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This issue is dedicated to the memory of

Lee Harwood

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Submissions

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accepted during the months of March and September, when selections are
made for the October and April issues, respectively. Submissions may be sent
by mail or email, but email attachments—other than PDFs—are not accepted.
We aim to respond within 3 months of the window's closure.

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Peter Riley

On Islands

(i) Bardsey

You walk above in the light
on soft ground, creatures of thought
glowing off the sea and the distance
to be gained. Haze on the fields
spreading upwards.

What we do here: live, more days,
climbing the stairs to the bed-loft each night
and lying there, waiting for
events in the sky. On the morning window-ledge
sunlight falls through a seagull's wing.

Days and nights of wind and bird sound
the sea pushing its lines towards the land
a hundred and twenty-one seals in the bay.
And out of all this a speaking to a purpose
out of this a reciprocal song.

Saints buried under the track, streaks
of limestone in the grass. Who went
unrecorded, whose being lives
somewhere else, far away, Doncaster
or Freetown, in acts of heartedness.

Strange birds fill the night with cackling
and squeaking over our thin roof. We lie
in the loft trying not to sleep until the sky

is quiet again, dream components
drifting towards the island.

The birds are Manx shearwater and they
know their tunes by heart all over the night.
The form of thought that they represent
mentions global fidelity and the price
of groceries at this time of year.

Massed voices from the sea, statements about the world
in scribbled notes blown out of the hand, lost in the wind
found again in a book or a bone flute. Decked
in red and white bands the unmanned lighthouse
attracts migrating birds to their death at night.

To stay and get older, learning the details, of sea currents,
cloud formations, whereabouts of the hut circles on the hill.
And to sit on the bench against the harbour shed
in late sunshine watching the lobster boat coming in,
without candy floss, without writers in residence.

To stay and get older day by day as the
mind quickens to the task and acts
of judgement become acts of justice.
How does this happen? By what principle
as delicately toned as a blackbird's egg.

Salt corroded iron ring in a stone stump,
bright red. Cist burials in the shoreline bank.
Catch my breath before it blows away. Trust
the principle. Leave the door unlocked all night.
Only the sea breeze will visit. Be sure to vote.

Alert at night in the loft, free of the eyes' commands
breathing like sleeping babies, thoughts always open,
always clear, thoughts you bring with you,
language that pursues you and here
come those crazy birds again.

We lie here and things happen
elsewhere, nothing can stop them.
Guilt dated 1945 and more massacres.
A voice is nothing unless appointed.
Sea murmuring and hissing grass,

There is no voice. There is no sense of.
The sea's eyes are closed under the soles
of your thought, year after year inching the self
towards a question to be asked about what is shared.
Wind. Birdsong. Death Stones.

That's no answer. There is no answer.
There is no silence. Listen to the mad
cacophony of the shearwater, making
species calls to their young all night,
island night, is it you are you there?

When day comes, listen. Listen
to the grass. Listen to the gravestones.
There is a whispering about the isle
that delights and harms not,
clearest at night, when the mind takes its part

And clear in the day when it rains.
Look it up in a dictionary, write
to the newspapers, tell us the facts,

getting older, moving slowly,
all comfort beyond.

This word and that and some others
and I sense an approaching proposition
creeping here under cover of night,
but everything I think is interrupted
by two thousand rubber ducks in the sky.

Creatures of thought, raging in the night sky
stamping your syllables into the soil
from which emerge baby birds and fly away
over thousands of miles of ocean bearing thoughts
that all may yet be the best it can.

Carmen Bugar

The House Founded on Elsewhere

He who turns against his language, adopting that of others, changes his identity and even his deceptions. He tears himself—a heroic betrayal—from his own memories, and up to a point, from himself.

—Emil Cioran, from *The Temptation to Exist*
(translated from Romanian by Carmen Bugar)

I.

Today is allowed to exist and then vanish
Like the seagulls and their shadows on
The still-seeming water in the Bay of Bantry,

Where I walk unnoticed, unrecorded,
Making memories of compass jellyfish swimming
Up with the tide, after the storm, to the beach.

My own shadow, stooping, standing
Over rocks and sand, back on the walking path
Simply means that I exist, and there is light.

That is all that will remain of today, no official record
Will testify against what I say that I see. As for me,
I hover in the space between the seagull and its shadow

Loose like a thought that tries to cling to something,
To celebrate the swans and their mirror image,
That medusa that opens like a flower in the sun,

Green lobster nets and masts of boats
Writing something oracular on the horizon
For those who are without a home.

II.

The first crack appeared on the ceiling:
Thin like the shadow of a spider's thread
Cast along the crease where the walls merge.

No one other than her noticed it there.
She couldn't take her mind off it, the way it
Stood in her view as she looked out at mountains

Between trees from her place at the table:
It brought a subtle wrinkle on her face.
Later on a larger fissure appeared, the paint

Swelled like the skin below the eye following
Sleepless nights, plain to see above the table.
She set to mixing cement, took out

Smoothing instruments, drained the weeping wall
And mended until all looked well again.
She built the new house with words bought

At the price of exile, letting memories go astray,
Fall where they may like dust.
How many times she walked around her house

Anxious and proud that she made it all with a translated
Prayer, a new version of the old prayer, holy
Oil from elsewhere, rituals and superstitions

From elsewhere, but all renewed and changed
Again, four languages over, where they show
Why they could pass through words that changed her.

III.

When the walls became full of cracks she knew no words
She cemented would last unless she uncovered
The foundation of elsewhere on which her house was built.

She dug around it, moved the earth little by little until the old stones
Showed through: porous pain, old fears, mistrust. She placed
Next to them what she could find around: a bit of happiness, a bit
of fear

A little bit of courage. All in the language where she
She learned them. Cement now, water, patience,
Piece by piece the foundation is renewed.

She looks at her children and husband. She will mend this wall
With words from here and elsewhere and let them
Help her build, rebuild and fix: their common love and skill

Should outlast time, be stronger than her will alone.
They play-build like when she was young and poured the foundation
Of that first house she cannot forget: the childhood house of joy.

IV.

Stefano is three years old, he fills his shirt with pears
And runs: 'Mommy look, what shall we do with them?'
I take out the camera and rush to him, his soft cheeks,
Busy little hands, his golden curls. The grass is full of pears.

V.

Alisa puts her arms around me: 'Come play with me',
She runs around the room with her bare little feet, here, there,
Like a sunray that escapes through wind-blown trees
In summer's day and lights up unexpected places.

Clayton Eshleman

The Dream's Navel

For Stuart Kendall

Gotham Bar & Grill in Manhattan, dining with Caryl, Cecilia & Jim.
At a table near ours, alone, a woman in whose face I saw Death.
At one point she turned her head toward us:
I could only stay in her *black ray lane* a few seconds.

So, here we are. Sipping cheek timber, under the cistern eyes of earth's
granite-gated vineyard.

Cecilia Vicuña: the shadow
is from the animal
you used to be
the shadow
is from the one
you will be
the shadow is not from you
from them
from the one who passes
its not a shadow at all
it is the sound
of a shadow
it is the shadow
of the sound”

Freud: “There is a tangle of dream thoughts that cannot be unraveled.
This is the dream's navel, the spot where it reaches down into the
unknown.”

Or as rephrased by Freud: “There is at least one spot in every dream
at which it is unplumbable—a navel as it were, that is its point of
contact with the unknown.”

Freud also identifies the dream navel as a knot entangled with threads (evoking the Medusa's head of serpent hair covering the mother's "dangerous genitals"). He writes that some "dream thoughts are infinitely branching, rather than tangled..."

At one point he identifies the dream navel with the defile, or central neck, of a clepsydra, "where all forms resemble each other, where everything is possible."

The spot where this navel "reaches down into the unknown," can be envisioned as an Upper Paleolithic opening leading to a cave, the maternal interior being replaced by a limestone one; the "infinitely branching thoughts" becoming the engraved meanders on Rouffignac's "Red Ceiling with Serpentes," a surface covered with serpent-shaped signs.

Or as in Combarelle's Inner Gallery, the engraved creatures that only vaguely resemble anything that lived:

animal-snouted archaic on the leash of,
or the harness of, a proto-alchemical mush,
sled beasts bounding in slow motion,
grotesque heads dissolving in grotto drift...

Can these silex-cut wall meanders and lines or black manganese finger strokes, unreadable but engageable, indicate a possible response of Cro-Magnon people in cave darkness to a dream's branchings & grotesque inhabitants? Can we cut through time here and descend, without historical interference, through the palimpsestic layers of unconscious levels, to uncover the possible ignition of image making, in which non-human souls began to mingle with human souls?

"In fact," Gaston Bachelard proposes, "a need to animalize is at the origins of the imagination... its first function is to create animal forms."

Henri Michaux's stroke chaos, in which creature forms are evoked by tangled and knotted lines reminds us of the Cro-Magnon

“creatures” verging on resembling something living, yet undefined...
As if we are in the presence of nothing in the process of becoming...

Vicuña again: “The void, the forgotten aspect of each sound that is propelling us as we search for memory and oblivion at once...”

One day I will be between here & there, in the nowhere that is part of every where that tonight seems substantial compared to its invisible absence...

My absence... as if absence were mine.

Old Whitman: “Have you learn’d lessons only of those who admired you, and were tender with you, and stood aside for you? Have you not learn’d great lessons from those who reject you, and brace themselves against you? Or who treat you with contempt, or dispute the passage with you?”

William & Cid,
with you I’ve lived.
Corman said no
& Blake said yes.

We are free only to the degree that we are able to acknowledge the
headless oarsmen rowing the heart skiff through the rainbow of a
totality
ebbing & flowing over
the rocks of man’s now quite clearly unregenerate nature.

We have lost the *temenos*, the imaginative precinct
in which van Eyck, say,
could orchestrate a specific world

Dearth of polar bears. Dearth of honeybees.

It is crying outside.

*

Image is the athanor in which I linguistize soul,
a dream umbilicus coiling down into the miracle of
Neanderthal tombstone cupules, Cro-Magnon engravings,
earliest shamanic hybrids,
through which a mistress spirit might rise,
electric with Tantrik lesions, from that serpent lounge
where the soul snake slumbers
until charmed up into a brain / body imaginarium.

My mind at base is a spermal animalcule
impregnated with female blood.
The Muladhara Chakra is not gendered
nor is my imagination.
I reject duality & propose an orgy of contesting mind.
The soul was in exile even at Chauvet.

Paradise is a form of polymorphous merger
charged by the bathysphere of the poem
rising from engrailings where even squirrels reflect,
& robins ruminates: the animal lager...

Bottom is crossed by
something alive, a crab or turtle brought up mud
regurgitated into a Cro-Magnon hand.
Ochre or manganese, discovered in descent
& mixed with cave water, palm pressed to stone
(a stone that in history becomes the omphalos, or om phallus),
released, leaving a “hand” without a hand,
negation’s—or was it absence’s?—first
imaginal presence.

The poem is from the beginning antiphonal
hybridizing ancestral fauna in language-twisted straits.
Oh the difficulty of the soul! “You could not find the ends of the soul
though you traveled every way, so deep is its logos.”
To Heraclitus, James Hillman responds: “the logos of the soul,
Psychology, implies the act of traveling the soul’s labyrinth
in which *we can never go deep enough.*”

William Blake, naked, reading Genesis to naked Catherine
in their London “Arbor of Eden.”

Jardin botanique, Bordeaux, 2008.

The bud & spoor density of a mauve Baudelairian incubation.

Tender vines erupting into fanged blooms...

Minute nomadic ants percolate the many-breasted

Venus of the Plants.

Centuries pass... And the ghost of Henri Rousseau

glides, a virgin on a lost ark,

in chime with cloned obsequies,

fertile diapasons...

Fused to his centrovertic grappling,

into the aethercore the poet pours his siliceous soul.

Donna Stonecipher

Snow Series 2

There once was a polar bear who didn't know that he was a polar bear, because he'd been raised in a zoo by people. What would a polar bear have to know, to know that he was a polar bear? That's what the people would never know. All that winter, as we wandered around town, we kept noticing how the segmented bodies of snowmen resembled those of ants', and how the new snow resembled other, older snows.

*

The beautiful young woman slowly realized that her beauty was a currency, but did not know how to spend it. "It is difficult to be beautiful for long" wrote Max Jacob. The young woman read this and forgot it. The Swiss chalets dotting the hillside resembled other Swiss chalets. The polar bear who didn't know that he was a polar bear had snowy fur reflecting those regions where only our supercooled minds can go.

Tamar Yoseloff

Pictures of Spring

I: Shunga

The geisha parts her legs
to receive his cock,
a monstrous cryptid, swollen fist;

I cannot see her face
behind the fragile net, a strand
of hair fallen from its comb

but her sex is open wide,
complex, a darkened gorge
he will wreck.

II: Tokyo Metro / Ginza Line

The businessman next to me
balances a briefcase on his knees,
opens his *manga*:

two doe-eyed girls in gym slippers,
hair in bunches, are ripped apart
by tigers.

The artist has taken pride
in the tearing of limbs,
the beauty of the tiger.

III: Isetan Department Store Shinjuku

The girl behind the counter
converts a sheet of paper
into a full blown rose:

she works quickly, her fingers
light, thin, her hair falls
across her face;

as she hands me this gift
without looking up, she nods,
a blush masking her cheeks.

IV: Ukiyo

I bend and break, bend
and break, contort my limbs
into these lovelocked shapes,

my desires spread out
like the fingered leaves
of a pillow book;

I resume the polite tedium
of clothes, desire folded in on itself –
a sharp intake of breath

Philip Terry

Stone I cut i

Of he | who see | to the | very | bottom | I will | sing ...
the wise | ~~one~~ the | man who | know all | the earth
+ + + in | ~~the old~~ | day ...
I will | tell the | story | of the | one who | know ev | ery | thing
+ + +
... DIC | TATOR | who find | the sec | ret place | open | the sec
| ret door
and bring | back know | ledge + + + | of the | age be | fore the |
great wave* –

*see Stone XI

he walk | the path | over | come with | pain tired | out + + +
and print | the first | stone book

He build | the wall | of big | city | of the | ani | mal noise
the wall | of the | holy | church of | the wo | man sex | god place
| of peace

Look at | the wall | the top | be like | steel ...
Exam | ine the | in side | wall that | no hand | can match
Feel the | stone door | frame old | as the | mountain
enter | the ho | ly church | house of | the wo | man sex | god +
+ +

a work | no dic | tator | can eq | ual + + + | to this | + + + day
Climb the | wall of | big ci | ty of | the an | imal | noise + + + |
walk on | the hard | stone + + +

exam | ine the | base in | spect the | perfect | brick work
Clock that | even | the cen | tre is | of strong | brick from | the
fire

As for | the base | be it | not set | + + + out | by a | wise man?

One ar | ea | contain | the ci | ty one | are | a the | fruit tree |
one ar | ea | the mine

The three | togeth | er with | the mine | make up | big ci | ty of
| the an | imal | noise ...

Find the | metal | box full | of cut | stone + + +
slide op | en the | steel lock

open | the sec | ret door | that hold | the + + + | story

Take out | the blue | stone and | read the | book + + + | out loud

How DIC | TATOR | suffer | every | hard ship

over | power | the en | emy | the pow | er full | other -

strong one | child of | big ci | ty of | the an | imal | noise pow |
er full | man-cow

He stand | in the | front like | a fear | less man

He march | at the | back like | a + + + | brother

a nuc | lear | weapon | to pro | tect the | army

He be | a great | wave that | break down | the wall

Son of | big ci | ty of | the an | imal | noise

DICTA | TOR be | the blue | print of | power

... DIC | TATOR | beauti | ful like | a jew | el + + +

son of | + + + WILD | COW he | mother

He op | en the | mountain | pass ...

dig the | deep well | on the | mountain | side ...

he tra | vel a | cross the | + + + sea | to where | the sun | god rise

travel | to the | very | edge of | the world | the one | who look |
for the | secret | of life

he find | a way | to the | ONE WHO | FIND LIFE | the far | off
+ + +

the one | who bring | back life | when the | great wave | destroy |
it ...

+ + + fill | the land | again | with pe | ople + + +

Be there | a dic | tator | like he | in an | y land?

Who with | DICTA | TOR can | profess | “I am | all pow | er full!”

From he | first birth | day they | call DIC | TATOR | by this |
name ...

Astrid Alben

Venus

The only machine in the sky is the sun very bright
not stare is a bottomless blue as if the clouds never existed.

Poet & I stare two-some then some blinded by specks *bzzzzzzzing* in
the mesosphere like poppy seeds the cosmos blazing on your brow

I love you today Poet with your devoted crater eyes
let's love each other just the two of us

apeman spaceman
the sun asleep in our dreams where flies explode.

Betrayal

The bar in the Prince Alfred on Castelmain Street covered in blood
in Brussels there is blood on your demands for peace outside the
chippie

stick-thin lasses in shoes covered in blood the sleazy rain covered in
blood the Spyder Porsche parked in a side street covered in blood

this morning's headlines covered in blood the awe-inspiring
symmetry of misery covered in blood and all the wasters at the bar

at lunchtime in the Prince Alfred on Castelmain Street covered in
blood.

How's and whens tiptoeing away *en pointe* covered in blood.

Amy Wright

Amys vs. Jennifers vs. Vonda

A slew of christened Amys inundated 1970s
grade schools named not for secretaries of state
or aunts, but a swell of post-free-love beloveds

whose generic-fearless parents chortled.
More forgettable than the average Nora,
Amys developed eclectic tastes for ecru, birch

beers ubiquitous vending machines don't stock.
Mere initials partitioned, Amys earmarked
booklists depicting little women unlike them.

The only harpsichord-playing Bottetourt
County Birdie prompted Amys' penchants
for firefighter-uniformed-Pomeranians

calendars, indigo heirloom carrots.
Even the most-popular laurel denied them,
umpteenth Elizabeths crowned more common,

Amys scored thrift store faux-fur *ushankas*,
learned Punjabi, compensated
for babyish nicknames with snakeskin boots.

Still, an occasional magnate
proves standout, extricates from the hoi polloi,
dons an ankle-length peignoir regal as any Ingrid.

Gravitational forces of sameness
don't break nonpareil almond-
eyed Aberdeens less desperate to prove

a name is more or less an in
or out of circulation product, a net
three birthday party cyclists circle,

tongues swapping distinguishing
syllables which repetition obliterates
until they are all unnameable as beach glass.

Janet Sutherland

How the dementia left some things unsaid

We could not talk of the oysters
whose workmanlike remains we'd found,
in the old field called *Horatio*;

Your plough had passed closer than usual
to a barbed wire fence and where it turned
the thin soil into chalk a cache of oyster shells

swam upwards to the light, ruffled, calcified,
lined with pearl. Whose lips had tasted
liquor salt as sea? Who buried them like coins?

Nor could we speak of roses, bruised
by a rainstorm or by winds that heaved
stem against stem until the thorns

had grappled the white sails, the blushed,
the rosy sails, the blood red broken sails
and brought them tumbling down.

In winter we would heel them in, knowing
that spring would break the leaf buds
all along the stalk. I lent you *Rosa Gallica*

when things got tough. It settled in
hard by the shore at Hengistbury Head
growing in sand, unlikely as that is.

Samir Guglani

X-ray

Perfect arc of hip
a mottled half moon,
and my caught gaze widens in surprise
at your thigh's white field,
its pencilled fence of skin.
X-rays stencil broken bone,
fractured spirits,
even keep a god's bruised face.

Strange then to happen
on this living trace of human flesh, visible
but missed for years, revealed
now like a trick, like silence, loud
once the sound stops dead.

Returning

Like jostling for the first
glimpse of sea we'd listen
for my father coming home,
his signal a breath
or the pause before speech,
how I imagine his pain
was uttered that day.

Years later I spy you first,
sat reading in reflections
your mouth incanting words.
You are a coin shining
in water. I tap the window
and you stir then open
as you always do the door.

Helen Tookey

Rheidol Valley

Sie war schon aufgelöst wie langes Haar
und hingegeben wie gefallner Regen
und ausgeteilt wie hundertfacher Vorrat
—Rilke, ‘Orpheus. Eurydike. Hermes’

If you put out your hand and the earth
were to take it, drawing you down
to its deepest bargaining-place—

If the joints of your hips had been
hollowed by water, the swallow-
holes scoured in the gorge were

your eyes, your name dissolving
like limestone in rain—

If you shook out your skirts and the earth
made grain of you, scattered and
sowed you, unmemoried, mute—

If you put out your hand and the earth
were to take it—

That Day Off Sakhalin

The anthropologist from Siberia
is singing the praises of Manchester.
—But don’t you miss the snow, I ask idiotically.
We agree that Russian poets lived tragic lives.
In Soviet times, she says, there were *Houses*

for Holidays, retreats for people with talent,
scientists, artists, writers like her father.
Such people are lovely, she says, but sometimes
they need to be absent. It's not rudeness,
she says, just that sometimes they need
to be absent, exploring a thought.
Siberia? I am thinking of Zina,
that day off Sakhalin. White bay city,
blue cold water. Zina, bottle-blonde, strong
and lovely, swimming out to the yachts,
laughing at helpless naïve Slava
who will get her her ticket; out
past the buoys, strong arms, blonde hair
streaming in blue water. All through the book
they keep coming back to it, *that day*
off Sakhalin, their strange shared dream,
white bodies, pale sun, and Zina swimming,
strong and reckless, out past the yachts,
past the buoys, foreseeing her fate perhaps but
always swimming, heading out alone to some
unknown free horizon—

Ian Davidson

Bridge Poem

It was an old
car anyway and
near the end of its
life but the
thing we talked
about was remi-
niscent of that
other thing, you
know that thing
we never talk
about you know

It was a long
bridge anyway
across the hum-
ber or the
tyne but that's a
bridge for you
these are bridges
we can cross
on foot or behind
the wheel for
hours on end

Bridges have
to be top down
and bottom up
and the bit in
the middle
might sway
in a stiff wind an
earthquake is
undetectable in

a car on a
bridge these
are insulatory
factors, rubber
mainly, and wire

and then in
the centre of
the bridge I turn
and ask you what
do you think is
this a place to
stop and think and
look both back
and forward and
ask yourself I
like the dead
centre of a bridge
with its bouquets
of flowers

but sometimes I
just drive across
in my old car
and avoid the
lightning strikes
or the sudden
drops or the views
of the rivers down
below I always
travel across a
bridge to work
it makes my
head spin

Sabiyha Rasheed

Dutchman Jumbee

Dutchman Jumbee dug fingernails in soil and taste the hot earth.
Dutchman Jumbee take *land of many waters* and drink until he sick.
Dutchman Jumbee heave into Essequibo, the water blister and cry.
Dutchman Jumbee take blue of Essequibo to push into his eye.
Amerindian wash with Essequibo water and their skin become
Dutchman skin. Amerindian contours mapped on trees and Dutch-
man say he grow it. Dutchman tree with Dutchman lung, steal
Guyana air. Dutchman breath woven into silk of Guyana's heat
and light. Dutchman want Amerindian hair to tie wrist and neck.
Amerindian fade into Guyana soil, become paths under Dutchman
feet.

Dutchman Jumbee throw rope across sea and drag Africa by the
neck. Dutchman howl shatter the moon to rain on purple night skin.
Dutchman Jumbee hide in Dutchman tree when blackness become
black. Black man sing with Guyana winds to make Dutchman skin
shake. Dutchman chew on black man tongue so he never sing again.

Dutchman jumbee burning leaves
Making ash of all its beauty

Carving red, gold and green into forearms
Of those who got caught in the rope

Dorothy Lehane

Visuo-Motor

these are real problems— really existing—
group 5 problems (aphasic & paranoid)
in addition to organic psychoses
paralysis of musculature speech
& not receiving reliable sensory information
there's never relearning the route round the house
we are surviving one type of death
a heedless sort of narcissist death
thoughts are unitary, sentient in that moment
grant me license to dismantle all previous experience
under the trope of consummation
the linguist made up of the radical
is post-operatively mainlining stimulus
explain proverbs
the jaw deviates to the right on excursion
the patient chokes
the patient can initiate phonation for 5 seconds
can protract and retract tongue
neglect items on the right
in the absence of the volta
you precious, cool motherfucker
95th percentile the way that sonnet begins

Ian Seed

from Identity Papers

Discovery

When my mother was told she had cancer, my father managed to sprain his ankle. He seemed resentful that she was not well enough to look after him in the way she usually did. He was in a lot of pain, he shouted, propped up on pillows in bed. My mother took to sleeping in the spare bedroom. She gazed endlessly out of the window, a small girl about to set off on a great adventure alone.

Ramblers

It was a cold dry day. We were out walking over forest-covered hills. There was a man from India with us who spoke little English, but who kept smiling. He carried an old sack over his shoulder. Like his smile, his sack made us suspicious, but we didn't ask him what was inside. When we stopped in a clearing to eat our sandwiches, he gathered some twigs and lit a fire.

While we watched, afraid yet curious, he opened the sack and brought out a pot and ladle. With just a few ingredients and water, he had soon made a spicy, sweet-smelling broth. I was the first to try it. Thus, he won his way into my heart, for it was like nothing I had ever tasted before.

Claire Crowther

Night Visiting

Stand at her door and look at her
during her aeon of sleep.
Make certain. A parent must.
What is visitable of her?

I'm afraid to move towards
a cot slowed by its creature,
who hardbuilds grit into her nest,
and not one feather nor
fascinator in her hair.

I mustn't disrupt the night thing
she does. So I will say no
to birds. Or water avens
flowering from limestone pavements
in grikes, or seeded achenes
draped with peachy sepals.

Report From The Goddess Who Handles Child Stars

The park flooded
on the last morning
she saw me.
The sash windows
creaked. The handles pushed locks.

Cold air walked up
to her bed – I was
bringing her
a different warmth.
She took my instructions –

after she'd rolled
her socks down to in-
visible –
Leave your father.
Last night's storm is our dream.

Shaking like a
primordial wave
of gravit-
ation, she left
home. Roots loosened. The streams

in Jubilee
Park where floodwater
toes channels
dug by humans,
exploded. Last years' annuals

offered dead sticks.
Beyond the barn's broken
spine, crow-nest
ferns parted, let
her through. *Leave the green bug*

*in its spit. Where
nettle bows to you,
a boy waits.*

In her country
hurt canes the dirt with rain.

David Miller

Spiritual Letters (Series 7, #3)

As we stood at the gate, looking towards the distant bay, we suddenly heard a stonechat calling. – If we're going to their place for dinner, we need to take our own plates, not to mention knives and forks. A rustle, not of wings but of paper. Burned black. A chair, standing by itself in the room: spectral, abandoned.

*no end
or beginning
to humility
its foundation
its increase
in the central
nothing*

islands
mountains
no end
of islands
or mountains

With violence he began to persecute and to defame for heresy the women he had known and had at one time cherished and commended as holy. We had not long set sail for the island, when a ship caught us up and came alongside, bearing word that we were to be exiled to an even more remote place. And so we changed course....

bell tolling
*most simple
most one*

clear light
or darkness
how cold here
where? remembering
and to dream
first one book
then so many

Jaime Robles

from The Wittgenstein Vector

Proposition 2.0251

Space, time and colour (colouredness) are forms of objects.

Here.

There.

Hearing your voice,
which keeps coming back to me,
threaded with color. We are reading
the same lines of the same poem.

You seated under unvarying light.
Me, in darkness, held still in repetitions,
remembered, so that with every
sound you exhale, my nerves chime.

•

Proposition 4.016

In order to understand the essence of the proposition, consider hieroglyphic writing, which pictures the facts it describes. And from it came the alphabet without the essence of the representation being lost.

I draw a circle around a name.
It flutters like a bird: caged though
it no longer scores the sky
with flight. Birds fall in clusters
like rain.

I draw a circle
across the sky, name its essential
color as blue. Blue, a circle inscribed
drops out of the sky. It is written
with wings
and the color of flight.

•

Proposition 4.22

The elementary proposition consists of names. It is a connexion, a concatenation, of names.

Surfaces of a stone can be smooth. Glass-like
and also markable: the chisel, like a diamond,
leaves a name, a fact, an object, a proposition,
on the clear surface, molecules are rearranged.

A name, a simple word, a fact, an object assumes
what lies beyond the window's transparency: the garden
where roses struggle to bloom under winter's
false sun, the branch of the young oak
bent under the weight of rain, its slow coursing
sap preventing the snap of broken wood.

There are birds, blades of grass and stray cats.
The brick wall of the church and the neighbor's fence.
All of these gather in the cartouche surrounding
these scratched letters, upholding logical confusions.
On a stone, as on glass, essential gardens lie below
the carved word, banging tambourines and clattering
castanets, seething across pharaonic ruins.

•

Juana Adcock

The Science of Perambulation

1. Orisson, horizon at the edge of the valley

The first thing you notice is pain, of course.
Aching thighs, coxis turning slightly. Pain
au chocolat. Tiny muscles in your bare feet
elasticate against angular gravel
brought from elsewhere.
Looking down at the sea clouds
frothing between the peaks.
The act of balancing
what was brought against
what others have.
The house hangs from your shoulders,
the washing line from the strings of your sunhat.
The stones roll from your toes up to your hip socket,
clicking.
How to walk until you've used up the last grain.
How to sleep, small, alone,
watching the tail of the Milky Way turn
on the earth's axis—a staff of almond wood,
its bark smooth in your hand.

2. Roncesvalles, valley of prickly shrubs

The Song of Roland was all about horses,
about drops of Saracen blood hanging from thorns,
and oliphants singing heroes where only death –

I drink from Roland's fountain and watch
the water get stuck between words,
oui le chanson meaning nos vamos

pa'l otro lado

how the Erdara letters were carried in gourds and wineskins
in the bellies of lutes and the jugulars of juglars
through txabolas and akelarres

over mesetas, valles y campos
finite earth

3. Irotz, the other iron-clad

Between the oven of Irotz and the mount of Nerval
there is a swarm of straw-coloured locusts.

They fly bloodwinged around your shins,
bump into your blessed pilgrim toes.

You crouch through the dusty stridulation,
knees creaking, hips clicking like locust.

I want to untie your sandals,
wash your feet in my tears like a mystic.

You know there is abundance
in having nothing.

4. Ciraqui, the circus of surplus

A monument of haystacks
red-struck by dawn. Castle-like.

And a cohort of knackered sunflowers,
bowing their heads for our sins.

How I wished to be alone.
How I left behind a man

dragging his suitcase.

Helen Moore

Migrant Neighbours

They occupy airspace round our tall Victorian houses,
wheeling, calling in a shrill, mysterious tongue, a ruckus born up
by hot winds from Africa, stirring with quixotic behaviour.

Out walking I met a brown-skinned man in a striped polo-
shirt pointing at a tree. "Look, wood pigeon nest inside!"
Peering through a screen of foliage, I glimpsed it

and thanked him for sharing the secret. "Bird don't trust
foreigner!" he replied, waving his camera.
O, white, small-town England...

sickle-shaped, mercurial, my migrant neighbours
were once called 'Devil birds'. Like scimitars
slicing through fixed trajectories –

human lives invested in bricks, mortgages ('pledges of death'),
soulless work for cruise-line retirement – Swifts are harbingers
of repressed dimensions.

Icarus, have we not learnt? Literalising the spirit's flight,
every summer crowds amass in thrall to the Red Arrows –
white male egos spewing patriotic vapour

to suck more youth into the wide-mouthed war machine.
Whistling in our dreams, Swifts soar to 10,000 feet and sleep
on the wing. Daily they return to press us –

theirs no choreographed routine, but ceaseless
improvisations with each other, with wind currents, insects;
I listen, try to interpret.

Gerrie Fellows

Watershed

i

Intent on our destination
hard core under boot soles
the track a drum

we are fenced from lightness
of birch leaves, sinuous pine
fenced from water
under hill names scooped with snow

bird calls cross the wire we walk between
high strung instrument
the flickering wren has no part of
nor the pine marten
doling dark scats in indented dust

(racing spokes past us at our walking pace)
we come down at last to the loch
find ourselves
without access
to the once-were-grazings
zoned from human intervention
by human intent

ii

zoned from grazing deer:
fenced saplings and pines
older than we can imagine
in our embodied counting
(at the pace of racers simple walkers
in our one-time lifetime)

grandmother pine
going under in slow motion
home to insect and lichen
nutrient to nutrient soil
how strange to us

serpentine, cracked beauty

iii

as if we could live otherwise
in our ever-moving at evening
deeper into the moine
against the flow
of the long east-flowing river
against ice
against the scour of glacial trough
into the catchment

the rocks of the moine slide us
over buried levels
(now we're in deep time and counting)
hitch us also a little sinister, infinitesimally
shift
the precipitous breached ridges

iv

We flit past the pace of geology
or ice thinking them stilled
to where even a river

in a space of grass and moss
is an almost imperceptible welling

before moment
to momentum
/falling
headlong

held
in gravity's tip
over the slowest transformations
of rock over/
metasediments, unimaginable
over
 into
 into

Aidan Semmens

Stories About the Wind

and illuminates the world
gleam entering the body
the smell of its substance
plane blacked out
in spurious protection
flying blind into the glow
flash dancing in the bone

then when the shock wave hits
pummeled up another 200 feet
aircraft of such tonnage
acting like a leaf
on a blowy night
thermal curtains flying
big eyes unclosed
earth heaving and popping
old paint under a blowtorch

and a small private army
bought secondhand
stacking used engines
batteries and fuselage
wings torn off by sordid boys

we sort the plastic from each other
bundle unread newsprint
warheads past their use-by date
spent fuel rods and radiant cones
measureless buried in closely
where they will or will not
go off or leach half-lives
into a soil washed by wavelets
on unforbidden shore

and the poets of the old nations
told stories about the wind
and the planes come sparking
out of the mountains

and she paces the floor
and wants to teach fear
a sudden windshift
rumours associated with
bureaucratic detail
the bedding the canned food
lighting of the morgue
drawings pinned by the blackboard
in a schoolroom entered
by metal ladder
beneath a concrete cover in a shaft

Lucy Sheerman

The Night Transcripts: Letters to Jane

Dearest

Her dress, a shadow of white on smoky skin. I can see the tremor of her heart. Tobacco flower blooming in a twilight garden. The sultry air like hot breath. Undone. Flames beneath the skin, burning my fingertips. Fires that glow in the darkness all through the night. I long to be done with it.

Rochester

Dearest Jane

How can I describe that look, captivating me with its disdain. I was humbled. Held still by the dead weight of need. Overpowered. I wanted to shadow my fingers across her skin and see her turn to scorn me. I wanted to ask for mercy and then I wanted her to deny it. I felt that I was heartsick and had been for a long time and that I could be cured with that scourging. It was utter. I craved pain that would show me the limits of myself. Contain me. I felt all my waiting and my wanting twisted into an ache of undesire. I had glimpsed myself reflected back; vile and disgraced. Seeking to be enthralled I sought her. But the look was gone. I was merely locked in the impulse of staring into emptiness, caught in a trap all of my own making.

Your loving,

Edward

Lucy Hamilton

from The Diarists

Crocodiles & Frigate Birds

It's years since the Diarist last saw it. Men had to manoeuvre it [*one good tree & axe for hollowing*] through trap-doors up to the third floor, winch it up on ceiling-rollers in two, or was it three, pieces? It's the only object of his on display in the museum [*long planks from single tree*], one small notice with his name and the year of the Expedition. No items of clothing [*pieces of rattan*], no diaries or sophisticated instruments. When they were small her awestruck children fingered the intricate crocodile [*carved beast for figurehead*] and the frigate birds in perpetual flight. Now the canoe is suspended so high you can't see inside [*wooden weights, hooks, scrapers, thwarts, brackets*]. Last night they all crowded round, skyping a granddaughter in Bolivia. And she could see her face and hear her voice. It's amazing what that little 'periscope' can do.

Notes & Quotes

The Diarist's son owns a fibreglass sports kayak. When he goes. When he goes white-water kayaking in the Atlas Mountains. Only a Greenlandic kayak is called *qajaq*. C's kayak would be *qajariaq* meaning 'like a *qajaq*'. Each man's *qajaq* is built to the specifications of his own body. *I always tried to make it so that it was not too short – so that I could load the insides with skins and provisions.* The Inuit copy the animals – that ivory bear Uncle Tom sent for her 10th birthday! – match the skins to parts of their own body. The women stitch a seal-gut jacket – *tuilik* – with bone-needle. Sew two-layered leather stitching not to hole the fabric. To retain water-tightness. To stiffen where necessary. C. wears his neoprene wetsuit & jacket. When he goes whitewater kayaking on the Oued

Ouzoud. When he wears his fibre-glass crash-helmet. When he plunges between rockfaces. Flies between water & sky.

Bedtime Stories

I

And the Diarist smiles, seeing as vividly as yesterday their eager little faces pleading to hear again & again: *In the worst and deepest of the rapids, we touched a sunken tree, upset, and the canoe went careering bottom up down the stream.* The father she hardly knew ... *I got caught in some of the underwater branches of the tree, was dragged deep down to where it was horrible and quite dark ...* How still they lay and rapt, eyes wide as owls'. Oh, the times he escaped by a feather! *I was carried along by the current at a hideous pace towards another swift and deep rapid ... which would certainly have been the end of me, had the Dyak not caught sight...*

II

Not a day goes by that she doesn't think of Mother. Mother who was 'waiting until you were old enough to understand'. Standing at the fireplace, turning her face away to tell what N. already knew – but he hadn't believed the boy at school. Now it was true. He would never forgive. Not until he'd eventually write the book ... *Ironically Dr. S. became better known for his appalling death than for his distinguished life.* Mother descending the stairs crying ... *For us she published a selection of his letters & diaries.* Now it's the grandchildren reading *The canoe was recovered, but the sack containing my bedding and everything else was lost.*

ELŻBIETA WÓJCIK-LEESE

let us say: the house

this chosen

minimally maintained
by aridity and cold

immobile for days

not a wind moves
and the air is still inside
the house
holding its breath
from the most withheld tense
to the most relaxed entropy

soundless

if one hears voices
one is hearing voices
children's and adult voices
from the past

essence of abandoned abandonment

there is nevertheless
an oozing

between midnight sun and midday darkness
between tension and relaxation
between two kinds of spirit(s) (breath)

time at work
slowly and suddenly retained
and released

stretching from the edge of an image across a little polar plain

to the house

and back again

across the abandonment itself

set in motion

by a pretended movement

a feint: the image lays its membrane across its motif

Note:

An erasure of 'led os sige: huset' by Erik Gant, art critic and brother of Pia Arke, Greenlandic-Danish visual artist—Arke used his text for annotating the white frames of *Imaginary Homelands* alias *Ultima Thule* alias *Dundas the Old Thule* (1992/2003), her four silver/gelatine prints that present her childhood home in Dundas, Thule (Greenland).

Marina Tsvetaeva

translated by Angela Livingstone

To pass by...

But maybe the best victory
over time and over gravity
is to pass by without leaving a trace,
to pass by, not leaving a shadow

on walls...

maybe: win by refusing?

Erase oneself from all the mirrors?
Thus – like Lérmonov in the Caucasus –
steal past, not disturbing the rocks.

Or maybe the best fun would be
not to touch with Bach's finger
echoes of organ music? Just
fall to pieces, leaving no dust

for an urn...

maybe – win by deluding?

– Remove oneself from all latitudes?
Thus – to steal through time as through an
ocean, not disturbing the water...

1923

Philippe Jaccottet

translated by Ian Brinton

A Game of Patience

In the playing-cards laid down in lamplight,
fickle figures placed in dust across the baize,
through smoke I gaze at what is best
not seen on this surface.

A clink of glasses heralds more insomnia:
a rising fear of tightening time,
a using –up of life and dwindling of motive.
An old man sheds past pictures,
stifles memory and stares at hailstones
rattling on the garden gate.

Gypsies

There is a fire glinting beneath those trees;
I can hear low voices muttering
near the gates of the town:
speaking words to a world that sleeps.

If we pass with hushed steps, fleeting travellers,
between these two worlds, it is for fear
of disturbing ongoing murmurs heard
around that hidden light.

Winétt de Rokha

translated by J. Mark Smith

Sonnet to be placed along the banks of a photo album

My countenance and her attitude of honeysuckle
take indigo form
as the dust jacket upon a nest of memories.

Everything has been going dark:
the heroic gust,
the ensanguined butterfly, dancing here
and there in the sunlight.

Have you heard how the raven planted his seeds of night
and surrounded the isolated thorn tree?

All those kisses, to make reason submit;
all those roses, sentenced to the murderous triangle of pain.

Lonely, your love does nothing but spin,
like a propeller
in the light-filled garden
of a star that's nodded off...

Our Father

Often solitude
prowls around in me
to the deep hum of silence.

The obscure souls of bats
lash their dismal hopes against the windows.

Sensitive to the cold, the chimneys
roll their sad vapours
across roads liberated of all trace
of heaven and of time.

The redolence of cassie flower
keeps away evil spirits,
while I'm hammering at the glare
in the black architecture of the books.

My lamp,
like a tragedian's blade,
cuts through the heart of the dawn.

A bee hive

snugs inside my belly, ripe as fruit,
palpitating, going golden like a corn field in season —
and nothing disturbs it but *being*.

The wind agitates it, like the trembling of aspens;
beloved songs make it drowsy
when the leaves fall, as if tears
were falling but no one was crying:

it senses the kid-like steps of the goats at daybreak;
the return of the sunflowers of the afternoon;
the Southern Cross, affixed to the
naked absolute of night.

Later, it sleeps like a bamboo leaf,
tilted downward,
extending itself, like a pendulum,
without arms,
without eyes,
without voice,
matter in shade, curled up
in the red coronal of my womb.

Osip Mandelstam

translated by Alistair Noon

Tristia

I've studied the science of separation
at wakes when hair's worn simply.
Oxen chewing, the mourners waiting,
it's the watch's final hour in the city.
I keep the rites of the cockerel night,
as they raise the road's bitter burden,
gaze out into the distance, red-eyed,
where sobs and songs can be heard.

Who hears that word "separation"
and knows the goodbye we'll adopt,
the promise in cockerel's exclamations,
when fires will burn on the Acropolis,
and on some kind of new life's brink,
while oxen chomp under tarpaulins,
why the cockerel beats its wings,
announcing dawn on the city walls.

The shuttle warps, the spindle hums:
I love the common, humdrum threads.
Watch barefoot Delia, here she comes
toward us, aloft, like a swan's feather.
Our life unsteady on its feet,
how scanty are the tongue's delights.
We've seen it all, it all repeats,
it's the instant we taste and recognize.

Well, so be it: a glassy figure
lies on a clean, earthenware plate,
like a squirrel's spread-out skin –
bent over the wax, a girl gazes.
It's not for us to guess Greek hell.

Women have wax, bronze is for men.
The only time our lots will fall
is war, but they divine their own end.

1918

Light Rain in Moscow

The rain is stingy with the chill
it brings with the summer thunder.
Some's for the trees. Some is for us.
Some's for the cherries on the stalls.

The boiling starts in the dusk
with the light fussing of teapots,
as if some anthill in the sky
were feasting upon dark shoots.

Out of the fresh drops, a vineyard
begins to stir in the grass,
a seedbed of coldness revealed
in Moscow, spread like a palm.

1922

[Untitled]

Voronezh, Crow-Town, when can I go?
You run me to the verge, preserve my knowledge,
rent me a niche, make me veer near the edge,
Voronezh, random, ruining town of crows.

April 1935