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Contents

Carrie Etter 5
Robert Saxton 10
Linda Black 15
George Messo 19
Janet Sutherland 22
Mark Goodwin 24
Luisa A. Igloria 29
Mary Michaels 32
Ralph Hawkins 34
Claire Crowther 42
David Kennedy 47
Sophie Mayer 51
Andy Brown 54
Patricia Farrell 56
Paul Batchelor 59
Rachel Lehrman 61
philip kuhn 65
Jill Magi 69
Tony Lopez 71
Susana Araújo 76
Rupert M. Loydell 78
Fergal Gaynor 82

Anna Glazova 85
  translated by Anna Khasin
David Huerta 89
  translated by Mark Schafer
Anna Hoffman 94
  translated by Catherine Hales
Gottfried Benn 95
  translated by Catherine Hales
Romina Freschi 98
  translated by herself
Luis de Góngora y Argote 101
  translated by Sir Richard Fanshawe

Biographical Notes 104
Recent & Forthcoming Publications 107
New from Shearsman Books

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**The Collected Poems of Álvaro de Campos Vol. 1** (ca. 250pp)
translated by Chris Daniels
Divining for Starters (43)

the discordant chatter
ends up in a skip
with the stained and frayed
sofa cushions and the
grandmother-embroidered
grotesquerie of holiday
characters gathered
from their days for one
menacing portrait,
one person’s kitsch
another’s vision of
provincial life

but mentally placing
others’ disheartening small talk
among the rubbish
solaces little, and
the enormities crowd
forward like the dead
drawn to Odysseus’s
warm, red blood

most days the sense
of personal volition
enervated by the images
that should not fall
into categories, the
armless orphan, the
friendly fire, the
bombing that struck
another fifty-six dead

most days veering
from chatter to paper
one more time even as
the movement feels
increasingly exhaustible

most days in the skip
rotating a broken object
to new angles in the hope
of discerning use, any
kind of use, any
scrap from which
Robert Saxton

Walk, Don’t Lie Down

Unlike the long, the tall compare one another easily.
To gravity we surrender our litter and our grief.

Around the corner of a block, possibilities muster
like Cherokee high on a ridge, ready for action.

Horizons weakly advise a vertical species,
surprised to step onto the world’s oldest tortoise.

Pedagogues, flyfishermen, waiters, pedestrians,
we all have our double star of feeling,
seldom seen but always immune from siege
within our ambit – the mouth and the shoes . . .

*

. . . whose ferrymen are the hands, ferreting softly,
unaroused by circuits of the cancelling self,
siblings who prefer not to touch, though they will
in extremes or briefly to encourage the others
gesturing to a rosebowl of ears and eyes.
They have two distinct approaches to gloves,
both active – to escape or to animate.
While the live parts learn to fumble, get lost
or stuck, sag, miss notes while offering deepest love
from its narrowest place, flake showers of skin
like snow, the dead parts, like trees, still grow.
The slope of a hill

—what is the appeal
of leaning? Trees, houses, people, all leaning
  in the same direction, as though
the world were tilted, walls thin
  as tissue, a figure
so fragile it will topple
  at the merest breath . . . tulips
float by leafless
  uprooted . . . feet
together every few yards measured
  it seems by the placing of the gate posts
she jumps – terraces – church, spire,
  village hall –
skewed, propped one
against the other . . . sideways . . . ballet legs
sinuous stretched
to their limits resisting
the pull
earthward – faces, the faces
  of women
are featureless, hidden
  by hand, hair, the wing
of a passing bird . . . downhill eyes
down York stone on London clay a certain
  conviction the appearance
of an unknown room . . . steadfastly
  on a compulsion
. . . replica clouds torn patches of chintz roses roses gloves
  for thin fingers a craving
  for the taste of salt . . . speechless
  she refuses
to fly on the other side
of plasterboard, voices
  debate, prefabricate . . . it is time
to go
. . . she slips could slip
  may well
water
will not hold her
comes up
everywhere
running
behind her back
seeping
the length of a city

—pincers’
finger and thumb
a forefinger’s
calf and thigh

—erasure

she hears
kind of
doesn’t

stop
to listen
she can’t
be bothered
her legs
do not part
her legs
are stuck together
she is always

like this
she lives
like this
her hand
constantly

over her mouth
her mouth
constantly
open . . .

earnest voices

this is the way

you hold

your head
hold

your head

the slant

of a ladder . . .
George Messo

fable

a monochrome land.

was snow

and there were pines:

infant, dwarfed.

horizons,

you could almost touch

but never reach.

sky

was black or grey

but never white.

a memory

of what we did

and were.
Janet Sutherland

Lost hearts
“the front room floor is beyond anything – decayed cement, rotten boards”

I got a strange feeling after I spoken to you
these broken voices
Were you at home? / Do you remember?
how can we touch
It smells of some light spice / Gone adrift
now that the room
a little ruby / It occurs to me
is empty

Lost Voices

“the beans were clean in their soft wool, and delicious”

I thought of you this morning
lines on paper
just a note to let you know
put down casually
the surgeon put my name on his list
you who are lost
the phone might be out for longer than we hoped
fold time
your big dictionary solved the last clue
you who are silent
I’ll give you a ring nr the weekend
speak
by keeping busy we are able to cope
Mark Goodwin

Torridon Peopled

crèe’s broken words grate & clatter our boots punctuate travel the slip of stone over stone of frozen spears doors bullets of ground ice feathers tangling white strands on philosophies of cold a foothold of silvery solid worth warm gold the sun plates slabs with frail light under ice-skin over glacis water wriggles black gurgles downwards like tadpoles under cellophane east wind twists Siberian thoughts into our skin our fingers tinder set alight with ice whilst indoors invades our centres with its distant mass as all this Highland vast wraps us with open our day is a gap of light cracked in winter’s stone night we rush through we turn from hard iced rocks & blade air we descend to the valley’s waiting hollow shapes frozen moss & yellowed grasses cup our steps with soft crunches as the light drinks itself dry & dim a crowd of birch saplings knee & waist high are a people we walk amongst I touch their twig-ends so the slender map lines they make vibrate like memories on fire but

Dark Bird with Corner

a rim of a ravine draped with moss & heather a chough? a dark clotted part of air her crock-crock a beauty full breaking of sleek sky
-flesh into jagged elsewhere a writhe of a burn’s rubbing rock greased

with sea-bottom greens primeval evidence water as melted mind ever

falling brain-white thoughts of clouds running electrically across ground

and down crags a chough’s finger -feathers flutter like a pianist’s strangest

dream white water fall-lines with auroras of hiss-mist behind tangled

birch trunks & leafless branches inky -slick claws black grappling hooks

sure of nothing a moor running from a chasm’s lips into distance a sudden

drop abhorrent to a ground’s khaki uniform of tussocky bog openness routed

by intricate enclosure a ravine a corner of a world funnelling reverie at a

back of a vast stage An Teallach a mass of ground’s applause & roar solidified

she rolls her crock-crock reply to my are you a chough? parcels her slippery

blue black twirls downside up flight moment hangs shiny soot hands of air

a sequin eye inspects our bright Gore-Tex-wrapped shapes her dark sharp
in our eyes unfathomable gladness a vole
trickles over snow swift as sorrow some

very small glass & metal room of our car
parked below is dead to dreaming move

meant a feathered throat & beak scrapes
the in visible corner a
cross close sky

Zy Skennor

translucent purr ple pink guernsey cows graze
lit silver grass Zennor sky smashed to peace

on mead ow! at forty thousand feet a cornish coast etched in steam moments mermaid

scale wisps ers soft granite out crops ancestral or ash tree living in through round a ruined cottage

of sky’s gold oranges & silver streamers a sky’s insides inside a gurnard’s guts a vast pub of coloured gusts & mist musicians jamming cumuli -guitars-sirus-chords-voices-accordion-anvils buttery

sky-milk dribbles twilight mines plum met deep through heavens’ rippling ringing tin song gone

Notes: Torridon is a village, a loch and a range of mountains in Wester Ross. Torridon is Gaelic for Place of Transference. An Teallach is a mountain in Wester Ross, its name means The Forge.
Meridian

Not the palm tree on left, nor the puddle of shadow under the mail truck with its insignia of wings. Not the tri-

colored tips of the bird-of-paradise plant or the bougainvillea vines next to the fence, nor even the adobe walls in signature

flamingo. What remains is this light, delivering its first and only letter—
who lives here is no longer

here, who once struck blind
the ivory keys behind a curtain—
practicing, practicing—

one day felt the dead
weight of the familiar.
This is what it really means

when they say that sometimes,
a kind of halo encircles the ordinary:
the seal around windows can, after all,

be broken. Heat rises above
the town and its landmarks, dispersing
over a wilderness of directions.
Mary Michaels

Fly

Her painting of the garden, as it used to be

yellow and purple irises, a red gladiolus, lots of red roses
and brown shadows like animals rushing towards the pond

a man is standing near the corner in the park with bread in his hand
complaining that there are no birds to be seen

the rim of the letterbox curtained with spiders’ webs

the grey torn net – pull across the window-pane – car exhaust blackens it

mauve buddleia spikes, pink hydrangea heads, white roses
orange and maroon gladioli and a tendril of ivy like a leafy snake

when it was hers

*

Pale underbelly of the robin, cormorant’s white throat
song of robin – cormorant diving –

not being able to find the memorial stone
although it was the month of both parent’s birthdays, looking
over and over, crossing paths, recrossing, with the red-haired woman
who comes down on the train and takes the bus back

she walks about alone, with binoculars and quickly

the trees turning the colour of her hair – just slightly red, light red
light red, yellow-green – the sky clumping them up
with sunshine and shade

finding it finally

*
Black crows along the beach

somebody picking up seaweed and putting it in a plastic bag
turnstones that look like white-flecked pebbles
	hree birdwatchers, all green Gore-Tex, tripods and binoculars
stride off across the shingle past the notice that says
**ROOSTING AREA – PLEASE KEEP AWAY AT HIGH TIDE**
water coming up, up, up

bending to their tripods, in a line, like a row of early photographers
heads under the hoods of their cameras

it is high tide

*  

Crow sitting on a dark branch
and all the long grass of the rain-soaked park
dee green and the trees
their leaves being lifted off with a fluttering

a woman on the tarmac path lying down
with her keys a little distant
her fall, not seen

out of the hole in the black bottle-bank
a wasp rises like a wisp of smoke
the bottles dropping still sticky with wine

a slow fly on the curtain, cleaning its legs

from the potter’s display in the market, a bluebottle zigzagged

the tall, pale, oval-faced woman in her brocades and wimple-like veil
looking down on the wares and the vendor

the fly runs up the window-pane.
the bastard sons were dropped from sky drums
nourished by nitrates
hardened by the life of the forest
and when the moisture from their breath dispersed upon the earth
a fiery substance went up into the air
producing thunder bangs and lightening swords,
forks to stab endless victims, these are they
that became the war-like clans of our earth endlessly migrating
hunting hunters in caves
shepherds in tents
and farmers the first to build proper huts

** * **

geometric compositions typify interiors
the door seeps a dribble of natural light
dogs are copulating to form a pyramid

naturally as she is having
an affair with another inhabitant of another hut

outside the birds sing in the evening rain
if only we could understand the song

** * **

motifs like a river run through
1611 Gabriel Rollenhagen’s *Book of Emblems*
the use of the window for procurement and seduction –
to drink a love potion opens a window
causing the natural essences of life to surge
foolish love I feel like a lemon
a third party
*Perch’io stresso mi strusi*
the clients only moderately drunk, only moderately vulgar
it’s the picture of an idea of society
husbands, marriage, clothes, wealth, comfort, vice
the rug from an original city
river valley market
the Volvo and the drink going to my head
Frans van Meris *The Soldier and The Prostitute*

***

Was Heidegger a Buddhist
did he copulate in the woods (*Holzwege*)
with a maiden of the woods
[do you remember her subsequent children and the
accompanying illustration]
there to contemplate being and perhaps a mushroom
do you remember the Woods
could I be a Buddhist?
I’d call you (you need mountains to yodel) my nymph of the woods
Did Heidegger suffer from nympholepsy
or was he too concerned with hammers and nails and wood for his
wooden hut
Did he have a brain room in his hut
Did he have rat poison
I must get back to you
I must return by the ship of the mind
*Chemins qui mènent nulle part*
(ways that lead nowhere) leading me on letting me go
if I yodel across mountain thyme
would you answer (those tracks which wind purposely from one point
to the next
the odd goat and goat herder looking on, the odd whistle from the
wolf, Mrs Woods
calling the sheep in)
we could retrace our steps through the woods which led nowhere
I could cook for you (wild mushrooms)
You could introduce your children and your husband
the woodcutter (are there trees in the Himalayan foothills)
* * *

Up in the mountains the Cave-Dwellers hoard cinnamon sticks in order to add flavour to Pygmy Stew
EVEN DWARFS STARTED SMALL
anything that breathes shouldn’t be eaten
I’m beginning to wonder about Natural History
The President’s dog has fleas (did I mean Pygmy Shrew)
The President has a Pygmy Shrew
Did Alexander Pope have a sex life
Noddy had big ears

* * *

He wanted her
but she was married
she made arrangements, assignations
seeing him at night
briefly, quickly
he mobbed her gently (text defective)

it was as dark as hell (said Constantine at Aptera)
one room for Demeter and one for Persephone

and of course they used iron to make bullets*
and bubble gum to keep the toilet seat up

she was such a beauty
that I kept her hidden
for years
my secret

*Hesiod attributes the forging of iron to Crete, to the Dactyli of Mt Ida
bubble gum was my solution

* * *
Claire Crowther

St Anne’s Apocrypha

i Joachim Emeritus

Here’s what Joachim wanted
her to find: a bent black gas tap, unused
for years, on a ledge beside the door. An old plastic watering can,
nozzle arched and long as the stem of a flower. No plants.

A twenty-one inch screen presenting
a document titled *The Wrong Sort of Electricity.*
The frayed lip of a grey wool-covered seat.
Two mugs, rimed with coffee in one long lip round each brim.

One decorated with a sketch of Einstein.
Awards laid, stacked or propped in frames.
A blackboard: pairs of rectangles, a set of five points,
The World Watching underlined, a heading OLD TABLE,
crossings out, drips of chalk.
A keyboard alone on a shelf. One
white box with four black lids stored inside.
A grey safari jacket hanging on the door. One window blinded,
the other open to a view of roof tops.
The phone slipping off the end of the desk, its wire dangling
into a half-open drawer. Lever Arch files labelled
Strain Balance.

ii St Anne’s Hard Hat

Maria put down her Dyson in the doorway. ‘Enough
of this. You’ll sack me if you get pregnant and by the way
you’re only fifty-three. Here, put this on, it’s cool.’
The scarf she handed her employer spread, a cloth
of morning glory; blackberry bramble. It covered the long
garden where Ornamental Crab, John Downie, fruited
red, yellow, along the post. Green dust had coated her
since morning. ‘And put this on.’ The new hard hat.

Anne strimmed along the chine. Finger bones of root
shook free from soil. ‘Inside, I feel twenty

but what can I look at and not feel barren?
Even these bitter apples have come to good.’

A surface differs from its interior physics. Her broken
nails glittered under grey leaves of wave.

iii Joachim’s Escape

The Astroturf was powdered with the trainer dust of physicists
who measure, under the Jura,

the half-life of elementary particles. ‘Come on, Dark Matter.’
Joachim, their captain, used his head –

thick. ‘Where are you, Exiles?’ Thirty years since cold chambers
of liquid hydrogen warmed up

yet on came the Bubble Chamber teams, red-shirted Kaons and Pions,
still chasing protons

the millisecond before it boiled, smacking electrons into negative action,
recording the infinitesimal lives of goals.

iv Honeymoon Outside the Golden Gate

The language was immaculate.
Joachim chatted to the driver: ‘Béarnais was a village then,
the prettiest. I would cycle right into Cern.’
White horses, like tall sheep, raced in their hundreds.
A plane hung on its vertical vapour trail above a chateau
with four square turrets and many ruined barns.
It was a revisitation in old age
of what had become angels, clouds of cherubim heads

St Anne’s Epigraph

while the sun instilled the night
in their window,
black glass
from a radiant, dangerous furnace,

and geese raced left to right like words,
each bird whirring
in its letter,
rewriting a written sentence:

Come back, day, un
broken.
Come
back day, unbroken.

Mary’s Bargain

Mary, in Anne’s spare room, huddled
under a hand-embroidered throw found
in a sale, crumpled beyond its physiology.

It cost pence due to the odd maths
of reduction – Fifty Percent! of the sale price,
which was Fifty Percent!! of the first Price Cut

plus An Extra Ten Percent Today!!!
She owned not one thing Anne would call exquisite.
She even calls her body art, casual stable keeper.
La Spagna

I

Musica ficta,
adding accidentals,
pauses awash

with green noise,

tree static foaming
in leaf shoals
mocking the dry stream.

The laptop drizzles
one passamezzo
after another,

tones of equal measure,

over the dry stream,
‘some parts upon a ground’,
where stones in stones are drowned.

II

Musica vera,
crossing the stream, trudging
round noon’s turrets,

all I see

here is being here,
purged with heat,
up by the old gate.

Covenants of space
pull me through alleys,
up steep cobbled paths,
first one step then a half,

above the old gate,
to audits made in stone
    of settlement’s full tones.

‘La Spagna’: dance tune for the lute, popular in the 16th century. *Musica ficta* (lit. ‘feigned music’) is music in which the performer introduces sharps and flats – often unnotated – to avoid unacceptable intervals. *Musica vera* (lit. ‘true music’) refers to passages which involve no such alterations.

---

**Unstoppable Languages**

Unstoppable languages
took their energies
down the bypass
    and out of the valley,
says the empty café by the bridge,
    hanging over the Allier;
their way of having their way,
    say the ruins marked ‘à vendre’.

The cadastre, parcelling land
    you either can’t find or can’t get to,
is a map of the commune
    only its ghosts could follow.

What got bounced out of the cart
    was people repeating
the same actions in the same place.
   What got left in the road

were explanations coming to an end
   in romances of the castle

overlooking hanging gardens
   where we see only matted gradins.

It’s about as likely
   these woolly, windblown ledges

were where the serpent
   the centurion saint’s killing in the church

would curl round the rock
   and sleep off midday.

Yes, explanations come to an end somewhere,
   and if weeds are flowers

in the wrong place then ruins
   are houses in the wrong time,

something that strangely pleases
   and upsets me every morning.
Carbon Dating

after Michael Winterbottom’s ‘9 Songs’

1.
Nothing much remains.
Carbon, trace of her

burn in me, is all. Exhale once,
twice, again, and it is gone

almost, hanging before my
furred mouth, a cloud

in which I see our residue,
entwining.

2.
Rock. Star. Elements
in any form, coming

together. Small talk like
radiation, reaction, the fight

against gravity. Her fingers
are glowsticks, their length

tastes of sweat, smoke, iron:
heavy metals.

3.
And in her, a universe and
an age. Why range only in

space? Whorled. Mine, she is,
and striated, so I trace her

history, bury myself in her –
take the tarnish off these

phrases in our translucent
newness.
Change is the reason my kids and I sleep. Then we’re satellites to no one, dreaming our lives as elsewhere – ourselves as fiction – as we dissolve into the schemes of others running towards the horizon to jump, to save ourselves from daytime’s common chances.

But, gradually, our bones have come to tell us of longings deep within – a hummingbird inside the flower; the figures in a showcase in a museum we dream wakes up at night – leaving us, wondering, how all of this began, and where it might be leading: Spring’s revenants; the nudes of summer; autumn’s bellowing posture; across the blade of winter’s keening knife?

A Picture Story

I.
Not all things start or end with an idea: things happen like a montage in a film for so long, then one day we wake to find our thoughts are up and out before us: out there on the road between the trees at the edge of the lake; out there in the world – the ceaseless flow beyond our windowpanes that shapes us to its needs – the complex drift of grasses in the rides, the river’s spine, the crimson thrill of dogwood in the snow,
the wild-ness that emerges at the edge
of what we know or what we think we know . . .

II.
We only know these few things: this unplanned
appointment called ‘a life’; the earth inside

the marrow of our bones; this prize beyond
our habits and beliefs; the fading ink

in the footnotes to our daydreams. For what
we seek in change is all the proof we need,

discovered where we least suspect to find it,
as we continue on our journey to and from

being. We’re only guests, just passing through
and always come back here before the end,

along the forest path that brings us back
inside these bricks built round the central hearth:

III.
this common space beyond our small conception
where we are called to things and rooted in

witness: the scent of dust on radiators,
woodworms leaving flight holes in the dresser,

a deathwatch beetle knocking in the beam –
the threads that knit our dreams together,

making room for hope and trust and change;
these last stones in the walls of memory.
Climbing

climbing on shoulders to view the street
the same now
retreating
but different then
hoisting him by his middle
watching beyond the waving hand
until after little years he slumps
then rises manifold
turned to the rejoicing
hiding something sweet behind himself
watching
crawling up the sides of his container
all joining hands
turning his way and that way
he sits so straight when the eye is upon him
falling backwards into his own arms
leading forwards and out

let us draw him in and put our hands together
swallow him on inspiration
hold our breath
and turn to face the eye in flight
we can look up at it and smile
look down
and inscribe his features on a piece of paper
grip the surface
and draw him with the wrong hand
then he will stare into space
and try to remember his next move
turn and we can rejoice in his memory
repeat it
an image of home

buttoned into our bodies
counting our hands and feet
we drift forwards
each other checking
for attempts to interlace our fingers
meeting ourselves
as we come the other way
and stop a moment
stop to watch the raising hand
stop to look away

bearing down on the back of his head
nothing changes after big years
we are still as small as we ever were
pulling at the lines on the blank surface
or as big but blinder
to the middle distance
passing the space from hand to hand
he has found a vantage point
leg raised to climb the next step up
nothing will stop us looking
wrapping ourselves around ourselves
and swinging forward and beyond
the same now
but arranged on different levels
bringing each other home
leading each other into the distance
a series of still moving bodies
along the street
looking over his shoulder
Drunk, I lie face-down on the grass
to watch the moon
with the nape of my neck
as you’d watch a girl move
through a crowded room
for so
long that when you try to say hello
you find your tongue
has lost its cunning
like the peeping tom who broke
a tell-tale rose’s back
or the lock
that swallowed its key
or the riverbed stone
(smooth as the nape of your neck)
that men in drink say fell
in love with the moon.
Rachel Lehrman

Virga

Alone on the front porch.
Voices from a late night game in the park.
The northwest sky scintillates and the east.

So well the body remembers
what the mind forgot.
If I could climb inside my thigh,
I’d find you, perched and quivering on the edge of the bed
the feline cut of your hair blending with mine.

Twice now, the storm began
on either side of my house,
wide-angled and moving away.

It’s so easy, in this dry space.
What I know, everyone knows—
but when I tell it to you, it’s strange.

Every night the storm continues.
Every night an attempt
at something new.

How do I explain:
when it’s too comfortable,
I never loved you.

Michelangelo said:
A block of marble
holds within itself
designs more beautiful
than the artist conceives.

My body
like marble, would mold to what you see.
Lit windows. Birds
screaming from their nests.

Suddenly, on my knees,
I sweep the ground
in a gesture
where long ago
you did not exist.

Note: *Virga* (noun): Streaks or wisps of precipitation that evaporate before reaching the ground.

**Prayer-Carving**

How much can you hold
before the— _oh so sweet it burns?_

Cold tea. A tilted chair.
My pointing finger against your pointed chin.

If all we spoke were flowers—
a peony instead of a tear.

There is no broken.
I came. I opened.
I danced golden leapfrog
into a shower of leaves.
I held my palms outward like prayer.

You leaned in from behind, warm shadow
breath disguised.

Lost islands on the sea floor
come to me.
philip kuhn

from At Maimonides’ Table

1. But if we explain these parables to him or if we draw his attention to their being parables, he will take the right road and be delivered from this perplexity.

imploded
   warriors
   stroma

as hillel the elder
watched a skull

float upon the face of the water

sewers opened
flow of raw art
vessels
cracked banks
rats crawled ashore

implex of reason
sprung from eagle of córdoba s
stain enlightened sky

scourge of tongue
broken star

gravelled words
refracted light
as
sacred scrolls

it were as if a dance
of two companies
cratered monochrome image over hebron
lugworm
leucoma
lenticular lesion

for the sound that lies in rhythms speech

last man orders from ship-soiled sailors arrived on shore

blood from the book
&
blood from the tongue

fent figments of flesh
erased their wounds
as angels of death dipped
reed-quivered fingers
into metallic alphabets
& gouged gods writ in
grift appointed universe

listen at the wandering ear
far greater than maimonides eye

shimon bar kokhbah
stepped out of jacob s covetous stall
man
of destiny
anointed
your glory
lies
beneath
white wippen waters star-studied earth

as the angel of history
skims
the deceitful brook
the river that failed
2. The Sage accordingly said that a saying uttered with a view to two meanings is like an apple of gold overlaid with silver filigree-work having very small holes.

broke this this spell
    this conatus of desire dissolved

this brocard pretension
    of brocatelle dream

this god of love
    is
        not
        this
god of love

but another love
    like this love
    from love
    over-flows

so
    abide not in love
        but be in love

not this love of singular reason
with its
    multiplicities of shapes
        figures
    & identities of shadow

nor this love
    lost in
    ironic gaps of reason
with cunning intellects
    of resplendent logic
denied
so
be not that self
    nor that other self
        wrapped in loves attributes
            with its parables
                sheathed
                    in orichalceous mountains of gold

or that other self
    as pale as silver tried in a crucible seven times

or that self
    that spins webs through inextricable distances of time
        with love fashioned from in-dwellings of love abandoned
    or
    that self
        inflected through an interstitial difference of sound
            with its lustres of grace
                trapped between the visible and indivisible
                    the sheaf of a tongue
        the pearl of a tear

note

These are the first two sections of in the fields of megiddo, book one of at maimonides table. This long textured poem, which takes as its starting point Shlomo Pines’ translation of Maimonides’ The Guide of the Perplexed (University of Chicago Press, 1963), suggests a series of meditations on some central themes in Jewish history—exile, persecution, diaspora, memorialisation, & the messianic impulse—read through the Babylonian Talmud and Tanakh (the Old Testament). The “eagle of córdoba” is a reference to Maimonides; “the deceitful brook”, “scourge of tongue” & “broken star” are linguistic & rabbinical-biblical references to Shimon bar Kokhbah’s “messianic” uprising, brutally crushed by the Romans at Bethar in 135 CE (AD).
Jill Magi

ATLAS

skeleton at the edge of the village presides over
valley here is the female pelvis
again more open than some
skin pulled or still attached drawn
for contrast

skeleton rests his hand on a skull placed on the laboratory table
implements of science the dead study the dead some
more open than and well-lit

LOT

mounted
alone statue-look look away and horizon
cast caste clay claw

state of paralysis a memorial just so
or liberty ultimate limb limb
limb to hold a sword or trigger flag
survey and
anthem

a posture
Susana Araújo

Closed-Circuit Televisions

If he touched my hand again
the breasted skin by the knuckles
would exhale back the grains
and black birds would come
to reclaim the tenses
I mixed up with a fork
like the first rice

I know that scissors of steel
cut through and across the skies
seam stresses of
pitiless paper dolls
multiplied into thousands
of siamese trabeculae, lost
souls of past perfect sand
nothing other in my hands

In the shores of banality and bad dreams
travelling with the shape of things, surface
along with millions attached to their chains
from lakes of desked death in foreign telephone centres
speaking English in tongues too far, fast and late
while we sleep, while respect is a fifty pound fine
to dress up the father, the mother and the food
while the foam of holy health will rule
edify and tell apart

So if they divide green heart and lungs
already apart
I will breathe again and against will
breath is an empty hand
which will not feed but will call back the blind
Cormorants nesting on close circuit televisions in Ovingdean.
Mournful Delay

reclamation & reconstruction  subsiding into night
revels in abundance  amplified morning light
neurotransmitter chemicals  muttering paranoid threats
most likely sued for libel  no friends  no girls  no pets

airways over the city  not a flying man
the world has little room for him  or new adventure games
flat mundane description  collaboration has begun
work leads to mutation  authorship transformed

indulgent & expensive  black holes on the stage
garish neon lettering  photos on the page
the media our salvation  nothing hard & fast
investigate the process  separate sheep & goats

can sound put things together?  what is going on?
confused on several levels  translate all the poems
early literary history  got drunk  never looked back
things found in a junkyard  lines from other books

Not The Original Ending

disorder threatens order  kind of presupposed
all is true not interesting  however much we know
blend of corruption & promise  attention to design
cosmetic counter specific  intelligent disdain

depart as quietly as possible  ever so eager to learn
fabricated in the basement  disappointed man
gratuitous foreign diction  happiness out of town
in situations of extreme stress  he lights out on his own
textual experiment & shock the idea of poetic sign
being locked in is unthinkable too many words around
mind can move & loop & stretch city’s liquid form
mystification got away it’s now a darker world

underdogs in the catastrophe zone angels sometimes win
universities that encode formalised extremes
versions of the story inherited status & power
we need less institutions more reasons to write home

Open Studio

cold brilliance & glittering eyes humanity uncertain
space between silence & silence a stumbling block to all
underlining lots of phrases too polite & too restrained
reading other people’s work much more could be said

strong words in a wooden box mostly apt & true
considering relocation give me a year or two
hibernation or chronic doldrums frightening at the time
good to have a next-door-nurse this how I am

enviably large studio space known through photographs
some engaging encounters people wandering in
avoiding overdrafts for a year walking to restaurants
biting & snapping at the world not too ob-scure or -tuse

not sure what the portrait was nail the lid down hard
vision blocking tractors heavenly choir behind
designed to push the boat out sentences acute
the first one was an interim this one is the last
Catherine Hales

in the name of

& when faith seems so much like a failure
to live & the procession moves on to finish
fireworks of course & the damage left

sticks & stones may break my remember
but words can never places we’d put up with
the mind’s collateral taken together alone

in a yurt somewhere savouring how sand
scours at the subtle lies we live by bones
aren’t even the half of it on the march

narratives

out of terracotta hills free-wheeling down to dry valleys even

roads villages where facades conceal centuries
of untold bruising the normal rigmarole

we’re too preoccupied to notice whizzing through
sniffing the earthiness up ahead the darkening

a sprung gust upsets our equilibrium
but not for long here’s a rustic taverna chianti

& pasta & postcards sitting it out while the storm
fractures a perfect day until we can carry on
Dry commotion
a cast of bones

what?
would you burn
shadows?

evening lights the fires
so under the northern star
sign of endurance
the inner life opens
the characters line up

you
the first time
by a wrought-iron gate
among laurels
among yews

echoes
the afterlife

on the water’s surface
sunstrikes
gathering
NOW
Six Poems

lamplight falls into no hand.
in the book a face cools
shaved off by a hair
as a second
shaves a zero off the time.

in this book one cannot but read
not of someone’s path around the lamp.
no lamp nor the sun but an eye
revolves there.
it reads with its hands
the tracks which the light leaves behind.

* * *

cut the pages then glued them back together,
never disturbing a line.
ate a cigarette end not his own,
spit thrice into open doors.
took leave.
said this but then turned back,
never said it but asked to pass it on: that’s all right,
thought it would be like new.
in the dark you’re the same.
remember the gray sky, extinguished thread, and
i shivered as i waited.
forgot, drank water, table stained: somebody been smoking.
wrought hair from the bulb with no light,
on the pillow, to scrape the cheek with.

dim; were sitting, i think so, yes.
catch another’s leg on the edge,
are you joking? “for the night is thick.”
listen, all right, lie, lie, but at least with feeling:
words got soaked, couldn’t speak.
covered a dry wine stain –
ashamed, that’s what you are, or maybe afraid.

i still have batwing shadows about my head,
that’s after that flight, been spinning, head swimming.
let’s take the fire exit? no, you say
no, no, no, i can’t. you be the one to live.
me, i’m kind of not here. dust.

go shake it out, though not into a bag,
i’ll sit here for a while. anyway you can’t see in this dark
how last night they burnt stumps.
cream at the cut, cremation,
as they sipped, no, snipped the dairy plums.
never-ending game

his outward form in the iris
height girth & colour of hair
skin & eyes
a green like deep in the forest
sparkling more than the canals of suzhou
fingers like summer storms
& filing all this into memory
trying out everything taking everything
like tobacco & coffee with milk
& his tongue beating in agreement
double double
using every centimetre
for the great music of our bodies

then abandoned
then cornered by daylight
then lobbing names into the dark
then parcels arriving news
ransom – the complete folksy bit –
nothing helps
opening her veins to lethe she flows
with warm litres
now her eyes peeling her eyes
leaking away from his memory
images that no longer mirror or hold
anything i.e. from his brain
& hers removing final doubts
(cries)
carefully paring muscles from bone
eradicating bumps & dips
carving her body into 1000
now inhibitions disappear
under the knife pieces of heart
into a little red box
from Solaris

Suddenly I respect the ancestors
quiet soul that wakes up
wants to end up with the minimal
bundle of loose ends that shine
only by its extremes, optical fiber
this universe appears as minimum stars
in their travel across time
it all dazes and goes dark
and planetarium recycles its functions
a bundle of functions the functionaries
the waffle and rennet of their river lectures
and a gladdened beach
only by lust for being happy
where do loose ends end up?
how do they let out, put together the lane
or where does it start, oldness of time
and loose ends never end
we wish to silence that try
or leave the wire naked,
but, is there music in that wire?
do we find love in discontinuity?
voices in my head scream
with conviction and noise
is a mirror in the pavement
there’s no pose or potion
it all softens
diminishes
occupies
sadness does follow its line of immensity
disappears
gives up fear to happiness
senses the asthma of the abyss
as a love asthma
it cannot be diluted
brain burns
the humor of the dark
settles the soul

* * *

not even weeds in the ocean, oh yes, the disaster
nuptials that twinkle, sway, unthread
what comes out of, what becomes extra
wakens over the pledge
and wheat bread:
the offering
the marital state
some of the incense love
all that is sensed is intense
a mouthful of asthma
gladness with a loud crash
I get dizzy
some of the conscription chases me
to be born later or to be born too much
it all anchors to me absurd in the past
a layer sustains me
there’s a huge centre of this summer
a sea in the centre of the earth
a stone far over
isosceles
buzzes the wine, white, mantle
rummages around like a wave, a breathe
burn from the centre of stomach
moss skin
extra demential this terrible territory
snow field

* * *
Notes on contributors

**Susana Araújo** is originally from Lisbon, but now lives in Brighton and teaches in the Dept. of American Literature at the University of Sussex.

**Paul Batchelor** lives in Northumberland, and is working on a PhD on the poetry of Barry MacSweeney at Newcastle University. His first collection will appear shortly from Bloodaxe. A chapbook, *To Photograph a Snow Crystal*, appeared from Smith/Doorstop in 2006.

**Gottfried Benn** (1886-1956) was one of the most significant German poets of the first half of the 20th century. The poems translated here are all drawn from his early expressionist work published before and during World War One.

**Linda Black** is an artist and poet who lives in London. She won the 2006 New Writing Ventures Poetry Award, and has a pamphlet titled *the beating of wings* (Hearing Eye, London, 2006).

**Andy Brown** lives in Exeter and teaches Creative Writing at the University of Exeter. His latest collection is *Fall of the Rebel Angels, Poems 1996-2006* (Salt Publishing, 2006). A collaborative volume with John Burnside is also due.

**Claire Crowther** is working on a long poem project ‘Link’ for a PhD at Kingston University. The poem explores the conflicts between the cultural expectations and real lives of twentieth-century grandmothers, and the work published here is drawn from it, as was the text published in issue 67/68. Shearsman Books published her first collection, *Stretch of Closures*, in 2007.

**Carrie Etter**’s poems in this issue come from a manuscript in progress, *Divining for Starters*. She lives in Bradford-on-Avon and enjoys blogging at carrieetter.blogspot.com.

**Sir Richard Fanshawe** (1608-1666) was an archetypal Renaissance man. Fluent in several languages, he served at the English Embassy in Madrid in the 1630s, and was Ambassador to Portugal, and then Spain, under Charles II whose marriage to Catherine of Braganza he also negotiated. He was a fine poet in his own right, but is best remembered for his remarkable translation of *The Lusiads* by Camões, undertaken while he was under house arrest during the Cromwellian interregnum. The only modern edition of his work is the *The Poems and Translations of Sir Richard Fanshawe* (2 vols., ed. P. Davidson, OUP, 1997). His translations of Góngora, Hurtado de Mendoza and the Argensola brothers will appear in the anthology *Spanish Poetry of the Golden Age, in contemporary English translations*, due from Shearsman in February 2008.

**Patricia Farrell** is a poet, dancer and artist, based in Liverpool.

**Romina Freschi** was born in Buenos Aires in 1974, where she still lives. She teaches at the University of Buenos Aires and has published four collections, most recently *Villa Ventana* and *El-Pe-yO* (both 2003). She edits the review

Anna Glazova is a Russian poet, born in Dubna in 1973, and is currently working on a doctorate on Celan’s translations of Mandelstam. She studied architecture at the Moscow Architectural Institute and the Technische Universität Berlin, and took her MA at the University of Illinois at Chicago, before moving to Northwestern University for her PhD. Her first poetry collection, Pust’ i Voda, was published in Moscow in 2003.

Luis de Góngora y Argote (1561-1627) was born in Córdoba and was one of the most significant poets of Spain’s siglo de oro, or Golden Age. Creator of an inimitable baroque style, his work fell out of fashion after his death, but was reappraised by Spain’s Generation of ’27 in the 20th Century; he is now regarded as one of the very greatest of Spanish poets.

Mark Goodwin works as a community poet in Leicestershire. He has published in a wide range of magazines, and his first full-length collection, Else, will be published by Shearsman in 2008.

Catherine Hales grew up in Surrey and, after various stops and jobs, now lives and works in Berlin as a freelance translator. Her poems and translations have appeared in several magazines, in print and online.


Anna Hoffmann was born on the island of Rügen, Germany, in 1971 and now lives with her partner and son in Berlin. Her collections include Pandoras Box (Parasitenpresse 2004) and Rote Magie (‘Red Magic’, Corvinus Presse 2007).

David Huerta is a poet, journalist, critic and translator. He was born in Mexico City in 1949, the son of a fine mid-century poet, Efraín Huerta. His first book appeared in 1972, and he has published regularly ever since. In 2006 he was awarded the prestigious Xavier Villaurrutia Prize. The translations here will appear in a book from Copper Canyon Press in the USA in 2008.

Luisa A. Igloria is an Associate Professor at Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA. Originally from Baguio City in the Philippines, Luisa is an eleven-time recipient of the Carlos Palanca Memorial Award for Literature in three genres (poetry, non-fiction, and short fiction) – the Philippines’ highest literary distinction. She has published nine books including In the Garden of the Three Islands (Moyer Bell/Asphodel, 1995), and Trill & Mordent (WordTech Editions, 2005).

David Kennedy lives in Sheffield, where he edits The Paper and publishes Cherry on the Top Press. His latest poetry collection is The Devil’s Bookshop
(Salt, 2007). He has also recently edited a volume of essays, *Necessary Steps*, for Shearsman Books.

**Anna Khasin** was born in Russia and lives in the U.S.

**Philip Kuhn** lives on Dartmoor. The text published here comes from a long poem, *maimonides table*, which has recently appeared in a limited edition from itinerant press, isbn 978-1906322-01-4.

**Rachel Lehrman** is an American poet who now lives and works in London, where she directs Nomadic-Collaborations, an international team of artists dedicated to promoting communication and collaboration among different artistic disciplines, places, and cultures. She has recently completed a PhD in the Communicative Dynamics of Collaborative Art at Royal Holloway.

**Tony Lopez** is Professor of Poetry at the University of Plymouth. His most recent collection is *Covers* (Salt Publishing, 2007); a collection of essays titled *Meaning Performance* has also recently appeared from Salt. With Anthony Caleshu, he recently co-edited the collection of essays *Poetry and Public Language* for Shearsman Books.


**Jill Magi** lives in Brooklyn, New York., and her next collection *Torchwood* will be published by Shearsman Books in January 2008. The poems in this issue are drawn from a manuscript entitled *Compass & Hem*.

**Sophie Mayer** has work in a number of magazines, and a chapbook *above / ground* in Canada, where she was living for several years. As Sophie Levy she was joint author of *Marsh Fear/Fen Tiger* (Salt, 2002) with Leo Mellor.

**George Messo**'s *Entrances* was published by Shearsman Books in 2006. His translation of Ilhan Berk’s *Madrigals* is scheduled for publication in early 2008 by Shearsman Books. He is working at present in Saudi Arabia.

**Mary Michaels** lives in London. Her most recent publications are *Assassins* (Sea Cow, 2006), a poetry chapbook, and a book of prose fictions *My Life in Films* (The Other Press, 2006).


**Mark Schafer** lives in Cambridge, Mass, and has translated a good deal of Mexican poetry, above all *Migrations* by Gloria Gervitz for Shearsman in 2004.

**Janet Sutherland** lives in Lewes. Her first collection, *Burning the Heartwood* was published by Shearsman Books in 2006.