight of threadbare insignia

You couldn't make it up
but in the time it takes to pick at a scab
peering into your pupil she fell asleep

Unbuckling the halo from your image
the stars pawing at my eyes
vanity of vanities

A woman is still a woman
but sometimes not
the other way round.

EILEEN R. TABIOS

Flagging the Empty Flagpole

You were the altar that made me stay—Spine willingly
bent for a stranger's whip—Clutched the wet mane
of a panicked horse—The night was unanimous—

The erasure that captured the threshold of consciousness—
One begins marking time from a lover's utterance
of *Farewell*—A faux jasmine insists it *is* the scent of gold—

Even a boor pauses before a Rembrandt portrait—Mom
began to age when she began looking at the world through
heartbreaking resignation—Using color to prevent encounters

from degenerating into lies—Furious flamenco with vultures
under a menopausal sun—I was not an immigrant; I was
simply myself who lacked control at how the world formed

outside the "Other" of me—Rust taught me how bats operate
through radar—Plain bread can clear an oenophile's palate—
Her neck thinned until I could count the ropes stretched

along her throat—Admiring women who refuse to paint their lips—
Dust motes trapped in a tango after the sun lashed out a ray—
Bliss deep within an ascetic's eyes as he wandered with

a beggar's bowl—Your betrayal forever marks me like a heart
's tattoo blossoming painfully against an inner thigh—Limits
inevitable from mortality—Detachment can include; detachment

enabled a white rattlesnake to penetrate my dreams—The protect-
-ion of his diamonds—Colors of a scream: the regret of crimson
the futility of pink, the astonishment of brown—To chafe at eating

food earned by someone else, each swallow bequeathing an
ineffable with the demeanor of ice—Your favorite color was water—
Picasso's *Sleeping Nude, 1907*: admirable for its lack

of sentimentality—Ache for fiction that does not chasten days—
A good day defined as eating a red apple while strolling
through white snow—New Mexico, where adobe walls were

soothed by brown paper bag lanterns glowing from lit candles—
Relief Bliss defined as the liberating anonymity conferred
by travel: *Mindanao, Berlin, Melbourne, Amsterdam, Istanbul ...*

become hours requiring no count—To become my own sculpture
when I crawled on a floor to see color from different angles—
Astonishment over a block of grey metal swallowing light—

The cocoon hung from a tree like a tender promise (I forgot
deferring judgment)—Obviating memory for a higher purpose—
Both perception and imperceptibility carry a price—

To be one of Michelangelo's slaves *surg*ing out of stone—History
defined as the World War II concentration camp where amnesiacs
tortured by tying together the legs of pregnant women—

Deflections enable a semblance of progress—Recognitions:
a white bird against a grey sky the same gesture I painted
for years as a single brushstroke of turquoise—Feeling you

in the air against my cheek—Your body against mine
introduced the limits of sunlight's expanse—Long for a sky
without horizon; instead, accede to the eye's clamor against

the opposite of claustrophobia—Jade's cousin: the green
of Antarctic berg ice a lost emerald rib broken and floating
away from a maternal continent—Addiction to *Duende* for

its intimacy with savagery—As an exposed nerve, you
greet mornings—Weariness defined as wishing to be pale—
Sky so lurid it was nonreverberative—To memorize

the marks of animals pawing as they hunt—Color has always
been a narrative—Preserving the capacity to feel you
in the breeze lifting my hair from their shyness—

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SUSAN TERRIS

TAKE TWO: FAMILIAR TENSE

no diaries no other letters only this
when Mary's Belgian griffon died the painter
wrote asking friends to find her a new dog

(clip) she was thirty-three autumn in Paris
*and send it to her by parcel post she desires
a young dog a very young one that will love her*

two artists together again and again he paints her
(dailies) yet restraint she glazes his oils
he adds highlights to hers careful not to nudge

with his elbow loathe to let flesh spoil luster
the new pup in her arms she leans forward
(pull back) a shadow union he feels the heat

of her breath *like the autumn we met let's
risk* she murmurs *don't* he cautions
I'm just an old man who likes horses as you like dogs

Mary Cassatt strokes the dog's muzzle (mask)
its silken warmth *when we met* she says
then I began to live Degas leans back

in the bentwood chair closes his eyes *tais toi*
he says *be still*

TAKE TWO: HUNG

enter the husband swizzle enter the wife they
embrace kiss her hat slips over one eye dummy
she says with his club (flip) he hits her on the head

she grabs the club clobbers him blockhead she
says (mix) now watch the baby she says tossing him
the child he drops it wife hits him again husband

swazzles says what a brave fellow I am but behind
creeps an alligator who says I'll eat you wife
says no please eat me (action) husband clubs her

enter the hangman says I will string you up sir
you dropped the baby hit your wife no yells Punch
yes yells Judy then hangman come and rope me

TAKE TWO: IT'S ALL GREEK

I speak *savura* not with whispers like yours
(*sotto voce*) but my own loud if faltering
bel canto to say he was never yours

a piece of paper money promised betrayal
comes in disguise he said you *valakas* little
coathanger of Cassini-gowns were only vanilla

did you not know how often we two were
in Monte Carlo or asea near Scorpios to screw
spoon up caviar (*tilt shot*) and screw again so

wild and delicious your jewels were meaningless
only I knew how to polish his and when he knew
death was near he took the deep-red blanket to

the hospital fondled wrapped himself in it
my last gift bloody-strong our love he's gone
now and I the grieving widow (*out-take*)

yes I am Callas to you Jacqueline
I send raspberries and catcalls

MADELINE TIGER

Green and Blue with Miniature Daisies

Low curving mounds of grass on either side of
the trail, where there used to be a golf course,
now weedy, abandoned, and covered with

what I found to be daisy-like weeds,
miniature wildflowers
slowly spreading across the grounds,

weaving around the tangles of Spanish moss
fallen from green ash, beech, palm,
and southern pine.

I kept in mind
the wind brushing through trees and grasses,
rippling the nearby pond: it made

everything flutter and bend
like the sand-hill cranes doing
their work at the water's edge

or spreading wings
to rise behind the white flock
of egrets, all soaring over the green mounds

littered with the miniature daisies
that flutter and keep on
spreading.

The rolling greens cover this wide earth,
and all above, not even arching, just there...
the bright blue,

the lovely sky: I see now
how high
our sky can be.

[untitled]

pink clouds at sunset
little frog at my door
lizards, wasps

squirrels climbing
up the bird feeder
pink sunsets

lizards, wasps
thousands more
moths and gnats

than anywhere
I've ever been, it's
beautiful here,

I say, swatting
all sorts of bugs
I can't name, but

flap at, to get them
away, and still say
ahhh, Florida, what

a lovely place, and lug
myself against the smog
and humidity so thick

I can hardly breathe.
My dog sits down hard
and pants, he hates

the heat. But I
insist on staying here,
under the sun, I try

to think of snow
in New Jersey. Didn't I know
where I prefer to be?

JEAN VENGUA

ADVOCATES

Everyone has an agenda in
this moving vignette; no one
holds still. This we can say

of the self, the many selves
flitting through apartments
of an old and badly managed

Victorian, making do:
artists, dancers
a fire-scarred Tai Chi master

I want to learn from. Even
my dead ex has returned, in
explicably affectionate. I intro

duce M. to him, but find instead
a substitute, who, I guess
has his own desires. And

the woman who wants me to find
her a lake to swim in. Always

a perfect sea, a room, within
room; desire within desire,
this time for home, secure

chambers, a neighborhood,
and advocates, flying high
their colored flags.

ON THE SLIDE

Maybe some sound, wish,

will answer

before the crushing light—

the feel

tone, tenor, rasp

—or from inside out

come like a rider

bliss-filled

bottle rocket

equipped with

solace charms:

chocolate

marmalade

warm oil

in a California

freeze

quiet meltdown

(that's

the other option

slow hiss then
disappear)

not that
simple

the mind is open

info

the heart is

both muscle and

chain

or to the poet:

a thin slice

on the slide.

MARK YOUNG

Light deprivation

sends rabbits into
wave after wave
of sexual pleasure,

inspiring them
to write like
Emily Dickinson.

long walks at the beach

Now that I've woken up with
some gnarly morning wood,
nothing turns me off faster

than a stint of dishwashing
in a prison kitchen or using
Lego to recreate the funeral

procession of John F. Kennedy.
Moonlighting as a porn star
can be a hard secret to keep.

the / aristocratic snobbery / of (the) English

The Shropshire redoubt,
elegantly bordered by
topiary, confronts bush-

fires with four nouns
chosen at random. In
this instance, ragged &

manque & bicentenary
& burlap are picked, &
since connected by that

coordinating conjunction
&, will always have to
have a plural verb along.

ALI ZNAIDI

A Dark Collective

The
broken lanterns
adumbrate the fireflies.

The
agonized fireflies
shrink into miniatures.

The
night already
a dark collective.

Oblivion

No
one will
remember the names.

They
will remain
stored in galaxies.

—Unknown
invisible spots.
Between them dust.