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Submissions

Shearsman operates a submissions-window system, whereby submissions are only 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, i.e. all who submit *should* hear by the end of June or December, although for recent issues we have often taken a month longer.

The next issue will be edited by Kelvin Corcoran.

This issue has been set in Bembo with titling in Argumentum.

The flyleaf is set in Trend Sans.

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Mark Dickinson

Olav's Wood

We sought love among those narrow trails,
the lived light curving between the glittering
wood moss, and the wind burnt wynds where patience
grew selective through a force that gathered
to a common feather, touching the lifting
feature of how we came to the touch
of a frizzled pincushion. Becoming a gift
where we would dwell, knowing the Holarctic
elegance colonising the duration
of what we felt, and sought at the threshold
slant to the water. Estranging bitter/
interruptions lifted from the dazzling
frown, notched to a distant twist of cruelty
that violence heats. At the side, we stopped:

before a silken retreat, where the water
of the burn/ split into the silver
carpet of a woven orb/ rhizoid
tapestry drawn to its shade, among tea-
pots nesting— sung to the heart, where the fragile
laughter's treading the love to the audible
Crake, blessed in the slant/ light that implicates
faith, and greets us, inclining the elegant
bristle among the spring that counts the syl-
lables of discovery. Feeling the earth
in the glittering slants, which fade down in-
to the comforting hint of a beauteous
narrow, whose star water carries the softest
notes of happiness, to harmonise the tree
side of this temple where the world grows
better than
before.

Angelic (kneads) Umbellifer

Shrunk to its need, the hybridity of wild encasing through gift those specular intervals of nodal foreshortening to the secular kneads of ground; low distancing, between leaf nodes and the dense splay of the crown. Where the leafy chlorophyll crouched to resistance, diverts to a thickness of grace. Couched along latitudes, each cell of nurture stems the over-reach to a thicknesses apex. Restraining the upright through a cleft of occupancy, where risks of height sway before prostrate increments of impotence. Such potent respite before a paradigm will opportune in the store of density, recoverable in this open extremity. Aligned to succession/ compressed to a hollow, where depth retains hereditary postures within a reach specific to its niche. Hunkering fit withstanding the jettisoned from opened drops of ocean-sharp, bitten-at-sore. Graft to its draft, each leafy dimension marks visible the open constraint: imparts within the bounded condition the measure of restraint. Any faint stands will at loss, as any over-height of obduracy frails upon florescence. Such stranding makes in its specular increments the standing on offer, lessening by trials beside a trail on this coastal way. Salt dash galing that moderates the song of its outburst, raising the annuity, razing the quiet solemnity; kneading the futures given to porrection to see what gives. Fleshing site-base, with a slope-flush of promise; shifting maritime climax with pronounced

fluctuations in the northern range. Wind-belt to over-arching—supine: therophyte generating radical inheritance, whose continuity is the measure of concentrated patience? Saline pin-point marks the offer, locating modified rations to its shore, and makes between the morphological strands, conditions for angelic stands.

Frances Presley

punch holes

I lift my conditional arm

move forward

look for

[]

I lift my conditional arm

move forward

look for

[a decision space]

move forward

wings

I think of writing a book of Flyology

A. A. Byron, age 13, 1828

I am going to take the exact pattern of a bird's wing
[exact] [bird]

I have already thought of a way of fixing them on to the shoulders
[fix]

a pair of paper wings in proportion to my size
[my size]

they might be made of oil silk try what I can do with feathers
[made] [do]

I can find no difficulty in the motion or distention of the wings
[no] [motion]

to move an immense pair of wings take an airswallowing
jet engine
downstream wakes
[wakes]

to put serrations on the trailing edge tattered fringe of a scarf
fringe feathers break up sound waves
[waves]

velvety down feathers absorb noise above 2,000 hertz

or change the angle at which air flows

silent brush
[silent]

of a Critch-owl's wing
[wing]

velvet coating on the landing gear

Peter Robinson

Ravishing Europa

for O

After staying up far too late
for a televised debate
and sickened by their bickering,
I'm reminded of Europa
by yet more mendacious bullshit –
but gone to bed, succumb
again to sorry memories ...
They bring back lying with the victim
of a far-off rape, a
ravishing, like the ones depicted
in occidental summer twilight
on these sunset lands.

Now you haver round our bedroom.
Me, I'm undecided whether
it had been an act of love
or violence provided
the very idea, to try the patience
of Europa, send her home ...
But no, deciding for us
despite the Cretan myths, the liars,
here you are beside me –
and I can only hope
it's like we're in the arms of Europe
with Europe in my arms.

Lincolnshire Landscapes

for Peter Makin

‘... there is a constant sense, as in a Dutch landscape,
of how the road leads on beyond the visible horizon.’
Richard Wollheim

1

Farmed deer – they’re venison under rain –
bound off on balletic points;
but we’re about to lose our way
with a box-pew church ahead,
its east end silhouetted
up against rain-laden sky –
the pockmarked, ochre stonework bitten
in by centuries of frost.

2

Under big skies of the Lincolnshire Wolds
when driven down field-skirting roads,
I’m grateful for that constant sense
of how they lead beyond
the visible horizon, land
moved across our windscreen frame,
our windscreen smeared by summer’s extinctions;
it’s shot through with reflections
overlaid experience
like sands rippling along a shore ...

3

the shore at Mablethorpe, for instance,
 with its razor-shells, hundreds and thousands,
 and wind, wind speaking in tongues
 of streaming sands –
 wraiths blown towards a steely sea
 break, break, breaking under iron-grey cloud forms,
 where figures, patterns on that beach,
 point off towards more ghost propellers
 over beyond the Wash, you see,
 or Humber estuary.

4

Leaving the big red VOTE LEAVE signs
 behind us in a homing turn,
 we find the B-roads lead beyond
 where abandonment, abjection, it will have them choose;
 it's figured in those FOR SALE boards,
 and what of language, person, coast
 emerges now we are to lose
 ourselves beyond the turning lines
 from a lost horizon ...

Alexandra Sashe

the last homage to Paul Celan

From the letter, inanimate
– my orphan, his anima –
half-path between
grass and hay :
half-feathered, half-weathered
half-buried and half-winged

a lapis lazuli opens the space,
the king of his own letter
bequeaths his language : his pain and
his secret –
a portion of each
he takes

into the river.

The Square is freed from the name of the tree
it served not, –
and keeps its leaf
dry and hidden
among the pages that speak of the king :

who speaks
through his thirst
his hunger.

Our
hands navigate through the river.
Our breaths live.

James Bell

the words remain the same

the old stones never collect moss though
are wind carved

collect centuries instead
imply design and hieroglyphs that grow
from maps –

notice a menhir not marked

the one beside the wayside calvary –
an oversight

a cartographic glitch that

years will repair – see Porzic is there
remember it

scribed a corn circle – an alien
outline in undulations of the wheat –
next year grass

the marker of stone remains

Cailovan needs to be looked for – rests
proud meadowed

on its hillock beside a stream

stone and water always last longer – hide
their history

well enough behind words

matter in their own terms of time – can never
collect moss

or sway sound like a wind chime

each opposite tumuli are stone bards with
songs chilled
under questions in summer heat

the words remain the same – makars make
interpretations
tunes turn in their own patterns

Michelle Penn

The Japanese Vase

Repair should be evident. It should strut an arrogant song, instead of pacifying quietly. It should deny nothing.

She has never restored a single ceramic by hiding the cracks, the chips, replenishing patterns exactly where their colours have strayed. Her sutures show, a defiant testament to damage. The withered fingers lay down gold lacquer, honouring every imperfection, every beautiful break. One scarred lover caressing another.

Repair bellows. It is not a bird, pecking seeds from a child's hand. It is not the woman who trades all she is for costume jewellery.

She is in love with the unused vase on the table, so exposed outside its shelter of Styrofoam. It begs for the strength she will someday bestow, its surface so intact, so ignorant of history.

Julie Irigaray

The Fall of the West

Comfortable bubbles of barbed wires:
Refugees are refused the land beyond.

Concrete rabbit-cages reaching the sky:
Ghettos with curfew, fertile ground for fanatics.

“We are a free country”:
Modernity as an omnipotent god.

Defenders of our superiority:
Inquisitors tracking behind the beard and the veil.

Al-Andalus swapped for the crusades:
The hand of Fatima is the new yellow star.

“They brought the plague to our civilization”:
Cholera was already gangrening it.

“A nation is a race”:
Some seek for an expulsion via the ballot paper.

The world post nine-eleven carries on
The traditions of the old wars of religion.

My generation will never remember
How life was before the fall –

Fall of man, fall of the empire,
Fall of Granada, fall of the towers.

There is no *shalom* for *Inch Allah*,
No taste of pistachio in our speech any longer.

Peter Larkin

Emergent Habits: Nearest Dress Far Over Trees

Emergent habits
from counter-habitual,
dressed for unfamiliar
one more attiring

the cocoon of outspread
quickens a loosened
unloser, throw
a scarf's

how a scurf of trees
extenuates, tempers
the emergence

clothes us in frail fabrics
unscrambling horizon
with seeing scars,
a thatch of spars
below their watch
of semi-stars

lagging ahead of the mut-
ilated, fostered to its
crooks, gives replenishment
shawl by shawl

no tree simulacra
inciting the swerve from field,
veteran neck turns in-
ordinately round scarf:
bypassing the cycle gives
emergent nub, one offer
on from saturate hub

not always succinct in adhesion, a capacity poor-store bare enough
for the jolt of emergence dresses then what had lost its way from
floor whichever root-bound knows no more branch-zero re-
bestirs a post-avoidance, the layer itself was already speculative

too slight along to have
rested at a blunt touch,
a sheering of counter-shoot
but stunted (sprinted)
by invasive variation
at the consensive spark

lapsed overheads dilate
a throw's declination, bring
uprights their preferences
in stubbing imparted
back to shelter, such thin
permissions stray
to the commutatory

the least glut is some
misfeed foraged towards:
a tree before its scarf not
so much draped as dropped
on a designatory benign
baffle as inceptional sock
coats the annexation

scarce crumbs of nature
at its horde's seasonal
office of not now
crowding out
the canopy of prayer

not treelessly put to the edge of
copse, erring from stand to
grove, from canopy to ambient
blowing scarf where
the shocks of emergence
leave a cluster

a leaf one of its selves towards a wave of scarf, not yet a leaf of fabric
no secular clump gathers this emergent profile the oak's sediment
ripped from hierarchy, wrap *that* in the scarf's flare wading an
emergence dries towards waddage, slowly to irrigations of prayer

pray across the unshadowed,
what a texture of tree-dress
(penetration's duress) won't
have had to thin out to

amplified remotely, in-
timately comparisoned shoot
over root such caparisons
thread the emergence,
embed symmetrical
resurgents

Kate Miller

The Locomotion of Laundry

All things began in order, so shall they end and so shall they begin again

Sir Thomas Browne

Always on the move: outlawed, bundled,
sheets straggle, deep in wait for their ablution, taps to open,
washer drum to turn.

Cloth which wound around the living
– and preserved the record in its creases –
only had to flop down on the floor
to forgo the old life.

But there's no hurry.
Everything is taken up and everything descends,
tugged from the rubber cervix, treated to a midwife's slap,
each coming newly into
being at the separation.

In the tango of its hanging,
a shirt or bedding that until this morning bore
another body's trace,
takes up position as a fighter, felon, dancer, tackler, striker,
airblown along the line.

There may be occasional arrests
yet piece by piece,
by pawn-like moves they are reshaped,
redeemed in the perpetual lifting and laying-on of hands
and so *shall they begin again*, to enter every room.

The term Locomotion was coined by Sir Thomas Browne

Khaled Hakim

Letter from the Takeaway (3)

I keep dreaming ive got a term project where ive never gon back to the class in months.

Yoo imagin inconseqwensial hermeticks abandoning th masses; you never interview anywon less than a rap gangsta, defens lawyer with a film deal, riting not narativ

In several yers nothing makes a diffrens. Animus ingested entropy remains. Reserchers in a pharmaseutical discover a receptor for Republicanism in the brain.

Wher is it situated a poem impossibl to acess. Experiens tels me noone wil giv a living riting word salads, I wudnt bet on riting not narative

but how do ye *kno* an audiens cant get it. Ive ever made judgments on behaf of peple.

A polemick of use value. Storiz setling unstably between textuality & inertia

eliptical poetriss of a clozd univers, suckd back to th pointles event horizon of my arsehol:

I got my language from a sawcer loopy consummat stylist of th new physics. Its such a relief to find discours owtside of discorse, hyperbolick retoricks of openness held in check by engineering

altho matter everywere pul on it, spred thin enufh so that it wil never collaps back onto anything important

'I' as emergent phenomenon, imperial syntax - your emergent behaviour

w/ time they all fade toward invisibility, their shop since radiation getting weaker & weaker - the parabolical barely making it to infinity before exhausting kinetic energy, to end as a tandoori cinder

declaratives of the new nature, omniscient descriptives of a universal discourse now known what they're talking about

geometrical waves dissolving ripple molds on the cloud I

the order of development, zygotes pulsing, genomes turning each other on & off on the billion network

each lightbulb connected to 2 others switching faster than light chasing information beyond the 'C' of relativity in a cyberloop flying saucer

anti-chaos boxes its possibilities into a tiny range as shit falls on the shitpile model, landslides build to stable states, to periodic tectonic collapse, we only have won pile of shit affecting any part of the pile

systems permanent wobble between redundancy & automatism, grammar pressures default

an expected property of mathematical chemicals

proze autocatalytic sets, intrinsic dynamics of probabilistic structure

cellular automata dying, expanding paradigm loops from a central region down tree - expanding *what?*

there are only 2 rules - Reproduce - Mutate

the parasites take advantage of information, others take advantage of the parasites, & others cheat on society, whether chemistry of carbon & hydrogen, or the computer bits simulation of Hegelian society

logicless currency fluctuations of democratic capitalism, the end of the best of worlds – the prosodic tools predictive power

look for patterns & price fluctuations, understand L=A=N=G=W=I=G=E poetics, make a fortune on stocks & shares

any ecosystem exists at chaos anti-chaos –

what is a chronometer – 2 snails placed on a copper plate forever in sympathetic communication

the oscillating energy of sparks as electromagnetic waves as lipids spread out on a pond

whoever hears it comes into tune, the amplitude is magnified

The Hertz transmitter across a tiny gap is this letter, more vigorous sparks of a senseless device

wave a white handkerchief each time the receiver experiment fails

information collects in the medium sieve providence, random karma collects structure poetic merits

automation from the remote generation, error...extempore orders the poem only poetry as far as its prose

defining features prosodic chaos, the simple

Medical orderlies know the bacilli warfare wound infection from Boer bullets

from your search for the magical bullet, the cure for syphilis in rabbits (compound 606); the protozoa in retreat: many more babies went home with their mothers to become a burden on homeostasis

apoptosis cells in the embryos hand die off to sculpt personal lifestyles, cancer stains delectable expressionism

stress levels decline, chemical balances describe wisdom, cells being told to die

odor stains knit close together, charity shops subsidized purposes

dependancy infrastructures graduate research its hundred thousand cultures in robot assembly – supported by corporate hardframe

little I, the valorized underclass in universities, trying to rite the cliché & unspeakable

O Planet of the Lower Classes

ware little white daddy's girls oppress the black studs – now *hoo* am I thinking of them

suppressed in liberal storied of essentialist conflict

empowerment by predation – *Stab up me meat, boy, stab up me meat*

batty bwoys getting their heads mashed in by gobshite w/ highly developed sense of black potency, & bloodclaat sociology

*I dont speke worrd a man – dis sey I must mooltiplie, an mankind unto
mankind is an abominacion heh heh heh*

political definicions pop – all Black peple ar interreplasable, therefore
I only need one homogeneous black blob

The desert iland test of the ontogenetick.

Langwige defining geografies waer the universals of anthropologie
play owt the constant oposition – defining ‘selfhood’ in th tribe, the
conservativ economy of identitie

Oh God – Im a racist! God, wharra releef.

at 10-43 second, temperatur a funcson of overcrowding 1032 degrees,
the 4 nown forsez of aire fyre curry powder & water wer one

the eliptical model poem has a begining end a liffime. Gravitacional
redundansy is relentless. Its contents ar destind to fry.

Julie Sampson

South-West's Sea Thyme

i.m. H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) who lived in Devon and Dorset, in 1916, & Cornwall, in 1918

Does a poet, stretching time, see way ahead of her the backflow of tide and so intuit, in sea-breaths a future leaning back toward her, slowly, irrevocably, keening her in?

Driftwood

Breathless, at last
we are here, at the sea-shrine,
though few seem to venture
to this abandoned plot, where
at the time of the latest tide
 a twist of drift left
behind figures
 for us,
the gravitational curve,
 a centenary - the sea's-time.

'you are useless, O grave, O beautiful'
(The Shrine)

Sea-Blackthorn (Sea-Berry)

We are stung by salt-
in-tide from the now
looming beach
 a windbreak,
this shrub is spiny,
 has thorns, yet our way
is strewn with a sea-gift
greeting - the little orange-tree -

its cluster of golden fruit –
(or is the gold-rush not
for us – is it then, instead,
our perfidious bliss?)

*'pour meted words/of sea-hawks and gulls/
and sea-birds that cry/discord'
(The Wind Sleepers)*

John Levy

Some of What I've Lost

I lost out, I
lost in, I lost over and through and am not
sure how to lose from. I lost the foreheads of my
late parents along with the rest of their

physical presences. I lost the voices of my
late parents along with the chance to call them
long distance when I wasn't in Phoenix. I
lost, because I never had it, the idea that I could ever

understand what made another person tick and
I never understood how another person could be like
a clock's innards. I lost the shoe I had
before we moved from Minneapolis and I liked not

wearing the shoe more than wearing it because
when it was off I could see on the circular label
Buster Brown and his presence was a comfort,
a friend in another place like a

pen pal except I was too young to write letters
or know what a pen pal was. I lost the tree
outside my second floor childhood window
in Minneapolis the big one

I used to watch fill slowly with
blue then deeper blue and purpling dusk that
would fill the tree between the branches between the leaves
and as it did that wide

tall tree filled me with blue then deeper blue and purpling.
I lost my favorite piece of white string I carried around all week
one summer. I lost each and every silver-colored cap gun
I shot, smelling the gunpowder. I lost the fear and hatred

of the words dick and cock that I had in fourth grade and
in the Madison Meadows locker room
when I heard Paul say *penis* unlike all the other kids I knew Paul
was going to be my friend and I was right for

a few decades at least. I lost a poem I thought I'd love
when I read in a Table of Contents DEFINITION OF MELODY
and eagerly turned to it and found
DEFINITIONS FOR MENDY, a poem

I then did read but I lost the poem I thought I'd find.
I lost the fear of someone killing me
by putting ground glass into my food a fear I had after
watching a show (Alfred Hitchcock?) on which

that's how a person was slowly done in. I lost the fear
I had of my silverware turning against me if I didn't
treat it right at every meal and use the spoon as much
and as gratefully as the fork. I lost any chance

that this poem could be revised into
a haiku. I lost every flat rock that I skipped across
a body of water hoping the skipping would last longer.
I lost the belief that anyone over 18 was in the world

of grown-ups. I lost control just now
when I wanted to use the word *un-childish*, but without
a hyphen, and my computer changed it (because I didn't
insert a hyphen) into *enchiladas*. I lost for the moment all

three of my different books of Frank O'Hara poems though I know
I'll locate One soon and making that O upper case is just a way of
paying respect to O'Hara. I lost and frequently lose solitude and
regain it and lose it and am glad about both the losses

and gains. I lost the opportunity and an opportunity and so many
opportunities and don't know how I could ever decide which is *the*
opportunity I most regret losing. I lost the opportunity to address you
as *Dear Reader* anywhere until now.

Makyla Curtis

body atlas

I felt a pencil
in the small of my back –
a geographical alliance against the
outline coat of my body's consciousness.
The clutter is a casual start
with a clinical look at my journals
where the map spreads.
All lines are fingers against my figure sketched
my huffing remarks depart the record
the graph lowers, the arcing
centre line dips on the page
we, she and I, write into our ego a
bottle of scotch
place lucidity in a jar and
trace the outline of calligraphic memories.
The environment embellishes us
the small parts of my neck that
is a bump, a clumsy knot to the hand of a masseuse
tips the coastal line forming a bay
she, not she with me, she the masseuse
she rubs my asylum neck pushing it out
the study of my shoulder remains unchanged –
a case study of letters fixed into books,
old copperplate in every corner describing the whole
of me. An artwork. Some journey,
an incremental penholder is all.
the sleeves dribble like scribes and always
highly professional the tears in the map
run along the highly-used routes.
She, the she with me, lies with her back a ridge like mine
we are a mountain range, an alpine physique
with hands forming our own cartography.

Rosanna Licari

The Hand

This is not usual.

The surgeon draws a Z with a pen to show where he will cut. The lump in the middle of my right palm protrudes like a limpet. It has grasped and fixed itself around the middle finger's tendon. The one that's strong as an octopus leg. Some have said it looks like a closed eye. Spooky. The doctor will join my heart, head and life lines and the receptionist vouches for his outstanding embroidery. In my mother's brain nothing is stitched together. Synapses collapse and don't form again. Neurons reach for what is left of sense, but meet nonsense. The obscure territories. Some have said the mad have the gift of prophecy. I tell Mother about the hand and she claims, *Yes, yes, I had this operation, too.* This is not fact. *Don't worry. It will all go well,* she continues. I take comfort in the assurance of a demented woman.

Ann Matthews

from Home Turf Sequence

Being
the devil's
advocate can lead
you places that *are* sometimes
refreshing. *My* favourite place is a home *not*
a building. I was in my Bronte phase that summer when I
snuck out in my white *nighty* and *walked* bare foot through
the drenched grass and the candyfloss *dawn* mist. *By* now
Dover is almost a *second home*. I'm not sure whether the
sheep and ghosts of Tre Ceiri enjoyed our version of free-
jazz on saxophone and trumpet. *Serial* monogamy is a dirty
occupation and not a label to be tagged with. I burnt my past,
eight bin bags of writing, which turned into a *feathery* pile
of ash, though some words *escaped* and fluttered *over* south
Anglesey. Dad measured out *peanuts* in identical eggcups and
we *thought* it best not to argue. What is time but your *measure*.
This is the second recession *that* I have lived through but I can't
distinguish a gap between them. Picking magic mushrooms on
the school field was fun though I'd run away *and* curl up with
a good book *when* you consumed them. We seemed to follow
the Fasching *carnival* from *north* to south Germany, beating
out the winter in unison. Even nice people can be bad losers.
Thunder crashes once, light bulbs shatter and the green light
screams like my sister. In the hot and tinder-dry bowl of the
Hungarian plain herds of thin sheep bleated and undulating
shoals of grey mice scattered. My subjectivity is part of who I
am. I was fascinated by the intense lime-green and shiny finger-
sized dips of the buttons on my cardigan.

David Miller

from Epilogue

Two deer – a mother hind and her young – appeared in the garden, content to stand or sit in poses as if for lens, inked brush or pen, chewing foliage, even in the rain. For me, they were welcome, though you were apprehensive: rightly so, as later on they ate your roses, lilies and geraniums. As I walked along the arcade, a small horse came up behind me and put its forelegs on the back of my shoulders, licking my neck affectionately. I fell; the horse fell. The hedge sparrow flew at one of the glass walls and hit it; then fell, dazed, to the floor. I gingerly picked it up, feeling the softness of its body in my hands; when I set it down outside, the toes of one of its feet clung tenaciously to my finger. There: a swirl of blood across the grass; the mutilated carcass of a sheep. I threw the staff to the ground, breaking the ceremony, and abjured magic thenceforth. *And sometimes even the best captain loses his balance*, you wrote. Seagulls flew in circles in the darkening sky over a coastal village of white-painted buildings, with hills stretching beyond. *In all faces is seen the Face of faces, veiled, and in a riddle*. He wrote in praise of *the best nurses*, in a poem's dedication: the rest was dream and dreaming's release. He died in hospital; my other friend died in the sea. A necklace or chain thrown into the sky. A skirl. *By the way, you are first watch tonight. Close your eyes – and look at the schooner approaching*. Had you really listened to his music when you called him *a poor fool in the fullest sense of the word? Poor beyond all measure and foolish beyond all measure*. – And that day when you almost drowned, on the school trip to St Kilda Beach? – Yes, I was told to swim, without being asked if I *could* swim, and there was no question of querying the order; but it just seemed like one bad dream amongst others in those years. – Does it really shimmer, sway, surge, break? *...for the direct way to ascend is first to descend*. Spices, seeds, legumes, we used; and leaves, earth, wax, stones; also wool, calico, silk, cotton cloth; and doorframes, and sheets of glass. Snow blocks are placed in rows, forming a circle; then row piled upon row, with gaps filled with wedges of snow; the whole thing slanting towards a ceiling. Resist temptations to pour water on the exterior snow or light a fire inside.

you could or you could
not and would it
be a pity
steel bronze iron marble

A house made from boxes: wooden for the exterior, cardboard the interior. – It was the connection between poverty and art that concerned me, whatever the problems and contradictions; wanting an art that was pared down and without pomp or pretension or displays of sterile wit, and with common materials its basis. But not impoverished art, inane or trite art, or art for shock's-sake or as mere novelty. The written, the spoken: if a conflict then to no right end. The eye sees, the ear hears: first the lightning, then the thunder. Tap, tap, tap, tap: rain on window panes; and rain on plants in window boxes. – A kiss is a kiss unless it's a concept or a lie. Is a formality a concept? and does a lie always betray? The sky descends to the smallest flower: willingly, graciously.

stars hill sea enfolded
imprisoned or else released
a lamp a table and wine
window door gate and pathway

Elderberry dye soaks into linen. As the bridesmaid suffered from nosebleeds, her mother had brought along a supply of handkerchiefs in readiness. – Goodbye, the bride said to me, her young cousin, as she broke into tears: would we never meet again, I wondered? *Although it will most likely occur in the distant future, I would happily live to witness an exhibition of everything I have created and still hope to create, if only to arrive at the conclusion: is it anything and does it mean anything?* He told the man who'd gone blind to get down on his knees, and then he pissed into his eyes; and the man could see again.

Caroline Hawkrige

Sightings

*"Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken..."*
Keats

20-inch Uppsala Schmidt, Siding Spring Mountain.
August 7th. McNaught, Robert H.
75% various ices; the rest different dust.
Inward bound towards perihelion.

It was hopelessly lost in December, but recovered
in the deep twilight of the New Year.
I will not soon forget this kernel of comet.
First post on Yahoo! Duluth, Minnesota.

Most beautiful (and only) snowball I saw this winter.
Today was 17° centigrade instead of zero
but this melting dirty iceball in the universe
has us happy, Davoko, Croatia.

I watched her for a long time in the company of a hunting hawk.
McNaught in a flock of birds, Leszno, Poland.
Even polluted Belgrade didn't stop her to shine.
Wonderful decline of the day, Kiev, Ukraine.

Click to the left of the Statue of Liberty. Chinese 'broom star'.
I climbed Stone Mountain to see it set against Atlanta.
Upward tail indicates 'near pass', January 12th.
Zodiacal light. A treat driving West.

Solar heat has puffed up the comet, causing it to brighten
to a naked-eye object in broad daylight and blue skies.
Somewhere over Bermuda out of our cockpit window.
I saw it with a 64-year old's eyes.

23s exposure, then flash to light up the kids as it heads for the equator.
Collisions with heavenly ice gave Earth vast amounts of water.
Right ascension: celestial longitude through eastern Pegasus.
Here, we cannot glance it.

Hurling closer than Mercury to the sun, it could break up.
Dust has been ejected before perihelion.
The whole comet is my hand-span across.
Its mammoth hair is way past Venus (smeared by solar wind).

We all rubbernecked a strange bushfire on the horizon;
the reptile tongue of McNaught issuing from the veldt.
A policeman reported a plane in trouble, trailing smoke.
Many hundreds of people waited on the hills.

Nearly an hour after the comet dipped into the Pacific,
we could still see the tail. Paranal, Atacama desert, Chile.
Remnant streamers rose in San Francisco with the moon and Venus
crowning us in the Alps after sundown, just like the white peacock

of de Cheseaux's comet in the famous woodcut and pristine dark of 1744.
Click the Han Dynasty silk atlas of 'pheasants', Babylonian tablets,
click Augustus Caesar's denarius, the 'hairy star' stitched at Bayeux,
click Giotto's *Adoration*, Halley's sooty core (fluffy fractal aggregates)

– all answer Frequently Asked Questions. McNaught fades
among the Southern Lights of a geomagnetic storm.
A circumpolar object through Indus and Tucana.
Probably tens of thousands, if ever it returns.

Dikra Ridha

You Are Still Alive

'Away, I'd rather sail away like a swan that's here and gone'
from the song: 'El Condor Pasa' (If I could)

*'Away, I'd rather sail away like a swan
that's here and gone.'* But you can't
father, because the life you left in the snow

still lives on. I burrow your memories
because your pain can live in my veins.
I inherit your longing and the regrets

you left behind. Your footprints melted
when the season began to end. It ended
when you accepted fate without asking

questions. Questions that may have saved
your mind from lugging the weight
of time as you aged. It sounds muffled

on the songs your friends recorded
for you. The words you danced to are old
but not to me, father. I am your heir.

I carry your laughter in the memory
I was born with. And over your friends'
graves, seeds of longing grow

for the bees to pollinate new seedlings
and streams of melted snow
will swim in seas that rise to flood

the land. Butterflies will carry golden
moments to every garden and flower.
Like your daughter, your old laughter

blossoms and honey sweetens the seasons
of your dances. *'Away, I'd rather sail away
like a swan that's here and gone'* you say

but your songs will be heard in the sunshine
of every sky; above snow, in your country
and beyond the clouds. Your laughter

will live no matter how you forget your fate.
*Like a man who gets tied up to the ground
and gives the earth its saddest sound.* Father,

fate took you from country to country
hoping one day you'll return but here
I am, father, playing El Condor Pasa

for the grey clouds and willow trees
as they look into rivers of the mind.
Even if you live without remembering,

the bees will make sweet honey
with your old smile. Your footprints
in the snow will relive in every season

so gardens and flowers sing your songs
despite your need to forget forgetting.
'But away, I'd rather sail away like a swan

that's here and gone' – and every decade
father, I learn more about sacrifice and love.
Why we say yes to fate and its warnings.

A fate can kill you before your body. It leaves
you wandering this earth, tossing and turning,
refrying your decisions, watching your regrets

flourish in your children and a man gets tied
up to the ground, father. *He gives the earth
its saddest sound* – its saddest sound.

Marianne Burton

Scribblings on the Storehouse Wall

They could belong to Pompeii, most of these,
in sentiment and indelicacy,

displaying a brevity worthy of headline,
admirable to anyone

with a sensitivity to ephemera. Here sex
and excrement are mixed

with other desires too secret to be expressed
except on gypsum where

box-handlers and forklift operatives pass.
Each phrase foams rabid.

Each stroke of the calligrapher's brush
manifests satisfaction

that finally these matters have been spat
away leaving the spitter

clean after his frenzy of penmanship,
freed from his fardel,

like Midas's barber who whispered
down a field's rent

in spring never minding the wheat
might rustle it at harvest

ass's ears ass's ears
ass's ears

Steve Spence

Adapting to the Situation

Are ideas important
in art? What's being
talked about here is
gender-equality yet there
is no chance of an
immediate coup and
we're in for a severe
pruning. Here we have
a massive squandering
of talent. 'Yes, but it's
the repetition of these
images which creates
a sense of boredom',
he said. What is it that
you want me to do?
'Such wonky variation',
she said. Yet we scoured
the streets for junk and
for the throwaway textures
of the city. Who knows
what may lurk beneath
the turbulent current?
Your hours may not be
specified but payment
will be made on submission
of a monthly pay claim.
Are you a wild-eyed loon
standing at the gates of
oblivion? 'First of all,
it's wrong to blame the
zander', he said. Are you

suppressing your painterly touch? Meanwhile, something big has grabbed hold at last and it's time to start talking in riddles again.

Jennifer Spector

The Arrow

*Take the diamonds from your hair and lay them down.
The deer-grass is thin. The timothy is brown.
The shadow of an external world comes near.*
—Wallace Stevens

Now the winds
sail disquiet
scour the fields
for that heart in port

who is sounding at the breaks
slippering dark rooms
what shards and glyphs chisel
camber in the heart?

where I have landed
there is bark to be carried
and plinths to root

blistered with scorch
the ghetto flower

it is the hour we who have wildered
burn our cressets
turn back to the road
outskirt the village
try our broken drums

something

luffed in the wind

caught like bloom &

must on the whaled skiff
where I am laid

ferries me

say the dryland arrows
also are turning

Sarah James

Penelope's Dream of Global Warming

The sky is a red shroud raining
flakes of dead star. Ithaca
has swum off, Greece's shoreline
retreated, leaving scattered islands.
Her husband's ship is a bestiary
with unmuzzled petrol breath.
The horned helm rocks, unsteady.

Her troubled sleep shivers and twists
with each wave that tips his sea.

Beached on an electric eel,
naked men crawl on all fours
along taut ropes that battle the wind.
Hooks yanked from green-field scales
leave brown gashes that bleed methane.
Flames crackle a cauldron;
its oil-black magic bubbled dry.

Baby fish rush to drown
in their mother's choked jaw.

A needle glints in Penelope's fingers,
as she watches her great-great-great-
grandchildren pierce their own skin
with piece after piece of sharp metal,
until they glisten with sweat and blood.
Beads of smoke and shredded light
thread their wet tapestry.

When she stretches her dream
to unstitch it, the yarn pulls tight.

Nathan Shepherdson

a ladder cannot be convinced to climb down from itself

. i watch him knit a mirror with his eyes

watch him cast the first stone into original memory
to see it skim towards the same mirror
now propped up against the horizon
shattered like glass fingernails from a wailing wall
as we ourselves alternate as gold teeth
exploding inside this mica mouth
spines smelted into the slightest answers
inside our own ears floating in open ocean
as wishing wells for the drowned
as deep as any word our heads pop up
to compete for the dot on the i in genesis

your licence to create the opening dream sequence has been revoked

enclosed are the instructions
on how to design a life
while walking the dog
so it can sniff out the bones
in your own grave

)...strike gently away from body...(

in a downbeat of the psyche
your necklace lets go
scattering toes & fingers
in Bren gun slow audio
across the heirloom oak table

in another Pacific War drama
shot through a Vaseline lens

)...strike gently away from body...(

you stop in at the dry cleaner
to collect your skin only to be told
that the stains cannot be removed
without extra cost and that the only currency
accepted in this establishment is the soul

)...strike gently away from body...(

this list is predetermined:

- 1 stand here while your tongue is dissolved in water
- 2 spend more time teaching dust to speak
- 3 permit yourself to learn the botanical names of lies

without regret i fall into my father's mouth
sucked back through his cigar butt
spat onto his bullock's eye

asleep his eyelids become trampolines
rebounding one eternal seed
between here & hereafter
blindsided he sees everything in his wake

the soft grenade in his hand contains no messages for the future

i watch him separate each lip of its colour
before these words form

)...strike gently away from body...(

orbiting shadows
intervene with grace
in a burning wheelchair

to let down what we couldn't lift
to let down what we couldn't lift

you catch yourself wading
through your own ability
to scold the light

you take aim at the world
with one thought & realise you are
the target ←

you catch yourself wading
through your own ability
to scold the light for being silent

)...strike gently away from body...(

how to replace the washer
to stop blood leeching into the cloud
above your head

do you remember
how we would hover
above each other in sleep

how we perfected the art
of waking up in the wrong body
at the right time

in our blinking our jellyfish propulsion through evolution

i was the first person in history to close a door .

Colin Campbell Robinson

from the kafka variations

Beyond a certain point there is no return. This point has to be reached.
Franz Kafka

4.

Sometimes he leaves home suddenly and, half prepared, walks to his office and wonders why is he there on Sunday.

Noise, peace, the typewriter and birdsong: trains rattling along the track; the organ grinder.

The case was already lost in any case.

5.

Devout.

Delicate.

Intense.

Vision.

Underground fire.

Unspeakable.

Some of his words.

Fragment (consider revising)

6.

Is it our fault the day ends before it begins? One moment sees dawn,
the next, creeping dusk.

And what of yesterday already distant and tomorrow about to rise?

November the sixth: the path covered with dry leaves, once more.

7.

Do you receive visitors? Are they scholars speaking in an unknown
tongue, as unknown as you are in their land, as unknown as you are to
your neighbours?

8.

All those villa experiences: those days on the Algarve; in Antibes;
winding through Bordeaux mouthing the vintage; all those days
before the fall.

Impatience.

Indolence.

Or impatience.

Either way heaven is in our mind or is hanging by a thread.

9.

Found, a letter from Schopenhauer:

Becoming old, drawing together, everything has died away around us.

We are living more and more in the memories of the past.

*Sensible deliberation and a firm will are not enough, there is an instinctive
impulse, like a demoniacal urge, that guides, careless of everything else.*

*Thus we may live to see something in the end, if we know how to live to
be very old.*

Dennis Barone

Recipe

Norwegians are by nature quiet; often tall and blond haired. I am none of these things and yet I am Norwegian, a fact few know. My mother's parents left Norway for Rose Hill, Virginia and then moved west to Fort Dodge, Iowa and west again to San Francisco where they opened the Cow Palace Diner. Today I meet a friend every Friday morning for breakfast. We have a list of six or seven places, all of them in central Connecticut. He orders omelets. I order pancakes or French toast; sometimes eggs over easy. And I never say I'm Norwegian: on that I'm silent.

A First Book

On the boat a dear familiar face stopped between stone steps and a clump of rushes. On the other side of the river, moonlight and starlight. A beautiful voice interrupted by laughter and thenceforward all letters for many years would go to the desert. The sight of their dog did not make our world an open door. Wonderful things could not take them both, or the woods, oil paneling, doves, burning oil, clothes, the window, her hat. This setting, this sternness: each had only these things to remember and could comment for a minute that the scene would soon close. I might have known the essential truth:

past, present, idyll, present.

Elżbieta Wójcik-Leese

wabi sabi for beginners

it's when you take off your sunglasses to have a closer look through the binoculars at that lighthouse on the curve of the promontory. but instead of slipping the glasses into your bag, you prop them on your head, even though you're wearing a thick woollen hat and you think, these frames will not like it. now northwesterly chill makes you reach for the hood, and as you're pulling it up, the glasses, knocked off, land on the stones of Rosmarkie Beach

and no licking or swearing can restore them

it's when your elderly father goes to hospital for screening tests, because you've finally convinced your mother that nurses there will make sure he drinks all the necessary solutions, but still he succeeds in pouring out that drink. so the tests are rescheduled, pneumonia sets in and at 6:25 the doctor phones to say he's sorry

and no licking can restore

Masayo Gôshi

translated by the author

Rental Locker Shop in Shinjuku

A rental locker shop opening around the clock
In Shinjuku
Where day-labourers keep their things
They come and unlock their own
To meet their belongings
It's a time of daydream
Their impassioned faces start radiating

A man with no job, no home
Rummaging through his shabby clothes and daily goods in his locker
Takes out a sheet of tattered paper
Invalid certificate of unemployment insurance
Which was issued by a company he worked for decades ago
 This is the only time I was treated as a human being
 This is the only document certifying who I was
He pats the paper by his hand as if it is a ritual
And puts it back in the locker
Seeming embarrassed to have mentioned something irrelevant
He resumes his earlier indifference
And goes out

A man who comes next
Takes a sack made from *furoshiki* out of his locker
And unfolds it
Inside, a set of carpenter's tools
Kept since the booming economy went bust
 They are not as sharp as they used to be
 But I can't throw them away
 I just want to use them once more,
 Brush up my carpentering skills
 Which I owe so much to my master

Just once more before I die
That's all
A smile appears on face for a moment
He bows courteously
And goes out

Another one to come
No family, no relatives, no job and no place to live
No right to live which the Constitution stipulates
No social security
Except Workmen's accident compensation insurance
Which is entitled to a lucky day-labourer too
They say this is for workers
But I know this is also to protect companies
The law is versatile, you know
The strong are more cunning, and get more than the weaker
This is the reality
You have to take care of yourself
You have to take responsibility for yourself
I have done many dangerous jobs
Including at nuclear plants
Many of my co-workers have died
Without any compensation
I've been all right so far
But I shall die in a ditch

He shows his medical card recording the radiation level he has been
exposed to

He knows it's useless
Putting it back in his locker, he goes out
Raising his hand over his shoulder
See you then

The last person on the night
He looks like a smart salaried man
What do you think I do?
I collect rental cars all through the night
It was hard at first but now I love it
His locker is full of CDs

Listening to music is my only pastime, he says
The Last Six Piano Sonatas by Beethoven,
I think it's his greatest musical challenge
Symphony No 1 by Brahms,
Seems a sign of his fear and anxiety, so conscious of Beethoven's
Ninth

Likewise, Bruckner's No 9 and Mahler's No 9
And Schubert's *Impromptus* and Schumann's *Carnival...*
They are moving, expressive, and agony-filled
I'm in ecstasy
My tearful eyes are floating
On the road illuminated by headlights
A Milky Way
I have no religion but I know all about awe
This is the moment disconnected from society full of greed and
malice

He puts the selected CDs into a bag
Among them was Richter's Schubert

Stars appear in the sky of Shinjuku

Szymon Słomczyński

translated by Elżbieta Wójcik-Leese

Sharpening

claws against vantage points you need to adopt?
Not at all. For a mutual exchange adopt
exclusively crime plots. Those with a motive
and the covering of tracks. Time: way back. Place:
young Orthodox church, the paint still fresh. Victim:
a man in his thirties. From his shot-through side
spills pus, this crude spill cheapens at a fast rate
towards the foot. The rates don't rise, the feet pale down.

People are gathering, swarming – a grim throng.
Carrying candles. Above them, hands. Each shelters a flame,
none turns to a fist. In the swarm stand fathers
and sons. The sacrificed victim is their ghost.

It's a day before the anniversary of his birth. Tomorrow
he would have been born again if he could do it twice,
but even the simplest people don't believe he can.

It dawns. The priest speaks in a heinous voice:
Find his body and eat it – you will come to being.

*And in the name of the holy trinity
do not leave this vantage point,
do not seek the killer behind this fatality.*

Menno Wigman

translated by Judith Wilkinson

Life Story

I was ashamed of nearly everything,
My neck, my hair, my handwriting, my name,

the nerdy school bag that my mother gave me,
my father as he fumbled with his blazer,

the family home whose friendship I turned down.
But there are tubes now in my father's arm

and he speaks more and more hoarsely of goodbye.
My shame's crouched in a corner now. He died

the way he drove his Opel: in control,
correctly, eyes fixed firmly on the road.

He saw no point in a dumb fight with death.
How everything I still wanted to tell him

scattered under the wheels of time.