

otata 19 (July 2017)



otata 19 (July 2017)

<https://otatablog.wordpress.com/>

Copyright © 2017 by the contributors.

Cover image: Pompeii, House of Menander.

johnmartone@gmail.com

CONTENTS

[Tokonoma — from Karen Wilkin on Morandi 4]

tigz de palma	5
Tom Montag	6
Donna Fleischer	9
Mark Young	10
Sheila Murphy	15
Giselle Maya	17
Christina Sng	20
Tom Sacramona	21
Elisa Bernardinis	23
Peter Newton	26
Alegria Imperial	29
Sonam Chhoki	30
Kyle Hemmings	35
John Levy	36
Nicholas Klacsanzky	42
Adrian Bouter	43
Angiola Inglese	44
Elisa Allo	46
Margherita Petriccione	47
Eufemia Griffo	48
Antonio Mangiameli	49
David Read	50
Stephen Toft	51
vincent tripi	52
Angela Giordano	53
Jennifer Hambrick	55
Jack Galmitz	57
Clayton Beach	58
Elmedin Kadric	59
Pravat Kumar Padhy	61
LeRoy Gorman	62
Lucia Cardillo	64

TOKONOMA

Morandi's themes and, to a large extent, his style were essentially established by the time he was thirty. For the rest of his life as an artist, he remained committed to exploring a deliberately limited territory, in a nearly obsessive investigation of perception that produced images at once remarkable for their repetitiveness and for their subtle variation. But for all the conscious narrowing of his field of inquiry, for all the rigorousness of his self-imposed restrictions, he had no single way of making a picture. It often seems as though he were testing the limits of representation, now vigorously modeling and separating forms from one another and from their setting, now translating forms and setting aside into broad, uninflected passages of paint. It even appears that each new picture, each new set of visual phenomena, no matter how familiar, elicits from him a different touch, a different way of orchestrating color. In fact, the more closely we look at Morandi's art, the more images we examine, the more individual each picture seems.

— Karen Wilkin, *Giorgio Morandi* (1997)

tigz de palma

lizard in the sun
in the lizard

bishop's lace sown between the chaff

flush
new sparrows ascending
ancient olive

lamb shear frolic in the wheat sun

garden rose
wild in the sky
i think of you

Tom Montag

Held like
water

cupped in
the hands,

this light.

Not so much an
omen as ordinary

sky with crows.

Sky and water press a line of grey horizon.

The crisp air
here, where
the world ends,

where the birch
knocks wood
in wind,

where the pine
sings.

Blue hills
and eagle.

The sky waits
and I wait

and the whole
world is blessed.

If I were
a hermit-

poet in
the mountains,

how would this
be different?

Another day
chasing loss.

Who brings
this darkness

who can wait
for morning?

God's name is silence.
Why do you ask?

Donna Fleischer

on removing the headstone

two deaths and
a bop on the head

friend, dear and new

i may be old but
we be new

questions, questions

Sting on the
way in is
fine, but how

do I feel about
Tina Turner grunt
& groaningly

pacing my
exit from the
shopping mall?

The

allocation of
energy

is easy

when there is

no energy
left to

allocate.

fortuitous onslaught

Aleister Crowley &
his deviant ways ex-

emplified the greatness
of the Roman Empire.

I. II. XIII.

Intrigue, or the

application of
sympathetic magic
to unsympathetic

sights & sites.

Arabica / is grown / in high altitudes

An exotic tau neutrino—
two men, one woman,
& a very happy ending—

has your name all over it,
just like the Barenaked
Ladies' classic song.

So little

happened
there, he
gave the
frogs

names
& lived
vicariously
through them.

The Tao of mixed herbs

You can fill
out an online
questionnaire
HERE & find
out what your
personal formula
of mixed herbs is...

& you can order
it for just \$15, all pre-
mixed up for you, too!
Plus, your video guide to
DIY Feng Shui is also here!

plaything politics

“Let me
just slip
into some-

thing more
cynical,”
he said.

Noted during Part 1 of No Direction Home

Looking fey, gay,
Bob Dylan singing

Mr Tambourine
Man, not like a

Rolling Stone but
like an ingénue.

Sheila Murphy

half tones early day
play by ear light through branches
earth still revolving

a handsome woman
fragile beneath silk muumuu
assertiveness training

divot of the smooth
warm earth carved out of depth
sologamy for now

tap shoes, the gun under
achievement, nicknamed stuff
as if and only if

cozy flannel night
a flicker from the warmth
of threadbare sky

FINDING THE MAGIC

wind and rain cat and i wonder where the birds go to keep dry

walking slowly each morning reveals a new bird a new plant

torn by high wind on water the moon calms whole again

shimmer of bumble bee wings iridescent milky way

step cautiously watch for the green tips of wildflowers

stippled with green the earth after spring rain

painting moonbeams on the pond basho's smile

willow catkins on water how can one not wish

potato planting feeling at peace right here on earth

serval cat

spring dawn
the greening of the land
makes me rise

raptors counted
my grandson's voice
from far away

through high grasses
we reach the spring
a chance touching of hands

my heart
goes out to the Chartreux
stray cat

summer sky
a nest of leaves clings
to the high poplar

Christina Sng

hovering
over a watchful koi
dragonfly

August rain
beneath the umbrella tree
a dragonfly and I

Tom Sacramona

daybreak
migrating flocks
where the stars were

not knowing
how to eat a pear
the light surrounds it

bud
rendered in
pencil

the sculptress
never touching
her own hands

high ceiling
the artist
and his clay

Elisa Bernardinis

colouring
the April rain
her pink coat

*pioggia d'aprile
colorata dalla sua
mantella rosa*

my nude arms
covered again
spring rain

*di nuovo copro
le braccia nude – pioggia
di primavera*

shining wind
I sit in the old garden
with new eyes

*vento brillante –
siedo nel vecchio giardino
con occhi nuovi*

summer memories –
wisteria petals
falling into the sea

*ricordi estivi –
i petali del glicine
cadono in mare*

in my sky
clouds without destination
iris in bloom

*nel mio cielo
nuvole senza meta –
iris in fiore*

freeway
the red of a rose
rushing through me

*strada veloce –
il rosso di una rosa
mi attraversa*

I let my hair down
darkness falls
on the oleanders

*sciolgo i capelli –
scende l'oscurità
sugli oleandri*

lifting his crutch
an old man greets me
summer wind

*con la stampella
un vecchio mi saluta –
vento d'estate*

hush
a scarecrow fixed distant mountains

*silenzio
lo spaventapasseri fissa i monti lontani*

(Ed.: Vi raccomando di seguire il blog di elisabernardinis.com)

Peter Newton

early summer
the skiff anchored
to itself

intermittent wipers
the whimsical god
of raindrops

the river bends
a sand bar's invitation
to ground myself

migrating herd an amoeba slides across the landscape

taking command
of the wind
a boy with chimes

awake to the oriole's splash of orange

the beach
where I learned to swim
chewed to nothing

Ouija board
in the attic
alone with the dead

scent markers
south by the lilac
their path to the hive

a soft spot
the old orchard's
return to order

Alegria Imperial

micro-stories

torn off pages in garbage sacks propped up in stoops human tweets

found among sparrows bleeding lips

in her shoe a mother her rose hips pried for truth

the empty stroller I want to understand pollen wind

soaked to the ribs pulled out of a grocery bag a corset

savaged, says the gardener burying fallen leaves

More deadly than hemlock
Patterned silence
in the larch grove.
A face
flickers out of the shadow.
The eyes,
empty of colour and light,
The mouth,
pulsing red-black with rage
to burn words

to tracelessness.

The Third Eye

A blind widower slowly turning his prayer wheel,
A motherless child with a russet halo of matted hair,
A woman writhing in the throes of another karmic birth,
A corpse swathed in the sacred cloth
In all these
The Third Eye sees
The Clear Light

Beware of Knowing

He is waiting in a yak-hide boat on the moon-glazed glacier lake.
'How can we ride the ice?' I ask.
'Your insatiable need to make sense, to map the world and glean meaning
from everything!' He cries.
I hesitate at the frozen rim.
He loops a silver rope around Orion's belt and sails out of the night

harp of wind
blue pine branches rise
like butterfly wings

Sorcery in Spring

Weary of carrying this longing around I approach the house. Your favourite
jasmine climbs over the dark and locked doorway. The only sound in the
unpeopled street is a dog howling in the fog.

winter returns
wantonly in late May
bonfire of red roses in snow

When is it enough?

ack home from hospital. As if ordered by someone, the hawk cuckoo's incessant cry, 'who's in the cowshed?' plays in my head. Out the window where once lime green rice seedlings glowed in the sun, bulldozers plough the terraces for the Expressway.

family shrine
cobwebs on the Lotus-born Guru
scorched by butter lamps

singing bowl
echoing in the temple ruins
a coppersmith barbet's call

susurrus of rain
in the bamboo thicket
a cobra sheds its skin

border control
yellow-eyed babblers gather

both sides of the checkpoint

spring offering
crow fledglings drown out
the dawn chant

equinox dawn
breaking the silence
a barbet's fevered call

why do
the yellow-eyed babblers
nest in the bamboo thicket

where the cobra visits

Venice nightfall
ripples of silence
after the last vaporetto

Kyle Hemmings

she collects milk bottles
and stray cats
offers them to the invisible son

3 by Alberto of Diego

Alberto Giacometti and his brother
Diego lived in Paris. Diego
posed for Alberto. There are three
sculptures by Alberto
of Diego at The Nasher Sculpture Garden in
Dallas. In each Diego
appears like a grenade of
self exploding inside the
impenetrable yet flexing
metal sack of almost face.

*Three Last Lines by Laurie Duggan
Plus Three First Lines by Edwin Denby*

I hang by my toes upside down in the trees.
inflating this camouflaged blimp, my poem.
across a map of blue skies and faithless love.

A child singing to itself in the sunlight
Small paintings seen, I cross the Park
Grey blue ridge, grey green leafage

at minus miles
per hour Giorgio
Morandi

If I Made the Tree

If I made the tree into a person
first I'd decide if I wanted a companion
then the gender
and where I'd place it, and the depth

of its roots, the width of the reach

If I made the tree into a person
I wouldn't want to limit
its responses to
seasons
so it must be deciduous, which when

one traces the word's
roots, leads back to
cadere, Latin, to fall

into my arms
into my mind
my dreams and out
away from any my that
restrains

If I made the tree into a person
I'd betray how shallow I really am
though that
wouldn't stop me

Champ

I was about 27 and
working in the small
Seattle movie theater, alone

behind the counter. That
was 38 years ago and
a boy (14?) came out during

the movie, looked
through the glass at
what he could buy and

seemed to
luxuriate
in the choice. He

had something remarkable about him, not
over-confidence exactly and
not swagger, but

something that made me, for
the one and only time, address
a stranger as “Champ.” I forget

what else I said. What I do
recall is, in reply to whatever I’d
said (probably something like “What

would you like, Champ?”) he
casually, and as if for the nth time, answered, “It’s
funny, everyone

calls me Champ.” He and I
both seemed
to understand why.

Talking with a Spider

Pablo Neruda wanted to. At least that's what he wrote in a poem, that he wanted to have a talk with a spider. As for me? I don't want one. But if I were forced to talk with a spider I'd prefer to do an interview rather than have an informal back-and-forth. Perhaps it would be something like this:

Q: Where did you learn everything you know?

A: From my mother. My father died before I was born.

Q: How do you come up with your ideas for webs? Do you wait for inspiration? Or do you simply begin and see what happens? Or maybe you make a plan before you begin?

A: You can't wait for inspiration, it comes while you are working. Henri Matisse said the same thing.

Q: Have you ever spun a web and had the feeling that you would never be able to match that web? That all your future webs would be inferior?

A: No. I have to believe that whatever I'm spinning now is the best. Otherwise I'd be depressed because it would seem I'm going downhill.

Q: Are individual lines or strands more important to you than the entire web?

A: No. It all must work together, all the individual lines, the intersections, angles, spaces, shapes, the density of my silken strands, all the elements must be right by themselves and also must create something complete that never existed before I traveled out into the air to create it.

Q: Would you ever work with another spider on a web? In other words, how do you feel about collaboration?

A: I couldn't work with another spider. The creative act involves a delicate inner balancing. There are a hundred little decisions and balancing acts involved in every inch of web. Plus, I feel different from day to day and my webs don't satisfy me unless they are in harmony with my body. For example, if even one of my legs is stiff then I create a totally different web than, say, if one of my eyes is swollen shut.

Q: If you were a human what occupation, or occupations, do you think would appeal to you?

A: Sometimes I think of myself as a gravedigger in the air. Other times I like to imagine myself as a fighter pilot.

Q: Are there any of your webs that you regret creating?

A: No. Listen, what I do regret is talking to you rather than working on my latest web. You may ask one more question.

Q: How do you react to the criticism that you are a control freak?

A: Freak? Sure, I love control. But freak? What creature doesn't seek control? Even an amoeba doesn't want to be told what to do.

Nicholas Klacsanzky

the saint thinks
he renounced everything
mountain wind

snow powder the graves we can't smell

fluorescent light
on dirt carried in—
subway car

on the darkest of nights eel fishing

begging
next to the mannequin
a disabled man

Adrian Bouter

flower island
the cemetery gate's
broken lock

Forum Romanum
historical facts fly
beneath my soles

purple wine
older than any memory
this town...

sea of light
all alleyways lead
to the square

Angiola Inglese

When will
the cherries mature?
the first rose

tufts of clouds
in lukewarm air
tufts of poplars

tenderness —
fish eyes
on market stall

clouds at sunset —
pitted cherries
one by one

last look
at the meadow —
three poppies

inside a painting
a white dress dances
with the poppies

May thunders
a hula-hoop forgotten
in the garden

page after page
sitting in the shade
of a larch

Margherita Petriccione

broken breath —
on the pathway edge
cut valerian

late night —
a scent of roses
in the bitter drink

June day —
young skin
in the rain

Eufemia Griffo

sea storming
the mistral whispers
its secrets

childhood memories
shelling the grains of wheat
one by one

<https://eueufemia.wordpress.com/>

Antonio Mangiameli

wind -
the prayers lost
in the fields

potting plants
her pregnancy
brushes a daisy

old mower ...
I pull the chord
in my shoulder

Stephen Toft

dappled sunlight
the pauses within
a sparrow's song

heatwave
i go deeper into
the cathedral

after swimming the river now flowing though me

vincent tripi

where did I come from?
where am I going?
zen gardens

impermanence
the wind in every one
of my mountain views

Angela Giordano

early evening
a bunch of stars
in the vineyard

*E' presto sera
Un grappolo di stelle
dentro il vigneto*

big murals
on gray walls
suburbia

*Grandi murali
sul grigiore dei muri
Periferia*

supermarket
always a migrant's hand
outstretched

*Supermercato
La mano sempre tesa
di un migrante*

Rainy day
The rainbow shut
In a puddle

*Giorno di pioggia
L'arcobaleno chiuso
in una pozza*

Jennifer Hambrick

alone
the riverbed
groaning

city street the rock that said abide

flame lily
too close
too easy

spring lightning
the scar on the tree
the moment he leaves

I hear my wife singing

What a Wonderful World.

She's not there: it's a recording
on her cell phone.

Her voice is off and she scratches
at the high notes.

I'm waiting for the construction workers
to look at the collapsing tower
of bricks on the roof.

We need to know how much
it will cost to fix and if they can do it.

I pace along the parapet looking
down at the wires strung along
the parking lot. A used car
dealer had an internet provider
string it up without our permission.

I'm waiting for the field workers
to come and remove it.

I hear her voice again smooth for a moment
and I think to myself what else can I do

Looking at the trees
covering the mountain
I know I am wealthy

Clayton Beach

Mosaic Virus

Moments before I'm due to close shop a young man with long blonde hair & a reddish beard saunters in with a hand rolled cigarette dangling unlit from his mouth— Boho chic. He asks me for spare change & I decline. His cigarette bobs with every slurred syllable; he asks if I have a Xanax or any other pills to give him. When I tell him no, he replies “hey man, you know, sometimes that really works,” shrugs his shoulders, then exits.

garbage & tents strewn along the railway line city of roses

My son is eating every blackberry he picks. My daughter eats one and drops one in the colander. I eat the ones so ripe they fall apart and put the rest away, spitting out bits of the dried flowers as I cut the highest hanging clusters free with a knife. Last summer we gathered figs, plums, apples and pears from the abandoned orchard on the other side of the fence. This winter the trees were all cut down and fed into chippers. A large white sign on a post proclaims the intended construction of a grand new complex of condominiums. When we arrive home I find a single letter in the mailbox, it is a no-cause eviction from the landlord. She's wants to sell the house.

foreign entanglement a storm of starlings

It's summer and I can't hear a single thing but the wind in the trees. In the fall when the mushrooms rise again from the loam the entire forest will drip with a susurrus of rain, crows will echo through the mist, the Douglas squirrels will ululate from towering old growth— the entire forest will sing with life. But right now, it's just the wind, passing through me and the hemlocks as if we didn't exist.

a voiceless voice the trees and I

elmedin kadric

sooner or later
a dot coming
for the water

lying around doing a dot nothing

a dot into a room full of people

sunlight
a dot
in mind

an olive
with both hands

Pravat Kumar Padhy

paper boat
the old man unfolds
his memories

LeRoy Gorman

the odds
of life on other planets
cherry petals

morningloriesky

my birthday
how easily they blow out
the Perseids

enough cloud
the moon slips into something
more comfortable

a redcoat in sepia
my poor Irish forbear
from Mars

retirement
the grey car is silver
for a day

Lucia Cardillo

sweet in the wind
scent of lemon flowers —
white butterflies

Dolce nel vento
profumo di zagara
Bianche farfalle

noon sun —
my narrow shade
under my feet

Sole a picco
La mia ombra ristretta
sotto le scarpe

green bud —
the silent pleasure
of waiting

Verde germoglio
Piacere silenzioso
dell'attesa