

MARSH HAWK REVIEW: SPRING 2015

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JOANNA FUHRMAN

History Poem #2

With the invention of photography,
pupils started to shrink. Babies were
born with lit pinpricks, instead of eyes.

This led women to think of their unclothed
bodies as *naked* instead of *nude*, to darken
nipples with black whispers and wax.

This led the men to calculate the speed
of the first great avalanche, to measure
the distance between mountain and lung.

When images digitized, fingerprints
blurred. Women noticed that their tears
had the potential to be sexy if they wore

them inside out so the dry interior
hid the messy wetness of the drop's
skin. Blood too transformed into

an idea about loss or pedigree.
Veins filled with periwinkle regret,
pixel dust and newspaper confetti.

Lovers could feel their palms drying up,
coconut trees replacing the eggs
their fingers used to hatch.

Neon Arboretum

A birch tree pretends
to be a bimbo

She sashays her nubile twigs
in the titillating green

spectacle we used to call
“the woods.”

She says,
“My pubic bark bops
like a lacy butterfly”

She says,
“My brain is hot pink cucumber
waiting
for you to suck it”

She means,
*the patriarchal nexus
lassos my autonomy*

and/or
she means

*I've swallowed the future
and am waiting
to shit it out
as pure
glittering
rectangular
post-organic
power*

Or does
she mean?

*I'm sad I'm in pain my father my puppy my alphabet my match-burned ken doll
my ego my blond black purple magnetic all-encompassing hair
~~never loved me enough~~*

She says,

“There’s no reason pretending
to be dumb isn’t feminist

if it helps you to win

the argument
the drum kit
the compliment
the sapling
the book contract
the rainbow
the organism
the paycheck
~~the paycheck~~
~~the paycheck~~
the poem

and who are you to tell me
what is or isn’t *my*
idea of authenticity?

You yourself

weren’t born
in a forest!

Those are emerald-colored
stuffed ducklings (!) you have tied

to your metal branches
not even

real / fake leaves”

TOM BECKETT

Some Sequels

Some sequels squeal
lathered theaters,
court an itch,
piss into
thought balloons.

This sequel's arc
describes a linebreak.

This sequel isn't
really following you.

On the other hand, I...

Sequels are anomalies.

Sequels are
entropic emphases.

Some sequels
are cash cows.

*I've become porous,
more porous
than before
vocabularies did things
to me.*

The thing is,
this thing is,
a sequel.

ARLENE ANG

Birdbath

This is where
feathers have abandoned the body.

A son can return home
from war bearing a different face.

The stone angel
on the edge of the birdbath
is still recognizable
even after a third of its head
is missing.

A bomb can pluck the breath
out of a son and force him to stop growing.

The birdbath has a crack
that runs through it. When it rains,
it becomes a watercolor
study on filling
emptiness.

A son can be
twenty-one years old forever.

The absence of birds can
supplant the entire sky.

ten : subtraction

from *approximative translations*

in

this he

returns : beetles

laid up on the tire tread : a war

like sunlight changing the color of the objects it touches : more
snow obsolesces the television : ten before noon on the dead clock :

the children pile at the bottom of stairs to greet the faceless :
tears observed through a microscope : dog carcass & misery

: the arm is no more a sickbed than a sandstorm even as it leaves
the shoulder : some misaligned ocean contained in a postcard : for

clarity a stoning : birds less

-er now arrive

from with-

out

DANIEL MORRIS

The odds may be against those of us at work recovering from the disaster, but it remains possible to pull through with outside support, communication skills, emotional dexterity, and ability to concentrate on the next difficult (but not impossible) task at hand

Downey called this morning to check in on his latest efforts at recovery from Sandy. Last summer he bought his Dream Home for a Song in Atlantic City (Ventnor actually) and now, he says, it still looks like Beirut, not the shiny yellow expensive property on a new Monopoly board he'd fantasized. What he described to me was that 3 or 4 times a week a special truck comes to his seaside street. It is like a dump truck, but oversized. It has an especially long and wide orange container in the back to haul away the serious debris. The dump truck had a Florida license plate, so he knew it had been contracted to make the long slow trek up I-95 North to deal with the ruined city's aftermath. Downey's triple-decker is only a couple minutes stroll from where the boardwalk once was and now nearer the encroaching Atlantic. What caught my attention was Downey's detailed account of how the "garbage man" operated a crane that lifted piles of ruined, water-logged things into the vast container. The operator's task was made especially challenging because of low-lying electric wires that hung along the puddled street and sidewalks still clogged with standing water. The worker had to maneuver around or beside or under the hot wires to get at the piles of junk without getting electrocuted. His task required unusual focus and dexterity to manipulate the levers of his crane without creating further damage to the neighborhood or harm to himself. I thought of what a good sign of recovery it was for Downey to notice the unsung but nonetheless symbolically meaningful acuity of the trash man from Florida.

There had been a big televised concert with local heroes Bruce Springsteen and Bon Jovi and Southside Johnny – Robin Hood – to raise funds to help people like Downey. Governor Christie was there. Downey started reciting The Cliff's Notes version of the months he had spent slogging through various agencies, adjusters, and contractors to salvage what remained of his dream home. For weeks he lived with only a space heater and sleeping bag for warmth. It was the way he used to live before his spiritual awakening, but he was getting accustomed to a new life with the milder creature comforts. A boiler system had only recently been installed so he could have central heat, and it was now mid December and starting to snow on top of everything else. Nothing was left of his first floor, which he had planned to rent out so he could make mortgage payments. He had laid out thousands of dollars already, maxing out his own and his very aged parents' credit cards, and borrowing from those few who still trusted him and/or who had anything left to give, to remove damaged carpet and mildewed walls and to start to put in new dry wall. He said there were a lot of dark times, and I wondered if his own decade of recovery had been put in peril. It would have been for

me. I knew from experience how hard you had to work to get his head and heart where they were at. I also knew from experience how much Downey had had to let go of already. To witness his recovery's symbolic manifestation collapse on such a Jobian scale might have been too much for even a committed person such as my "brother from another mother" Downey to keep repeating his Serenity Prayer and taking it easy one day at a time.

Downey is a social worker by trade. He coordinates social work students at a local college. He has a master's degree and a winning way with people. His ability to get what he wants with his wits was always a blessing and a curse. Together we thought of the Vietnamese immigrants in Atlantic City and the Portuguese of Ventnor. Lacking standard English, how could they negotiate, as could Downey, although uneasily, that alphabet city of agencies to get the insurance funds that seemed all too easy to obtain when I watched Springsteen and Bon Jovi and Obama and Christie helicoptering in and giving hugs to weeping victims? It is not that those group hugs and the concerts and disaster relief are meaningless. It is just that listening to Downey I realized the actual process of even putting one relatively privileged and partly still functional life back on track and even one not totally decimated home back together is a complicated business most will not fulfill. You must face the truth. No matter what you will never get your life back near to where it was before the disaster. Perhaps a harder truth to bear is that even a modest recovery back to an approximation of the way things were before the storms hit will require the strength, concentration, and dexterity to maneuver among the wires and standing water and forms and tensions that Downey had described were being handled with such grace by the junk man who'd come up from Florida. The Florida junk man had, for his own benefit, found the work that hurting people were desperate for someone else to help them do, or to do it for them if they lacked the tools and know-how to help with that particular task. Maybe those helped by the Florida junk man with rubbish removal could themselves help others in distress with some other necessary unsung task, such as filling out forms, giving someone a ride to the next meeting of survivors, making coffee, or just a smile or a hug.

NATSUKO HIRATA

FAUNUS

Retinas of red and green.

Segue---

A flock of Faunus in
a deep rose petal pond.

Reminiscence of twin waterfowl.

Woman with leopard back.

I run past.

CANCER

"How do you like this silent car,
Venus, Hermes?"
Gift of Jupiter
Is it efficient?

I drive to a heavenly body
with them.
Freely.

MARK YOUNG

Meanwhile, in the souq

Wagner's Leit-
motif, built by
people in the
anime & manga
community in

the days when
pirates roamed
the Gulf, was a
favourite venue
for vaudevillians

until an unsigned
band from Abu Dhabi
became unhappy with
its loose abdominal skin
& torched the place.

electricity poles with a half-moon shape

Spare us the conspicuous
parasol. The realm has shifted
in favor of the hands-free

feature of a hat. One of the
fads this summer will be
biking down backstreets.

There is nothing daintier now
that horse riders have left the
city. So, too, has Edouard Manet.

SUSAN TERRIS

MEMO TO THE N. J. POET WHO BET ME THE SUPER BOWL SPREAD

when I was growing up spread meant Miracle Whip
you put on your Wonder Bread with the baloney

what legs did in cement boots in the Mississippi
if you piqued the St. Louis Mafia

what you put on top of scratchy wool blankets after
you squared hospital corners and we didn't

say *point spread* but *odds* not on games but horses
running at Hialeah and spread was also what

other girls' mothers said not to do before marriage

MEMOS TO SELF

at the bathroom door Brando
yelling for Stella when you are only

Blanche lusting for sex and kindness
a streetcar run off her rails

∞

like Francesca you risked
life for the plunge of forbidden love

now in this windswept circle of Hell
you can't touch but you can see

∞

oh lady whose portrait was it when
you thought you were Isabel until

in the gold-veined mirror you saw
just the cracked face of Madame Merle

CARLOS HIRALDO

1979

I was day dreaming when I heard Prince
I haven't done much looking forward since.

When I woke up that warm Sept. morning,
my mother was still awake.
The sky was clear and blue.
Then there were people raining everywhere.
In 2008,
we tried to run from our destruction,
but fell back into inaction.

I was bleary when I wrote this
forgive me if it glorifies the past.
But this century barely started and I fear what's to come.
War is all around us, my mind says prepare to fight,
so don't blame my body if it gives into flight.

Tonight I'll go on diving
into the straight white lines.
Gotta knife in my pocket
look at how it tore.
Yeah, everybody's got the bomb, but I got no Medicaid.
Before the reckoning happens, I'll dance my life away.

2-0-0-1 party over,
no more fun.
So tonight I'm gonna party
like it's 1979.

HOLLY GUACAMOLE

I like avocado,
but not the mushy paste.
I don't have a story.
I'm just sharing apple sauce and brittle dreams,
nothing as extreme
as lost hope,
for a college professor comfortably lower class.

I am dope.
I sit all alone and smoke lots of Coke.
They say the caffeine is bad for ya,
but I inhale smoke right off the can.
One day I'll go outside in this summer heat,
but summer pay is just as bad as every other day
and I have too much time to kill in July.

My throbbing toe
teaches me a painful lesson,
you can't walk barefoot in your own house.
I close doors faster than a speeding bullet.
A working class ethos tells me I should give it a day or two,
despite my adequate city insurance.

A lot of things talk to me,
but no one I want to.
The birds in the streets tell me nothing,
and the kids outside my window white noise.
There's no poetry in Sunnyside
since my baby flushed my baby,
just a perpetual after taste.

CAROLE STONE

Terminal

I will put Chaos into fourteen lines and keep him there.
- Edna St. Vincent Millay

Why am I always in the wrong part of the terminal?
My bus leaves from Gate 6; this is 37.
Busses will be delayed due to police activity,
the P.A. system announces. My back hurts;
I rest against the tiled wall. If I end up alone,
can I print my airport boarding pass,
pump my own gas, drive to the Motor Vehicle Station
to register, set the thermostat for Standard Time,
program the three-way all-night lamp,
carry the heavy garbage cans to the curb,
remember pick up days, find my way
in the emptiness? Mother and Father never helped
with the dark and dread, their grassy graves
overshadowed now by the Parkway.

After Reading Basho

My head on two pillows
I wake every two hours.
The street light shows

Howard Street empty.
On the hill of my neighbor's yard,
snow remnants cling

to railroad ties.
Four A.M.
I'm a small gleam.

THOMAS FINK AND MAYA DIABLO MASON

DID THEY DISMISS SCHOOL WHEN MARILYN

Monroe died?
It was summertime.

The studio did
everything it could to push
the baby out.

She had, they felt,
dropped out of the sky.
A void appears
in the coffee.

Is yawning archival?

You can't return a dress after
you've cried in it.

THOMAS FINK

AIRTIGHT COGNITION

“Sit down in a restaurant and order a tree and see what happens.” – Bill Zavatsky. “The Language Environment.” *The Difficulties* Ed. Tom Beckett. 1.1 (1980). Web. 31 Aug. 2014.

“Words have meaning. And their meaning doesn’t change.” – Antonin Scalia. Jennifer Senior. “In Conversation: Antonin Scalia.” *New York Magazine*. 6 Oct. 2013. Print.

“This time of year you get terrible apples.” Tuned
to words
that branch,
server, rooted,
stumped, pre
broccoli &
What do
“have”?
to change.
elephant
trunk
a forest.
are meant
meaning
of meaners
change &
meaning. “It’s
melon. & it’s
this melon.”
pens when
a tree orders
a family? Sit
down in this
tree & order.

CHARLES BORKHUIS

RESTLESS

I unplugged the terror from the wall
and the house fell down
it was all run through the computer anyway

I confess the snake made me do it
now my back is bent
into a hobble-stick

you can't unfriend us the voices said
we're already your next thought

it's true the present
was already a memory

I must have slipped the noose
and left to walk the dog in my sleep
returning to the place where they plant
trees and faces in the soft tissue
under my tongue

blind star by day
see-through body by night

CLOSE READING

look closely at this page of sky
pierced by dark branches

scraps of words and phrases
collected in the trees

rough ends made to cling
to tenuous beginnings

the silent twigs and dead grasses
nested in memory's eye

then off to another branch
look closer at the tiny sun

under an eggshell the grooves
where music was cut

into the face of a stone
I only played the stream of notes

to get to the stone
I mean the silence

which was never quite
quiet enough

JANE AUGUSTINE

Snapshots: Lower East Side, 1970s

(i)

At the all-night newsstand on Avenue B

woman with gray afro
short sleeves & bare legs
laughs coughs

got a raggedy ole match
for this
raggedy ole cigarette?

boiler broke today
--warmest day in January—
robbed the landlord
of the fun
of thinkin how cold
we'd be

bent sideways
with hard laughing

got a
ragged ole quarter
for a pint of wine?

(ii)

Moon over Ninth Street

a big white shopping bag
above the wrecker's scaffolding
finds the lintel
and the gargoyle

old rubbish-picking woman
convinced
there's something
to salvage

(iii)

Specter this afternoon: an errand boy

no longer a boy stalks down First Avenue

between piles of *The Daily News*—murder,

body count—and a showcase of silver sandals
that girls wear to parties. He's coatless, his pants

droop. He holds out a woman's black suede pump
gripping the heel like a revolver's butt.

His eyebrows smoke slightly. His jaw shifts
like a linotype stamping hot lead:

here's a spike through his heart,
a sheath his foot can't slip into.

He's riddling the silver-necklaced throats
that pass by him, someday a headline..

GEOFFREY YOUNG

PORTRAIT ONE

Look. Judgment is reliable to the extent that it's haunted by knowledge of its own arbitrariness. Even on a clear day you can only see half-way.

What makes *that* guy so tiresome is his way of wielding common sense as if it were the last word. His stance, of being instantly and perfectly comfortable with whatever the world presents I size up as a typical intimidation routine. No one without a silly streak is going to be good at being serious about art.

The only strategic reason for being publicly "extreme" about art is not to be outflanked, gotten-around, incorporated—an aggression with passive intent, a negative virtue, keeping the powder dry.

Today a polite cough can scare people to death.

We live in a crazy world full of weapons, war, and destruction, and poetical types go all aquiver over a few mildly heterodox opinions? Obviously, it's necessary, if you don't want to be a complete crank, to adjust yourself to the sensitivities of your times. But I've only begun to realize my capacity for contrariness, and I mean to adapt myself grudgingly. This may be a species of "heroic" attitude, but why is the context so absurd and piddling?

The hero chooses, accepts, assumes his context. I'm only a malcontent holding out for a contentment I strenuously expect.

The insularity of the poetry world may be dynamite aesthetically, but values are tested in the world.

Money. The word seems to upset people so much that I want to yell "money, money, money!" until everyone's deconditioned. Money is the medium and weather of our lives, the very word "value" is pre-eminently a money word. Why should I have to be telling you this?

Art is buyable, yes, but part of what's bought in an obligation to the future. Immaterial art just substitutes artist for object as the buyable thing. See? Any attitude to the art object or art act can reverberate into the world, really changing things. Poetry lacks this reciprocating grip on social reality. More mysterious, it requires greater faith.

DEBORAH GOLDEN ALECSON

Living Grief

I've been through a revolution
of staggering loss
and where there are missing people
I have found myself

funny how this works

shaky ground beneath me
with each parental death
releasing toxic memories
I thought I laid to rest
but they are new opportunities
to view what was lost
not their dying
but their presence in my life

my mother smudged her life out
it's called suicide
and my step-mother dissolved
in my narcissistic father's arms
a loss of two mothers
in one year
it's a lot

the brave red flower
pushing through a crack in cement
the bold tender lifeline
affirming itself
the self, accepted by my self
is now what is left

this vulnerable offering
this quaking red leaf
is only alive
because I rode my grief

September 30, 2014

JASON McCALL

Now That Wally West Is Black

The next time he makes Superman
look like a Big 10 linebacker
in a bowl game, I'll have an "of course
the World's Fastest Man is black" joke
primed and ready. My nephew

will have one more action figure
I won't feel guilty about on Christmas.
I won't have to say Wally is kinda like
Iron Man or he has a hammer, but not as cool
as Thor's. He'll be confused

by the *Justice League* cartoons.
He'll follow the alternate timelines
and alien doppelgangers without blinking,
but when the Flash slows down
enough to let the world catch him

winking his blue eyes,
the nephew will have questions,
and I'll have to promise him
that a Flash can be black,
just like a policeman, president, the first

pair of lips that tastes
like lightning in our mouths.
And I'll tell him the Flash is only a red blur
most of the time, so his skin doesn't matter,
but we'll both know I'm lying.

Trayvon's High School Reunion

We'll have to shoot
a last minute email
to the caterers to keep the Skittles
off the snack table. We'll bother

to leave out a jar for the Next Black Boy
to Breathe College Air Scholarship Fund.
We'll have a moment of silence for all
the dead bodies we forget to name.

We'll tell the DJ to scratch
over all the gunshot adlibs, leave
the Public Enemy in the crate.
We'll take a head count before every slow jam,

guarantee everyone has a shoulder
for their wet cheeks, a buffer
for every mumbled prayer god
will pretend to never hear.

SHEILA E. MURPHY

From American Ghazals

Two Hundred Twenty-Third

Porch swing very much a mental furniture outlasts
contentment in the way that pacifiers take the place of food.

I want you back again, that I might tell you what you mean to me.
This side of heaven seems commotion more than prelude.

Her name, the name of fine china purchased
When the Depression hit, amid pale poverty.

Do not threaten to overturn the various legislations
that ensure our freedom, said the saint, during a convocation.

I look back and I absorb a little of Grand Haven, Grand Rapids,
Kalamazoo, and Battle Creek, each one with long-term personality.

Two Hundred Twenty-Sixth

Imposing on her unwitting hospitality,
the drunk began to teach her algorithms.

Unwanted earnest money answered prayers
she did not know she had recited.

Now and again, the yard showed some maturity
by yielding weeds that matched the purple flowers.

If you happen to have had a child, would you mind
sending her to preschool instead of to my home?

He frisked strangers who desired to fly until
at last they settled on a destination.

VINCENT KATZ

FOR MY FRIEND, RICHARD

It has seemed like a moving towards
But in the end it is simply moving
Continuing and swimming ahead
Just some more rocks and shallows

SIDEWALK POEM

I have to be on my own on the street
then I can write any way I can
observe pedestrians, tourists
all seem satisfied in the air
of September, to be walking
here, on the avenue

security the guard offers them is jewelry
not raining, two men arrange pillows in a window
church where we heard that musician once

I am here to find pure possibility
pure possibility is fantasy

no, it's *really* possibility

for it to work I must be completely alone
If I'm *with* anyone, possibility's no longer plausible

this perfect light and air just now
calm people have on avenue
can literally: Do anything, Go anywhere

I don't want coffee in a paper cup
I don't want coffee
I want sleep
springlike haze settles over autumnal city
breeze blissful I walk

everywhere — on corners, in holes — people are having lunch
— pizza, and there is Spanish music playing

beautifully two men hoist bucket with board in it up 15 storeys
swimwear goes on display, as does display itself

secretaries in button-down shirts and skirts, guys in ties
smartphones and cigarettes, in the lift from the ocean

I can't take that solution
stranded personalities, summoned cops, chewing walkers
In between cutlery and upside down clowns, vintage New York
a way of seeing, designed lobby wall
rectangular protrusions, tired of the same old
continent, tree, idea, freestyle barber shop, happy hour

The street curves down then up as it nears the river
steps ascend into heaven, patterned repetition as of temple
etched floral corner flattened capital metallic frieze catches sun
next arches Romanesque Deco entryways unchanged
people new generations new hair, edits
come from all parts of globe
no one look, no American, no city
but is city, with bodies, crimes, havens

Old yet ever new
Eternal voice
And inward word

They come to pay homage in evening
not cold, season set to city appropriate pitch
hue, timbre as quiet in movement, voice
one looks over avenue, perch at one with sidewalk and asphalt
lights on in offices, many, yet quiet, here, in middle
calm, long ago, settles, walks
grass, bush but nature is humanity
walk of purpose at this hour, poetry's forgotten attitude
now the right time, almost palpable
can't control time but am able to add to it
have the possibility here
one who reckoned against it lost
one who reckoned for it found

pigeons flying in circles in blue morning sky, bit chill

walk, using bodies to propel,
enter office buildings, check messages, carry umbrellas
don't feel like carrying extra weight now

series of uplifts, don't want to stay anywhere,
don't want to have coffee till after lunch,
at corner of grand intersection, decades collapse,
already on upper avenue, can relax, flow and decor one,
cigarette, red light, steps, on avenue
carrying life, the forms, send it,
okay to turn, now on wide side street

Ides of October
alcohol feels good
flooding bloodstream
allowing space
in restaurant tables of inlaid design
eternal bottles line up, face you
blinds open on plate glass to street
activity continues to flow out as in here
people at bar or tables in conversation
passing time,
in clink of music and plates

Buildings line up in light, a new day,
cold, finally, allows fresh perspective,
here, where people, fewer in number, walk
children skip to warm
if this can all be done with love, heart, then day will have a shape
here writing their walking

last day of its being light late
constant walkers on the line

get funky out at the edges

could be a time for poetry,
but outside, not in
not on the inside looking out but rather
on the outside on the outside looking,
sensing the air, rain, drops, sidewalk,
damp cover, delicate, reflection,
in puddles, crimson, magenta, yellow, white, peppermint
not to go back, but present, no we,
just everyone at the moment, in the rain of this city

extent of hair, expanse, guitar's rhythm,
vocal, legs, bare in Spring, or clothed, December
human-animal path, on sidewalk,
to that terrain outside the normal round, where one can, finally, breathe,
and that breath is breath of other human-animals, in drowse of morn,
in realm of flowers and gardens, now I
cross over, free from overhang, exposed, rain hits my face,
feel on my skin air, be outside, in any weather

Signs for living, leaves, approaches, aggressions, then just walks,
the walking through, movement, please, how work is done,
under overhang, protected from vision, attack,
spot one can hit, outside, amid walk

Sharp light morning edifices, cold descended

Warmer, light Monday, cold but still light,
skyscraper in light above, leaves still on,
conversation, tapping, dragging, hum, voice,
standing, in cold, awaiting, signal,
stopping, sheer civilization is walking, in boots, to corner
could be more, until isn't

Today is day of secrets, scratches, stretches,
even that close, far away from sound,
your ear, mind, is continuity of faces,
educations, sunlight side to side, edge to edge,
wandering back in light, scrap and hovel in chill,
light is guide, beyond brick, granite, if you can follow,
in sky, on building, drifting off banner, on person walking

They may not think poetry's important
but I know it is important

Wet asphalt, it rained, will rain, but now sunny haze breaks,
blue at edges, under light, white, clouds,
cold of January, holds, pigeons in clean gutter,
families walk up avenue, down streets, sidewalk
what propels them, ancient conveyance, desire,
walking its dog, body that drove one insane, that sudden face,

shift between walking, staying, America, Europe,
light that hovers and expels, families and individuals

I wouldn't want to be like him, possibilities of tall buildings
straight above you in dusk, lightness, faint lingering at other end
of tunnel, calm weather, those photos don't register,
don't want to leave this calm corner yet, various lights apparent
in daylight, still, a race of emotion to keep it, steady
as conversation is, a place to stay, walk, but not argue,
it would be rude to argue with poetry, this evening

Park's outlook one of other century, need sidewalk's push
still, the light here, before day begun, activity of it,
crossing faces and calves, gives stories, now in photo,
poetry, though, is walking, not standing still person, writing in book,
but who move themselves, cerebellum as human-animal form,
I too able to walk and can't be held to past

A sense of light, and person running
red, purple, light blue traverse, as points on screen, park
statuary, ambulation, no voices but those of workers,
in silent meditation, headphone, raucous shout
bird declamation, high in sycamore
sophistication, as all is played for one
against three-dimensional scrim

*exitus acta probat they say
let us raise a standard to which
the wise and honest can repair
the rest is in the hand of god*

Wild lawn out there, black squirrels only,
white pigeons, and little butterfly
but dark green, long, shaded by leafy cover

Recovery of distance, there, on avenue, people approach,
morning hour of walking dogs, some still, workmen,
bright yellow vests, hardhats, trees in leaf,
distant in purple robes pose for photos,
buildings come together, meet at points, overlap,
trees come in to fill field, rich growth under,

all leaves, foretell summer, all wet,
haze lighter, men in shirtsleeves, ties,
drink coffee, women in dresses, light jackets,
solitary boy, late, scooters under enormous green

Church where that musician played, calm grey surmounts
neo-gothic against modern grid,
up to green, bacon, and one you love,
avenue is clear, few stroll past displays,
artifact, convention crushing, voice domineering,
pretends only to discuss, thoroughfare, cavernous
few souls, beginning moment,
before boredom returns, necessity, front
put up to guard desire, work as unit
once, phalanxed attraction, suffering on the sidewalk

EILEEN R. TABIOS

ENHEDUANNA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

[1]

*I forgot you wanted to see her seeing herself... I forgot you thought of me as you paced the streets of a city whose sidewalks memorized the music of my footsteps dancing away from youth into courage.... ~~I forgot my own scent had threaded itself through the strands of your hair...~~ I forgot you saw a bottle of Apollonio Riserva 1997, and recalled how the wine's jammy presence puckered my lips to your huge but hidden delight. I floated in your orbit then, though I looked elsewhere, ignorant of gravity's logic.... I forgot you saw each virgin moon as a ruby you wanted for adorning my body.... I forgot you tasted her in every wine that dripped down your throat. I forgot Dr. Loosen '99 Wehlener Sonnenhur Riesling Beerenauslese: "a bouquet of slate and roses, a molten flavor of starfruit, honey and pineapples".... *He was seated in a café, his table next to a haggard poet whose long-emptied cup refused succor as she kept writing a poem, writing a poem, writing a poem...* I forgot an old man on the other side of glass rolling brown cigars on a wooden table. His eyes sunk from the same element that thinned his lips: a wish for more years... I forgot the signs surrounding the man with curdling milk in his eyes—signs signifying nothing relevant to an embattled world or self: *Macamundo, Push, Hoyo de Monterrey, Cohiba, Partagas, Excalibur, Davidoff, Zino*.... I forgot linens called *Lamorna* or *Serge Antique* that offered themselves not as black or white but as toast and oyster.... I forgot a tapestry fabric called *Marley* from whose complex greenery small red blooms occasionally and always tastefully burst.*

[2]

*I forgot you wanted to see her seeing herself... ~~I forgot my own scent had threaded itself through the strands of your hair...~~ I forgot a man revealing a pristine white cuff as he raised his wrist to check a steel Movado watch.... *He was seated in a café, his table next to a haggard poet whose long-emptied cup refused succor as she kept writing a poem, writing a poem, writing a poem...* I forgot an old man on the other side of glass rolling brown cigars on a wooden table. His eyes sunk from the same element that thinned his lips: a wish for more years... I forgot England with its glazed chintzes bearing sprays of rose, peony, hydrangea and gladiola—names evoking country houses: *Bowood, Amberley, Sissinghurst, Sutherland*.... I forgot linens called *Lamorna* or *Serge Antique* that offered themselves not as black or white but as toast and oyster.... forgot the definition of optimism: "when sky turns blue, it becomes as physical as an organ".... I forgot waking from a dream of white heat to see sun-washed walls forming a room where silk and lace sculpted a milk puddle on terra cotta floors.*

[3]

I forgot I lit alleys by leaving scarlet roses whose perfume, I hoped, you would discern.... I forgot we once stood unknowingly in the same room of this city of numerous rooms—did you frequent its space without knowing ~~until now~~ why you always looked intently at each face? I forgot you saw a bottle of Apollonio Riserva 1997, and recalled how the wine's jammy presence puckered my lips to your huge but hidden delight. I floated in your orbit then, though I looked elsewhere, ignorant of gravity's logic.... I forgot you also loved New York City for hosting those whose hair whitened prematurely in order to write books with titles encompassing *Purity, Smoke, Thrall, Shield, Brush, Mote, Sheen*—which is to say, *The Encyclopedia of the Om*.... I forgot how pronouns confused me. I forgot the “She” evolving into an “I” then back again, flustered before your gaze. I forgot England with its glazed chintzes bearing sprays of rose, peony, hydrangea and gladiola—names evoking country houses: *Bowood, Amberley, Sissinghurst, Sutherland*.... I forgot linens called *Lamorna* or *Serge Antique* that offered themselves not as black or white but as toast and oyster.... I forgot a tapestry fabric called *Marley* from whose complex greenery small red blooms occasionally and always tastefully burst.... I forgot the definition of optimism: “when sky turns blue, it becomes as physical as an organ.”

[4]

I forgot you also loved New York City for hosting those whose hair whitened prematurely in order to write books with titles encompassing *Purity, Smoke, Thrall, Shield, Brush, Mote, Sheen*—which is to say, *The Encyclopedia of the Om*.... I forgot how pronouns confused me. I forgot the “She” evolving into an “I” then back again, flustered before your gaze.... *He was seated in a café, his table next to a haggard poet whose long-emptied cup refused succor as she kept writing a poem, writing a poem, writing a poem*... I forgot you startled the girl whose poetry elicits dragon scales from empathetic muscles.... I forgot a fabric named *Solace* and its availability in celery, parchment, black pearl, crème brulee, persimmon and sage.... I forgot an old man on the other side of glass rolling brown cigars on a wooden table. His eyes sunk from the same element that thinned his lips: a wish for more years... I forgot the signs surrounding the man with curdling milk in his eyes—signs signifying nothing relevant to an embattled world or self: *Macamundo, Push, Hoyo de Monterrey, Cohiba, Partagas, Excalibur, Davidoff, Zino*.... I forgot a tapestry fabric called *Marley* from whose complex greenery small red blooms occasionally and always tastefully burst.... I forgot the definition of optimism: “when sky turns blue, it becomes as physical as an organ.”

[5]

I forgot you wanted to see her seeing herself... I forgot you thought of me as you paced the streets of a city whose sidewalks memorized the music of my footsteps dancing away from youth into courage.... I forgot I lit alleys by leaving scarlet roses whose perfume, I hoped, you would discern.... ~~I forgot my own scent had threaded itself through the strands of your hair~~... I forgot that when you turned a corner and felt the joy of Baudelaire's “infinite expanse” at the sight of sky thinned by two parallel skyscrapers,

you thought of me latching a star on a gold chain so that its shimmer would lower your gaze towards my breasts.... I forgot you saw a bottle of Apollonio Riserva 1997, and recalled how the wine's jammy presence puckered my lips to your huge but hidden delight. I floated in your orbit then, though I looked elsewhere, ignorant of gravity's logic.... I forgot you saw each virgin moon as a ruby you wanted for adorning my body.... I forgot the empty chair that awaited us, its expanse the totality of a planet still unexplored.... I forgot you tasted her in every wine that dripped down your throat. I forgot Dr. Loosen '99 Wehlener Sonnenhur Riesling Beerenauslese: "a bouquet of slate and roses, a molten flavor of starfruit, honey and pineapples".... *He was seated in a café, his table next to a haggard poet whose long-emptied cup refused succor as she kept writing a poem, writing a poem, writing a poem...*

[6]

~~Surely you walked through the spaces I hollowed from air and left behind in anticipation of you....~~ I forgot I lit alleys by leaving scarlet roses whose perfume, I hoped, you would discern.... ~~I forgot my own scent had threaded itself through the strands of your hair...~~ I forgot we once stood unknowingly in the same room of this city of numerous rooms—did you frequent its space without knowing ~~until now~~ why you always looked intently at each face? I forgot you also loved New York City for hosting those whose hair whitened prematurely in order to write books with titles encompassing *Purity, Smoke, Thrall, Shield, Brush, Mote, Sheen*—which is to say, *The Encyclopedia of the Om*.... I forgot the empty chair that awaited us, its expanse the totality of a planet still unexplored.... I forgot you tasted her in every wine that dripped down your throat. I forgot Dr. Loosen '99 Wehlener Sonnenhur Riesling Beerenauslese: "a bouquet of slate and roses, a molten flavor of starfruit, honey and pineapples".... I forgot a man revealing a pristine white cuff as he raised his wrist to check a steel Movado watch.... I forgot a fabric named *Solace* and its availability in celery, parchment, black pearl, crème brulee, persimmon and sage.... I forgot an old man on the other side of glass rolling brown cigars on a wooden table. His eyes sunk from the same element that thinned his lips: a wish for more years... I forgot linens called *Lamorna* or *Serge Antique* that offered themselves not as black or white but as toast and oyster.

[7]

I forgot you thought of me as you paced the streets of a city whose sidewalks memorized the music of my footsteps dancing away from youth into courage.... I forgot I lit alleys by leaving scarlet roses whose perfume, I hoped, you would discern.... I forgot we once stood unknowingly in the same room of this city of numerous rooms—did you frequent its space without knowing ~~until now~~ why you always looked intently at each face? I forgot that when you turned a corner and felt the joy of Baudelaire's "infinite expanse" at the sight of sky thinned by two parallel skyscrapers, you thought of me latching a star on a gold chain so that its shimmer would lower your gaze towards my breasts.... I forgot you saw each virgin moon as a ruby you wanted for adorning my body.... I forgot you tasted her in every wine that dripped down your throat. I forgot Dr. Loosen '99 Wehlener Sonnenhur Riesling Beerenauslese: "a bouquet of slate and

roses, a molten flavor of starfruit, honey and pineapples”.... I forgot a fabric named *Solace* and its availability in celery, parchment, black pearl, crème brulee, persimmon and sage. I forgot England with its glazed chintzes bearing sprays of rose, peony, hydrangea and gladiola—names evoking country houses: *Bowood, Amberley, Sissinghurst, Sutherland*.... I forgot linens called *Lamorna* or *Serge Antique* that offered themselves not as black or white but as toast and oyster.... I forgot a gilded door on Park Avenue you opened to a silver organza bag. Nestled in tulle netting were Lindor truffles in “all available flavors: milk, dark, white, amaretto, hazelnut, peanut butter and mint.”

[8]

I forgot you thought of me as you paced the streets of a city whose sidewalks memorized the music of my footsteps dancing away from youth into courage.... I forgot you also loved New York City for hosting those whose hair whitened prematurely in order to write books with titles encompassing *Purity, Smoke, Thrall, Shield, Brush, Mote, Sheen*—which is to say, *The Encyclopedia of the Om*.... I forgot you saw each virgin moon as a ruby you wanted for adorning my body.... I forgot the empty chair that awaited us, its expanse the totality of a planet still unexplored.... I forgot a man revealing a pristine white cuff as he raised his wrist to check a steel Movado watch.... *He was seated in a café, his table next to a haggard poet whose long-emptied cup refused succor as she kept writing a poem, writing a poem, writing a poem*... I forgot the signs surrounding the man with curdling milk in his eyes—signs signifying nothing relevant to an embattled world or self: *Macamundo, Push, Hoyo de Monterrey, Cohiba, Partagas, Excalibur, Davidoff, Zino*.... I forgot linens called *Lamorna* or *Serge Antique* that offered themselves not as black or white but as toast and oyster.

TOM RANDALL

Homage to W. S.

I am in love with you, Wislawa Szymborska.
With your plain straight-ahead lines.
At times conversing
With your anthropomorphized memory
or alter ego.
At times not being there at all.

But my love does not stop there,
Wislawa Szymborska. No, Wislawa Szymborska.
I wake, chewing on your name
as a thoughtful student does on a pencil.

I am unfaithful to my wife
when I silently chant your name
like a prayer at matins.
It resonates in my head
before the first wren of morning
chiffs his song.

Your name is my mantra,
Wislawa Szymborska.
It will live in the poetry
of all those throaty consonants

Bonnard's Apples

Bonnard looked at the
archaeological remains
from last night's
dinner. Wine glasses,
salt (but no pepper),
an orphaned fork,
two reduced red candles on
a blue table cloth. A bowl
that held apples.
Apples such as Cézanne would approve.
Except they had lost their planed edges,
melted beyond restoration.

Time for the new.
Like a *voyageur*
he had to make do,
paring each apple,
a sliced sliver of cheese,
wine sipped to slip them
down his throat.
He took the evidence,
seeds, skins, and stems,
to the burn barrel,
and, although it scarcely seemed to matter,
torched it all,
and fed the last cheese
to the camouflaged cat,
the one always hidden in the carpet,
draped, or dappled light.

MARY MACKEY

Act III

the dancers take the stage
masked as macaws, eagles, elephants
black swans
one is a ball of army ants
one an entire jungle

by the third act
they have all been done to death
as the last tiger falls to the floorboards
the audience realizes
it has just witnessed real murder

outside the theater
everything is being erased
glass towers
boulders, tumblers of wine
fine cheeses, toy sail boats
children playing hopscotch

the prairie grasses form a cathedral
over the last living locust
from the west
comes a rumble of thunder and buffalo

LEWIS FREEDMAN

Drugging Evil

In this prolonged horrible feeling of not being able to rise into an appearance of myself becoming
in the conviction that the intake of what is other than me is the sole way to discover
myself to be within a movement that might allow me to attend to a task beyond the
static non-appearance of me as not-me before me
i sometimes play the role of a customer in the purchase of the functioning of my own
mental system
but a customer whose transaction is really on their daddy's card
or i'm sometimes within an administrative hierarchy of my subject
embodying a boss who actively tries to dissolve the non-movement and non-
appearance of their employee through a repetitive incantation of the same
which is actually an effective strategy if measured only by the appearance of a product.

In this prolonged horrible feeling of not being able to rise into an appearance of myself
becoming
only some percentage of the structure of myself is present for the administrative
meeting of the parts of myself infinitely scheduled to deal with this crisis
another percentage of my structure is in some other place
but despite the safety of its dislocation it can only instantiate itself by pointing towards
the boss in that administrative meeting
the boss whose bossness defeats the obvious arbitrariness of its power tautologically
through the thesis that power may be projected upon to assume any form
and it's this unlimited transformation that the force which denies my ability to rise into an
appearance of myself becoming is studying and utilizing
since what is greater
the movement that results in the product being realized in the least amount of time
or this structure of presence as it arrives and has arrived?
and what is similar to the presence that is not manifested as presence but is
nevertheless within the structure of feeling
or the explosion of rearrangeability which some future of myself feels rich enough to pay
for?

Not My Intellect

I am first noting here that i am repeatedly referred to by others as a singular entity, existing to some irreducible degree in a belonging to that is not only the belonging to others;

Secondly i am noting that my name, or lewis, or lewis freedman, or lewis edmund freedman, or "the egg," or "lewis," or "friend," or "corduroy," or "anorak," or "donuts," that my name sometimes appears to me to be utilized nearly unknowingly by me as a charm or talisman for a healing that the only way i can think of to describe this healing is that it's precisely a healing of what doesn't require healing, what doesn't need to be healed;

and i will add that i think this description significantly understates the utilization it depicts, being more of a hint, a "y'know what i mean," than an accurate depiction of the function that my name, or lewis, or lewis freedman, or lewis Edmund freedman, or "the egg," or "lewis," or "friendly," or "eddie," or "lew," or "lewfus," it understates what it depicts, what my name seems to be utilized for if you get my gist;

or to add a redescription, this use of my name for healing is a kind of healing which transcends healing, though not in a good way, that is it moves beyond healing into what, and i'm hyperbolizing here, is a pure repetition of the illness or wound and thirdly it is in the realm of intuition to note that this has been only a description of the activity of my writing, which is to say that this writing is exactly the healing that is only the repetition of illness;

andi will add here that this isn't vaccination or homeopathy that i'm describing, its repetition being so much closer than that, which perhaps i was hoping the hyperbole above had already made clear.

I will begin by remarking that even though the possibilities of the human intellect, of which my output is perhaps a malfunctioning example or marginally outlying case but is nevertheless within the realm of examples and has never, to my knowledge at least, produced itself in a fashion that is truly beyond the example, this output being clearly no exception;

what I move towards remarking upon here is that the possibilities of the human intellect are, in my admittedly malfunctioning estimation, not at all useful to either the human intellect, and its relation to itself as the human species, or to its environment.

If this claim is remotely shocking or controversial to its reader then it's appropriate to its assertion that i have begun with this remark since it will have grabbed the attention of its audience which in my experiences within the educational marketplace is a commonplace introductory demand upon the artifice of beginning, presented as self-

evident, and self-evidently one of the most useless and stupid demands one could place upon the human intellect in its confrontation with the technology of writing;

once I split the atom, you see, can be read variously, and either i went down to the cafeteria for a fruit cup and yogurt to think over the overwhelming potential consequences of this discovery, or i was simply relaying the story of my discovery in an understated and lighthearted fashion because surely you know this story already or you wouldn't be at my sickbed interviewing me;

andi will advance this first remark with a second of silence and then a subsequent point, since your attention is now fully with me, to note that the human intellect at some level can not understand the splitting of the atom since it does not readily conceive of the nuclear structure or location of its own thinking;

and it is, and i am entirely mistaken, the non-conception of the nuclear structure or location of thinking that takes us to be more valuable than even the value of the various-organisms-that-surround-and-contain-us to us, takes us, and i am speaking for the species here through the authority of my sense of being only ever example, takes us through the very medium with which value is reckoned to be of greater value than the value of human intellect to us, the form of the thought of which, or, this form of that thinking, can be quite easily figured if reread, but only to repeat the unification of itself within some non-conception it is transplanted into beyond it;

it, human intellect servicing as its own example, pretends at regular and irregular intervals to see as unfathomable its double function as the idol it worships to draw its power from and the judgmental tenor of its constant complaining that it, unlike the objects it has made, cannot be relied upon to heal or recall itself;

regardless, i compensate for the loss of the fixity of my point by dramatizing its extension, the human intellect persists as the conviction that it possesses its own activity with the exact metaphor with which it metaphorizes itself to be in the taking possessing of itself;

that is, encompassing itself retroactively as having been the container of its own name, it, the human intellect, takes possession of itself as a talisman or charm charged with the impression upon itself of its mysterious entirety, a singularity which enables it to act as source, as an example of source;

to act as source upon the as such named world which it lives its life through and upon, that protected by this charm as the sensation of having experienced, of experiencing, it, in summary, that is in this mode, it has seen upon or through only what it may act upon or through as source of itself;

this this this described here perceives such things it may act upon as source of itself as

sources themselves, refers to me repeatedly as having returned to what only i can produce, signals through jargon the artifice of the end of this composition, and make no mistake a diction specialized to describe the human intellect will never repeat itself into a recovery of what it has necessarily already lost, and make no mistake, the smug accumulation of a specialized language of the human intellect which figures the human intellect within it, smug because it looks through its own loss as though it were not loss or there, is the product and symptom of exhaustion, it has as it has, exhausted as it was, signaled the artifice of an end, and why, I shall ask in conclusion, should it do so convincingly, having already produced the language to simulate a return to where we have begun but by the passage now changed?

JENNIFER KWON DOBBS

Yi Sang's Room

At this table, I pose as an illiterate draftsman

Tax collectors
commissioned me for an imperial museum
but I take notice of my name

marked by, against, and within

scorched fields, a trajectory of fathers
who are buried between
their children's sighing and searching
the smoky night

Motherless, my words
may be dismissed as thought experiments

The tenure committee prefers
lacquered pine
bowls of nettles to story loss

Yet I no longer fear administrators
who nail ordinances to my door

My courtyard disappears under a lake
of brown tile. The pillared darkness divides into
floating rooms in which anarchists eat

The latch slips
Leaves blow through the gate
Now it's possible

to speak in earnest of escape:
"Don't let disaster catch you"
immobile and bereft

Failure is also a posture against, against

Born Kim Hae-gyeong, the great Korean modernist poet changed his name to Yi Sang after a Japanese survivor mistakenly called him Mr. Lee. According to critic David McCann, this sobriquet “[marked] his notice of, resistance against, and existence within Japanese occupation.” The poet lived in Tongin-dong in Seoul, and his traditional house (designated in 2004 as a cultural asset) is one of few remaining *hanok* in Seochon. In a February 2012 article, *Joongang Daily* reported that he lived and wrote in “a small dark room” and had no concept of a house. The quote comes from his seminal work, *The Wings*.

Note left at a U.S. camptown brothel for my missing imo

Dear Sixth Imo, Grandfather's youngest daughter,

No one taught you to write "petal" / unfurling red across the bed / creek cutting the mattress / No one told me your name / chalk to sketch your body starred and open / so Grandmother could buy rice while the neighbors ate barley / Nobody asked where her money came from / they knew where youngest daughters disappeared to / why their mixed babies disappeared too / what math purchased seaweed for soup fed to the married eldest delivering a son / the first time I heard the rumor of you it was a mistake / to ask your name because Omma wanted to hide you / just as she hid the fact of me I also hid the words I knew—*kijichon, yanggongju, koa, ibyeongah*/ I hid under the bed, in the cupboard, behind clay pots / all the names for absence feeding our family who chewed and chewed

BASIL KING

Highway Obstacle

For Robert Creeley

Friend and mentor
Who taught me
How to turn
Things upside
Down

Mother of Pearl there is an Olmec head
In my garden and it can't stop talking
It says his brother has been betrayed
His brother is locked up in a museum
Where there are no windows
Artificial light surrounds
Cases of sculpture and artifacts
And he knows who made them
He says he has seen men and women
Stare at him wanting to know
Why is he so simple
Why is he so complex
The Police want to know
And they have questioned him
Photographed him and they tried
Without success to fingerprint his culture

Pause

Mother of Pearl there is an Olmec head
In my garden and it can't stop talking

It says if he finds a letter
And he doesn't know the sender's name
Before he throws it away he checks
The sender's address
Remember children grow up
To understand every word
Has its own
Highway Obstacle
A deck of cards address unknown
A profile of a three-dimensional shape

The ridgepole has its own security
With it you build a house
Without a roof rain will destroy
The house and its contents consist
Of names I have never heard of
Creeley asks forbearance
By his own accounting he has been
Procrastinating over the difference
Between a short Line and a long Line
Oh, mighty Ovid replace the metaphor
And give us a phrase that ignites
Brevity

Pause

Mother of Pearl there is an Olmec head
In my garden and it can't stop talking
I was told that I would be given everything
New York would be mine
I was 50 and it was 1985

I was betrayed
1985 was the year of my second dunking
All the promises came to naught – nothing
I licked my wounds and we went to England
To the land where I was born
To the country that I'd never called mine
I had not been back to England in 38 years

England has made itself into a Little America
The tongue and the wardrobe has dismissed Turner
And Constable and has become a bloody carcass
Francis Bacon rules
Bacon's space is contagious it is housed
In the Thames the tide and the bridge
Meat Fish Bow Bells
What I had been writing in my head
Since before I went to Black Mountain College
Daisy chains jellied eels the Second World War
Anti-Semitism
MIRAGE

Calligraphy is for lovers
A short story has no ending
If it fails begin again

Pause

Creeley turns and asks forbearance
We are not always given what we ask
But ask again the ridgepole has its
Own security and without it

We cannot build a house
Without a roof
Rain will destroy the house the contents
Consist of names I have never heard of
Creeley by his own accounts has been
Procrastinating over the difference
Between a short Line and a long Line

Oh, mighty Ovid replace the metaphor
And give us a phrase that ignites
Brevity

M.D. JOHNSON

Loveliness wedges in between

Loveliness wedges in between crime
And retribution, derails insurrection,
Narrow passage holding firm against
Interseeding red clover with winter wheat
Plowed to perfection somewhere
Between snow and religiosity.

I never dreamed the czar being a girl
Terrified, half-child draped in layers of
Gauzed ambition multi-purposed as
Camouflage yet failing to insulate against
Malcontents or extranjeros thriving
In cities, inciting fear, engendering
Subterfuge and inequity.

Some dreams go unmade in desperate
Circumstances, but I never imagined
Appearing at her doorstep brandishing a
Sharp response designed for quiet ambush—
Nor ever fathomed in a few months
I'd be offering a tiny immaculate glimmer
As faith to the world.

So ironic, I gave the czar a landscape rendering
Of white flowing wheat drenched in purity
But then she flinched like I needed a benefactress
Despite I'm no artist out to save the world.
That was my last generous act, a final hope
That loveliness might conquer
Spoils of iniquity.

Interlude between the grave and what happens next

She remains a hero in my estimation.
Squirming to assume her position in a pink, paisly
Armchair she finally willed to me, I reminisce, a peaceful
Interlude between the grave and what happens next.

Recapitulating types of fabric, needles and thread,
Items dumped and disdained but then retrieved
After the funeral, I recreate memories, strategize
How to stitch remnants into something visibly whole.

I remember watching her legs and thighs navigating
The perilous climb all the way to the bulbous top,
Her efforts to reposition a heavy frame just enough to grab
The circle's edge, wrapping into a knot, inching upward
Slow and masterful until she nestled at the harshest eye
Of impossibility, shimmying more like an ooze
Than any human thing until she managed to seep
Through the eye of perfection sans icky residue.

"It's like anything, hard but not impossible," or so she lied.
Now, I sit staring at the perilous blank wall facing a
Threadbare existence. I was never great at maximizing
Benefit with minimal risk, never liked pragmatic
Polyester chafing at the groin, expected her to
Fashion me in cotton. Half attentive to snow piling
Luscious and deep, I imagine a tattered wilderness.

There are notches on patterns that won't match up,
Seams that won't stay put, but memories hold like durable goods.
I got close enough to peek and poke through shreds
Of yesterday's secrets and tolls while some daughters only
Get a glimpse. Pulling thread through the eye of a needle is risky.
Pricks happen, but I'll try to remember what she said:
Bandages come cheap.

NORMAN FINKELSTEIN

Update

for Robert Archambeau

Dear Members of the Subcommittee:

The most recent reports indicate that we are experiencing significant increases in displacement across all sectors. How are we to account for this, and what is the appropriate response? We have double-checked the current icons against the master list. Although we have identified numerous instances of free-floating belief, there is still no reason to assume that cultic activity may in any way interfere with the proposed generation, gradual but ultimately pervasive, of the affect clouds developed by our recently acquired subsidiary. (We refer you to the results of last month's test at selected stations in Tokyo, Paris, and Chicago.) The evidence suggests that we should anticipate an occasional thinning of duality barriers at commonly recognized checkpoints, such as grottos, tailor shops, and antique auctions. Although we do not consider it wise to entirely dismiss the rumors of oneiric infection among more susceptible populations (to say nothing of the so-called "sightings" under corpusant illumination), we would nevertheless discourage any encoding, inscription, or spell-binding before verification is firmly established. We will continue to update the Subcommittee as necessary, but we would request that the members exercise patience, as our informants tend to be less than forthcoming on most occasions.

Complaint

Among the piles of paperwork accumulating here at an alarming rate, we have found a number of documents which require immediate action. How could they have been overlooked for so long? This is precisely why we chose to go offline some time ago. The forms, encased in phlogisticated capsules and projected into the æther, are delivered every bit as effectively as conventional uploads, but without anywhere near the risk. It would appear, however, that this procedure now needs to be reconsidered. Every report is complete; every message is conveyed intact. The seals are unbroken; the pleats and creases are sharp and pronounced; the unfolding process is smooth, and upon reassembly, the authenticity of the specimens has never been called into question. Yet heightened security has failed to eliminate the meddlesome presences which the sensors can detect but cannot prevent from entering. Nothing appears to be missing. Can they be delivering *more* documents? Falsifying information? Tampering with due dates? Insofar as current projections remain troubling, we admit that we are uncertain as to how to proceed. The consultant informs us that the familiars have gone on strike, but is the situation really that straightforward? The instruments measuring sentience have grown increasingly skewed. When the sub-committee was convened, members nattered on and on about their "projects," as if none of the leaks and stoppages mattered at all. The recent break-ins, however disturbing, cannot be entirely to blame.

KIERRA FIELDS

Penumbra

Somewhere someone chose
Blue for a girl,
Installing the moon
Within her. Everything shaded
Dove Blue. Wants to
Feel nostalgic
About Every Little Thing.
Wants to write "feel"
A hundred thousand times
Just to peek in at the feeling
Sitting like baby blue in utero;
Sitting like an infant in blue
Sea, sky and wind;
Sitting like something better
Is coming. Or like maybe,
It already did
And the only thing left to do
Is to whistle in the water,
Or to hold a hand
That feels warm
In the same way numbness does.
Numb does things like wave up.
Undulate. Numb don't know
Where Numbness stands
At night. She's sitting beneath
Cyan Lights, wishing the moon
Was everything
And the only thing.

STEPHEN PAUL MILLER

I Was on a Golf Course the Day John Cage Died of a Stroke

As in Frank O'Hara's best known poem,
"The Day Lady Died,"
After much everyday foregrounding
A poet should perhaps discover
An underground celebrity's
Death through the media
But I search for little
 meaningful things,

Not exactly an appropriate tribute to John Cage.
Yesterday, the day John Cage had his
 stroke,
I saw Merce Cunningham wheeling
 his hip to hail a cab west
 on Broadway and 11th

I wonder if he was going to St. Vincent's Hospital.
Then this afternoon, about the
 time John Cage died, my friend
 Mae Fern and I were
 walking through the Staten Island Greenbelt.
We lost our way and decided to
 find our car by hiking on a street
 alongside the nature preserve.

Mae Fern is from Arkansas and I
 asked her about the presidential election.
 She said she grew up
 in Arkansas with Bill and Hillary
 always in the background
 but as somewhat
 peripheral figures.

It was funny to leave Arkansas
 and learn more about them

On a grander scale than
 ever seemed possible at home.

Hillary had spoken to her high school and
 she seemed "cold" and "mean" to her,

Yet she felt that the Clintons
 had done some good things

Such as set up the 11th grade
exceptional students' art enhancement

Program. She said it was very "liberal"
and cited John Cage as an example
of the work they did.

"John Cage was there?"

"No, but we performed
John Cage pieces like
the one with about ten radios."

"Oh yeah, no one ever finds
a radio station, right?" "Right."

I remember John Cage in
his Bank Street basement loft,
before he moved to the Avenue of the Americas,
(he called the basement space "Merce's nightclub"
and said if he ever had a view he
would "drink it up") typing
a poem for a one-page poetry magazine
I was putting out then.

He told me about a Merce Cunningham
piece to be performed at the Minskoff Theater
which consisted of the excess parts
of other pieces. I said
I'd like to see it. He gave me a ticket
to a matinee. When I
got there I was sitting next to him.

"Did you hear the president
pardoned the draft resisters?"
I ask.

"Oh, you mean the boys in
Canada?" he replies.

I really wish I had shown
him more of my poetry.

I don't think I ever sent
him my book.

I never told him that
I didn't work as he did
based on an urge not to repeat
that he nourished—

I never told him I wanted to
deprogram chance.

Once we were walking to his
 favorite West Village Xerox store
 when he asked which
 poets had most influenced me.
I told him he had because he made me
 try to write so as not to ruin
 the "nothing."

"That's very hard," he says.

Once we are driving down
 34th Street when it begins to
 get ominously dark.

"Sometimes one forgets

 New York is just
 a seaside town," he says.

CLAUDIA CARLSON

On being a foreign exchange student in Minneapolis

No sleep in Dinky Town, I'm too cold, sick,
low heat, cups of water freeze, jolt awake
when my foot leaves the edge of electric
blanket, or my sister slips in way late
after her "dates" with a creep. Not falling
asleep after cold trudge to the warm U,
heat dazed through Chaucer which I'm now failing,
requires more and more cups of black brew
at twelve cups a day I faint in jitters
in a snow bank. Docs test for brain tumors.
I snort, "need sleep, less coffee and sisters,"
and find a boarding house with heated rooms.
My sarcasm freaks out the provincials
and their winters still conjure lonely chills.

Dirty Laundry

Eros is limply pegged to the clothesline,
boil and wring, sun and bleach, he's not the thing
that kept you and another spinning time
lips and hips, slip and flow, until the ring
of morning sent you both sundered in joy.
Sidewalks, gutters, bushes sang sex to you
flies and woodpeckers, didn't diddle coy.
Feet lift, throb swings? Only felt in the blues
oh yeah, oh yeah, go wear those yearning notes...
If you could have saved a stash of those hours
or would switch partners the way you switch coats...
but threadbare lust is the cost as life scours
the juicy colors from your skin and heart.
Too old, too sick, too true, for a new start.

ANDREW LEVY

A Great Blue Wet World of Thought

I'll bet that bush would be so soft & thick you could use it as a most natural thing in the world. Everything is perfect. How it has been handed down, person to person, across generations. Bloomberg is an ass. Answer my question fast. Be silent mechanical bee. It's not always going to be this way. You left me without warning. The wind is whistling through the screens, ambulance and fire sirens carried on currents of chilled air. How do any business. In a great blue wet world, what an ass I've been. Misheard lyric: "*Somebody calls you, you answer quite slowly; That girl with colitis goes by.*" And the most natural thing the world and the rage that he's burning up with spills over me. Its mooring is partial, or provisional, an infinite emptiness the people cannot see. Certainly no hope of gain motivates it. It is a revolt against the tedium of the merely economic attitude toward the great blue wet world we have half a mind to kill. Everything seems to go wrong. It isn't a question of practice, it's the removal of our surplus. Someone said it's impossible, that you can't fit the whole world. That we can't place an initial, experimental order that has no known experience of making the broken heart heal. Aeneas fights with Diomedes and Achilles in the *Iliad* (and doesn't die). He may not be major, but he's a bit more than

peripheral. Men seem to think it is a question of aesthetics. Nothing of the sort.... Start at Prince Edward Island or start here. Coal ash contains mercury, arsenic, lead and other toxic chemicals, it piles up in massive quantities. Indiana makes same-sex marriage a felony punishable by prison. They are my words. Nobody asked me to write them. You are incinerating continuity and opportunity. You could step into a minefield without even knowing it. You could identify with the poor.

Okay Zombies

The creator openly affirms the offensiveness of his product. "It is designed as an affront to an entire belief structure," the business told us. Some dealers and their associates told him to disappear, that the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration. Two lovers commit suicide and a cancer-ridden guest is deprived of his morphine.

A sheep intended for an after-dinner skit is slaughtered for food and a marauding bear crashes the party. Only one person, Silvia Pinal, holds the squat pen; the pen is let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half of its six chambers unloaded. All forms of media, without an irritable reaching after fact and reason, numb society's sensitivities and inhibitions to their weapons. The living have long feasted on the flesh of the dead, today the tables have turned. It is the dead who require the flesh of the living to survive. The procession of the walking dead goes on dividing by similarity, occupying, betraying or communicating the same body, its bloodlust is beautiful. By leaving the site of the living, we recall that we were looking at only one perspective (or complaint), that of those undead, and that by looking at such 'persons,' we bring them harm. Hence, the weapons mentioned above. What is the relation between the dead that pursue the living and the life that is being pursued? Is its nature a dispute or a disquisition? Is it an artificial elemental in a mortal condition? Do the dead turn their head when I pass? Do they harbor grudges in their remembrance of me? Is a zombie consumed with its unrelenting attack on organized religion, bourgeois values and other targets? Do the undead possess the morality to shock? Are they of high importance for biodiversity, distinctive assemblages of plant and animal species? Are they important for landscapes that are otherwise settled? Aren't zombies capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reading? Are they not large masses of fat preserved and walking, men and women of achievement? The cancer-ridden enjoy lamb, with an expensive single-malt. The walking

dead develop as a layer, blanketing much of the landscape, including higher and remedial sheds. Two lovers decay many meters deep in peat.

PATRICIA CARLIN

BAD ANGEL

Chain me up,
bad angel
on this straight road
of no labels.
Your separate words
are indoor activities –
finite,
happy.
Put some dumb jokes
and no pity
into this mouth.

ALTERNATE UNIVERSE

*"If you come to a fork in the road, take it."
--Yogi Berra*

They're nothing, too puny, too few – those gone-beyond-finding mothers, brothers. They lie down in deep grass, claiming wildness, poisoned with tameness. The air is their cage, water their blind alleys, always circling back. You who live on land, that's nothing too, the nothing between sky and the black roots underground. They can't live there, and neither can you.

#

We argue about water and wind –we switch sides. You fly, I swim. No sieve to catch that slow seeping -- it's not blood, just whatever trickles away and is never exhausted, never over. Tiny domestic drains –sink, bathtub, water swirling against the clock. Impossibly distant poles are leaving no choice. Bore through the earth to the other side, where water shifts direction. With the clock or against it -- nothing changes.

#

Once, she began, a girl lived happily in the not-forever-after. One morning was the morning before, then the missing after. But that unhappened. The angel of yesterday swooped down and slashed tomorrow in two. Now there were two girls, the one who lived happily in the ever-after and the one who didn't. That can happen for you, too. Open your arms to the black angel – die to your old life. Someone else will live that life, someone who once was you. Let her not imagine that forking path. It will be too bitter – better to live out her bent life in the other after. It too was a way to go.

PAUL PINES

THE DAY SINATRA DIED

In the shower I wash my thinning hair
threads that connect me
to the invisible
guide me through the daily labyrinth
of a beastly
world
wonder that so much of it
has come off in my brush

and how I will navigate
my daughter's future
when it's gone

(poor Ariadne

deserted by her hero)
she calls
through the door
"Daddy, Zorro has snot on his paw
but I've wiped it off..."

"On what?"
I ask

gathering my clothes
suddenly worried about her next year
at Middle School
and how to handle
a dog with
a nose
cold

RECASTING OPHELIA

I'd say that time
and space conspire

to create impediments
but that sounds

too much like
Polonius

whose speeches
last summer

were cold comfort
watching Charlotte

go mad as Ophelia
end every evening

on stage at Saratoga
Shakespeare

in a coffin too hard
watching her die

the summer before
in *Les Mis* my baby

Eponine a mortally
wounded robin

on the barricade
singing her rain-song

and now off stage
haunted by fears

she is trapped
in the water soaked

weight of Ophelia's
robes eyes staring

out her window
at a willow wilting

in the winter light
makes me cry

I worry about her
living so far away

in Brooklyn
blocks from where I

grew up my Eponine
passing guys

on stoops who whistle
and call out:

How's it goin'
Snow Flake?

DENISE DUHAMEL

Femslash

Laverne had always been a “tomboy,” or so her parents said. Skinned knees, fistfights, saving her paper route money to buy the girly girls frou frou. The “L” embroidered on all her sweaters stands for more than Laverne. She wears boxers under her poodle skirt as she waits out the conservative 1950s.

Shirley is the kind of girl Laverne has been waiting for all her life—a goody-two-shoes with a perky smile. Plus she lives in the same apartment!

One Friday night, after a few beers, Shirley and Laverne lie on Shirley’s bed, overworked, too tired to get ready for their bowling date. They talk about everything under the sun until they get to sex. Shirley insists that she would “*never*, well, you know...” then stammers and turns red.

"I don't vo-dee-o-doe-doe," Shirley finally says.

Laverne replies, "Oh, I think you *do* vo-dee-o".

Shirley grabs her stuffed “Boo Boo Kitty” and hides her face. Laverne pops open two more bottles of Shotz.

When Lenny and Squiggy knock on the door, Laverne and Shirley cover each other’s mouths trying not to laugh.

“Shh...” Shirley whispers. “Don’t answer.”

Shirley has an epiphany. She has never vo-dee-o-doe-dooed because she never wanted to vo-dee-o with a man.

The two women look into each other’s eyes until they hear Lenny say, “Come on. Maybe the girls are already at the Pizza Bowl.”

Then, together Shirley and Laverne do it their way and make all their dreams come true.

Legal Thriller

A man's worst nightmare. An ordinary citizen facing conviction for the most terrible of all crimes—having a vagina! *Presumed Feminine* brings to life one man's all-consuming, fatal attraction to wigs and heels. The story of his obsession puts everything he loves and values on trial—including his own life. *Presumed Feminine* lays bare a shocking world of pantyhose and bracelets, betrayal and murder.

This man's only hope? Scout Morrow, a lawyer best known for her gender illusions, understands too well the hidden depths of a bottom bureau draw, the curvatures of a human heart. Morrow's mustache and masculine gestures unnerve the jury who are forced to face their own assumptions. *Presumed Feminine* will hold you and haunt you, long after you have reached its queer conclusion.