

Otata 14

February 2017

otata 14 (February 2017)

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Tokonoma image: Concord battling discord, 8th century Psychomachia of Prudentius London, British Library MS Cotton Cleopatra C. VIII, Canterbury, Christ Church. Public domain.

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— *from otata's bookshelf* —

David Miller

FROM LATE TO EARLY

Tokonoma



Ian Storr

Dawn on the veld
a coal train clatters
through birdsong

Cascade pool . . .
half out of the coolness
frogs with claws

Colours

lilac the guide that brought me here
green the road back home

red the hammer's work and blood
a shelter blue the bearer

gold the gathering stitch
orange fruit to share

encountered but silent black
white dazzling light

Tom Montag

Within the wheel of stones
I hold my empty heart.

All around I see them,
the elders watching over.

This is not a dream.

The silence
of the hawk,
not the owl's.

The light in
his eyes, not
the distance.

Suddenness
in the dark

flecks of fire
like wolf eyes

rising to the stars,
my breath.

The light fades as
evening evens

the darkening
sky. All things glow

beneath starlight.
A gentle wind,

the trees murmur.
Day closing up.

Nothing is lost,
nothing wasted.

Sometimes death

comes before

understanding.

vincent tripi

not just path to get back Indian Summer

Angiola Inglese

fog —
contours and colors
come and go

the morning glory —
a sunset breath
on the hot wall

moonlit night —
a fallen leaf,
a leaf

leafless branches —
written on the gate:
wet paint

John Levy

Anxiety

The word
sat
on a see-saw with anx high

on one side
facing the grounded
iety; x nervously

eyed
i, that heavy beginning
of the denominator.

Title

When I've imagined being an ant
it's always daytime. So just now

being an ant at night is a new ant
life for me and I look up

at the moon. I can carry something gigantic
in the moonlight too.

Sometimes I leaf through a poetry book
looking for a short poem. Sometimes
there aren't any.

Johnny Baranski

empty diary the lines on a convict's face

once
forever meant
forever
yellow dahlias
turning brown

the woman
in the see-through blouse
blossoming cherries

Marina Bellini

alarm ringing
the dog turns onto
its left side

winter blues -
the *Experience Japan* flyer
on the desk

Kim Dorman

Sod roof in an albumen print
portraits of pioneers

Hundreds of bats un Waugh Street bridge
Guano & mountain laurel

All the sharp, high-frequency chirps

We pause beneath a cottonwood Mackerel clouds
A circle of trees where the mocking bird sings

The matter-of-fact is poetry

Summer sun

On dirty
Glass

Small birds atop fence posts

Tommy used to say

“It’s a dream come through”

The sun goes down

Reflected n a neighbor’s window

Susie in the kitchen making pizza

Talks about cats in Istanbul

Men live die

In the Desert Migration

Give up hope
Choose instead

What is

Headless heartless
Hero

All day in the sun

Nights

Without water

You said it yourself

“Wounded”

And sanity the roadside weed

Terminal condition
We sail'd with

Disease carriers
Some

To build port cities
Camps

Great bridges roads
Across a continent

Wilderness
Home

Houston, 2016

On this night
of my 64th birthday
I lie in bed
sleepless
with a broken leg

Austin, 2009

We steep tea
stand on the balcony
Quiet when
the deer come

In the east the
sky darkens
The air is still

I see your brown eyes
& light green
blouse
Feel the weight
of years
slip away

Even before
sunset
Venus glows
above the junipers

All the years
Sunlight passing through our bodies

Inventory

Pigeon, hawk,
grackle,
bee, butterfly

Seduced by the slow
world going by
I seek to inhabit

Whittle the day down to this

What we seek to recover we cannot find

Michelle Tennison

nosebleeds
& their mental
equivalent

kingfisher when the elements disperse

rose on
win ly
dow blue
pat show
tern ing

(Ed. note: Michelle's collection *murmuration* can be ordered from her site <https://alitjellyfish.com>, and there is plenty else worth reating there.)

Mike Montreuil

two days with nothing

left to say on blank paper
yet everything said to them

the women in my life
the women who've become my sisters
the women I'm afraid to touch

the mountains rise up
almost vertically
framing a narrow valley

Raven knows the trick
for every tourist photo
feathers puffed up for God

Jack Galmitz

Driving all night
on an empty highway
the Scorpion overhead

Now the sea wears fatigues
& the sky a flag pin
so it begins

Sledding
into the highway
is one way

Peter Newton

the surf says shhhhhh
until I can
catch my breath

zen temple
the silence
sold out

year of the rooster
to say nothing
used to equal death

first valentine
her loopy letters
skipping home

Valentina Meloni
(nanita)

I'm crying — not for you
I'm just slicing
a pair of onions

Empty nests, empty nests —
only the echo of lost chirps
between branches despoiled

A funny robin
watching me curious —
a glass between us

Over the Calycanthus
a flower sprouts wings – let's fly
little wren, let's fly!

Roasted chestnuts
just inside the coat pockets
to warm cold hands

Reflected on the lake surface
the red dragoon — imprisoned
in the dragonfly

(Ed. note: Translations from Italian by the poet.
Please visit the poet's website — www.valentinameloni.com)

Clayton Beach

noonday sun hanging low in the sky she tells it slant

his compliments diamond glitter in the air snowblind

white iterations of leaf upon leaf glazed concrete

mercury blue mist cries so far away from sea

Maria Laura Valente

baby in my bed –
even winter nights
are short

cough echoes –
autumn is colder
in her tiny bed

first fever –
late summer's stars
are so far

white noise –
ocean depths
in her dreams

for my parents

scratched vinyl-
my parents' vintage dance
in my memory

orange peel -
the unexpected hug
from my father

Sonam Chhoki

Whom the gods forgot

The Brahmaputra
gulps the full moon.
In the silver undertow
a girl, a goat, a couple awaiting
their first child's birth, float.

Unclasped of dissolving earth
they fan out and swirl.
The sky etched
in their unseeing eyes.

Accustomed to pain

How was I to know when I clasped your hand alive with love our
time together would be fleeting? Now, the dark holds me in speech-
less sorrow.

shadows mounting gourd vines on the temple ruin

This hunger for elsewhere

Wandering the night in the mountains, a monk clad in gold rides out of the fog on a black mare. He holds out a hand; I climb behind him and see the hole in his back.

*frozen waterfall
the lammergeier's shrill whistle
echoing in the ravine*

stars veining the sky ...
the palm reader couldn't tell
our fates were tied

rain dark window
darker still the slope, where
the cedar once grew

Grief is another country

Little one,
You were that special prayer
at the lighting of each butter lamp.
You were the dream
I was loathe to wake from.
How I wish
you were never born

Frances Angela

day moon
holding the hand
of the woman on the bridge

infant school the scent of the woman no longer there

her voices that winter mother's broken gramophone

laddered stockings mother still dancing back home

night rain
the knots
in mother's gold chains

the cemetery
i pass each day
rambling roses

insomnia from my window the empty swings

'late' her hand print on my face

homeless
the puppy tied
to his waistband

early dark
space on the field
for one more crow

licking rain drops
from his bowl
the beggars dog

dawn tide
three chambermaids
link arms

womens' prison toys spill out of a trunk

luminous stars
i stand in his room
in the dark

her empty glass
the sound of mother
leaving

unripe orchard
the age
of the cobweb

nearly teatime just enough time to scooter back

day room she calls on Christ

hometown park
the gravel
still in my knee

late october the rope swing slips in to the river

Elisa Allo

snowy beach -
the thoughts wreck
in this white

snowy night -
a silent song
inside and out

crescent moon -
between snow butterflies
bamboo dances

Jacob Kobina Ayiah Mensah

a feather falls within itself shortly

thunder rolling into something else now

suddenly
a corner

in my life

thickly
overgrown

with grass

this foreign area
is a few days
after i left

stillness has fallen on stillness for too long

i am hosting the lost gull in my absence

rain
bubbles
reflect
themselves
in my thought

spring
to
spring
slow
ly

distance
e
d a w n
r
s

drinking the sound of distant waterfall as long as i can hear

a star burning its way briefly

that wind like a butterfly spreading its wings

Tom Sacramona

newt
stays in the paddle
shadow

dry riverbed the river of mushrooms

mountainside
the light reaches
inside

first and last mix
in the lamb's belly
frost

Carolyn Hall

answering to "auntie" this night of stars

even owlets looking at me through mother's eyes

he said / she said --
through a glass-top table
the spider's underside

laurel berries these shortening years

long strides of anger bitter vetch

deep autumn
having tried on
so many hats

dead twenty years
she has something more to say
intermittent rain

oblivious
to her own beauty
winter pears

a gopher
mostly out of its hole
first spring day

Christina Sng

in complete darkness
our cat watching
a cat

easterly
our son flies in
with his son

daffodils
in the still grass
whirlwind

Pravat Kumar Padhy

ink spots the colour of cleanliness

seashore
I also add
my recitation

cold breeze
the dog stares
towards east

Marta Chocilowska

market town
in the small house window
a birdcage

quarrel —
a horse chestnut's fall
breaks the silence

exam day . . .
the horse chestnut trees
blooming white

