

Otata 23 (November, 2017)



*otata 23*  
(November 2017)

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## *Contents*

*Tokonoma* — Maria Szabó 4

vincent tripi 5

Marie Laura Valente 6

Ingrid Bruck 8

Frances Angela 10

Angela Giordano 13

Helen Buckingham 14

Peter Newton 17

Jeannie Martin 21

Eufemia Griffio 22

Jack Galmitz 23

Tigz De Palma 24

paul m 26

Stefano d'Andrea 28

Mark Young 31

Elisa Bernardinis 35

Kim Dorman 36

Stephen Toft 38

Elisa Allo 40

Andy McLellan 42

Lucia Cardillo 43

Dave Read 44

Pravat Kumar Padhy 46

Alegria Imperial 47

Rupert M Loydell 50

Bo Lillesoe 51

Romano Zeraschi 53

Valentina Ranaldi-Adams 54

Margherita Petriccione 55

otata's bookshelf

Giselle Maya, [\*Fox Wind\*](#)

## *Tokonoma*

I stared at her in astonishment. It was as if she were descending, before my very eyes, into the depths of an underworld I had never imagined; like someone fallen in a well, from which the only sounds to be heard were curses and a desperate gasping for breath. By the time she'd finished she was barely whispering. "Yes, there are such moments, moments when a technician wouldn't have had to lift a finger, when no helicopter was needed. The world of living, growing things could dance all by itself." Lord God, I thought. What had that one Faustian moment in her life been like, when she cried out for time to stop because the trees were swirling all around her? I shall never know, but it is there, somewhere in her past.

Once, after she'd been introduced to the tape recorder in our apartment and told that you could play back a text or a piece of music, she talked about what it would be like if someone's life were recorded and put on tape to be rewound, stopped and replayed at will. She said she'd accept her own life the way it was; or rather, as it would be up to her death, but with the proviso that she might rewind it to any point she chose. I didn't dare ask where she would stop the machine, and still less, why there. I didn't think she'd tell me anyway.

— Magda Szabó, *The Door*  
Translated by Lex Rix

*vincent tripi*

*Write about the unknown as if you never knew.*

silence  
the brown thrasher mimics  
the Mystery

God  
is  
patient  
the  
egret  
moves

“Somewhere someone’s  
writing about what i’m  
writing about & knows it.”

the penny which  
no one picks-up  
put penny beside it

*Haiku is neither the movement toward an end nor is it a movement toward beginning. It is, however, a movement capable of carrying us along just as we are & with everything that is.*

*Maria Laura Valente*

*alba d'inverno –  
nel primo sorso di tè  
tutta la luce*

winter dawn –  
in the first sip of tea  
the first sip of light

*alba che irrompe –  
la capinera smorza  
l'ultima stella*

breaking dawn –  
a blackcap blows out  
the last star

*ultimo bagno –  
nel sapore del mare  
tracce d'autunno*

last swim -  
a taste of autumn  
in each wave

*alba di nebbia -  
invisibili i peschi  
stanno fiorendo*

misty dawn —  
invisible peach trees  
blossom

*Ingrid Bruck*

record arm needle-  
diamond beak of a hawk  
in twilight circles

sun bathing  
pygmy rattler drops  
from a palm tree



a chipmunk wobbles  
between trash cans ~  
fermented apples

flute notes drop  
a rotted tree trunk  
carols

*Frances Angela*

last leaves helping grandma lift her mother off the green commode

underpinning she finds the jade bead i lost

all the colors of mother's hair growing up

late night train another woman's child in my lap

mother's cashmere gloves  
i wear now  
second winter

wind chimes  
my red sarong  
blowing dry

a year since i saw the old man and his lurcher darkening heath

it's warmth still  
the dead vole  
i bury

withered field  
sharing my apple  
with both crows

old grave  
seed falling  
from the bird-feeder

*Angela Giordano*

ripe pumpkins —  
the colors of sunset  
in the garden

*Helen Buckingham*

sea view  
shutters  
thunder

match to zip sheet lightning

supernovas  
come and go  
morning star

brink of night where the big beasts hurl brickbats

sunday roast blood on my tongue

moving in gift bruised peaches

pill low  
teeth marks

physic garden  
leaving with  
a list of ills

guy fawkes night an earsplitting rainbow

fireworks pretty bombs all in a row

Catherine wheel it's what she would have wanted

Black Friday  
curtains



*Peter Newton*

a kid's  
game  
the red  
orange  
yellow  
leaf  
wins

seedling I say  
to the someday sunflower  
it's a long way up

the flower seller  
in the changing light  
returns to her island

pinging off the tin  
pecans sound bigger  
than they are

horse-drawn their love early on

a bout with gravity  
the surf's  
fancy footwork

native islander  
the sing-song  
in his voice

day lily stalks  
our first fire  
fed by summer

autumnal  
I've been called  
worse

back to our little game  
renaming  
the stars

skywriter . . .  
his words turning  
into clouds

*Jeannie Martin*

where were you  
when the lights went out,  
firefly?

long after the guacamole  
avocado plant  
in bloom

for the  
coyote too  
Wolf Moon

*Eufemia Griffio*

my mother's last trip  
so cold  
this autumn dusk

## *Jack Galmitz*

So little time left  
I watch the sparrows flying  
dipping and rising

Whatever I love  
is mine  
that mansion covered in vines

Back of the trailer  
boys in a puddle  
playing soldier

Three men on a roof  
stop what they are doing  
to pledge allegiance

# *Tigz De Palma*

thistle  
tapping lightly  
butterfly

lizard sky scent of pine and sea

humming  
birds in bloom



all my broken heart  
waiting  
inside a pomegranate

rise the ancient fort cobble moon

quick the blue  
eye of cicada  
razor song  
its night voice  
response in stones

one in the sea two in the sky equals yellow

*paul m*

greening meadow...  
a wood warbler sings  
his grandfather's song

knothole  
the explosion  
that is the sun

brisk  
spring  
morn  
ing  
after  
my  
making  
the  
bones  
left  
over

spring clouds...  
a mannequin shaped  
nothing like me

less than 500 sq. in. of orange...

late monarch

replacing  
it  
more  
gently

than  
I  
picked  
it  
up

sea  
star

# *Stefano d'Andrea*

melancholy...  
a distracted bee  
forgets the flower

*malinconia...  
un'ape distratta  
dimentica il fiore*

in the clearing  
the sweet thuds of chestnuts  
— childhood echoes

*nella radura  
i dolci tonfi dei ricci  
— echi d'infanzia*

peony...  
the wet caress  
of thunderstorm

*della peonia  
la carezza bagnata  
di temporale*

silent fountain —  
only the crickets' chirp  
in the sultry air

*fontana muta —  
solo il cri-cri dei grilli  
nell'aria afosa*

reading Lorca  
...a tangerine's droplet  
on the page

*leggendo Lorca  
— goccia di mandarino  
sulla pagina*

the pied wings  
of a dead butterfly  
— moved by the wind

*le ali screziate  
d'una farfalla morta  
— mosse dal vento*

the first grape...  
a gecko peeks at me picking grapes

*la prima uva...  
un gecko mi osserva scegliere gli acini*

*Mark Young*

*so much depends*

upon the direction  
you're coming  
from  
but

bicycles &  
red wheel  
barrows  
always have the

right of way  
even when  
it's not /  
raining

*manifestly obvious*

When asked what  
he & Engels were

up to, Karl Marx  
replied: "We're

writing the wrongs  
of the bourgeoisie."

*The white cockatoo's song of love*

Self-inflated &  
perched on the  
branch above  
the object of  
his desire, he

comes across  
not as bird  
but as a puffer  
fish with the  
air escaping.



## *The Prize*

A moment  
when two or  
more lines  
of thought

that have  
taken long  
independent  
journeys arrive

coherent &  
incandescent  
in the same  
singular space.

## *Formal de Hyde*

When is a sonnet? Where are there sunspots on the moon? What will the river rise? Why, on a street of high-class jewellers, couldn't she buy an autographed copy of *The Life of Caesar*? How are the antelope lonely?

## *Ma Caw*

In the back-  
ground, the  
empty vessel  
that is Céline  
Dion parrots  
the words of  
others with  
as much e-  
motion as a  
cash register  
can generate.

## *t he n arrow r oad*

a s unlit  
piece  
of s tone  
p laced  
on a h ill side  
re counts  
t he t ravels

*Elisa Bernardinis*

summer storm  
the neighbors forget  
their quarrel

*tempesta estiva –  
i vicini scordano  
la loro lite*

holding it between my teeth  
then the sweetness  
a grape

*lo tengo un po'  
tra i denti, poi la dolcezza  
un chicco d'uva*

in a little water  
a snow-white lily  
epilepsy

*in due dita d'acqua  
un giglio bianchissimo –  
epilessia*

*Kim Dorman*

*[jottings]*

china  
blue on  
white

boats  
figures in a landscape

\*

train platform

bald grackle  
struts

across pavement

\*

patch of lawn

beside  
a bus stop

many small  
white

mushrooms

## *Earthly*

The word  
recurs.

Brief  
the pale end  
of day.

Susie stands  
at the  
window.

Cloud-covered sun.

*Stephen Toft*

autumn wind  
my father's saw  
sings to the trees

snow at night  
you whistle  
the strangest tune

spring breeze the song of the florist

feeling playful  
on washing day  
i become a ghost

autumn leaves  
the colour of my  
neighbour's hens

deep winter...  
snow fills the doctor's  
footprints

swimming  
above the dam  
the stars

# *Elisa Allo*

(to my brother)

*primo vagito —  
la luna del raccolto  
nei miei ricordi*

the first crying —  
in my memories  
harvest moon

*all'ombra  
di una quercia  
campane lontane*

in the shadow  
of an oak tree  
distant bells



tsukimi\*...  
*il tatami ascolta  
il canto della luna*

*tsukimi\**...  
the tatami listens to  
the moon song

(\*moon-viewing or "contemplazione della luna piena d'autunno")

*orionidi...*  
*desideri dispersi  
nel firmamento*

orionids ...  
desires dispersed  
in the firmament

*Andy McLellan*

autumn sky  
once more I long  
to speak crow

## *Lucia Cardillo*

leaves fall —  
on the branch an empty nest  
in unstable balance

*cadono foglie —  
in bilico sul ramo  
un nido vuoto*

autumn light —  
one big fly slams and slams  
on glass window

*luce d'autunno —  
un moscone sui vetri  
batte e ribatte*

*Dave Read*

bone scan ...  
an aspen drops  
its leaves

morning fog  
we stagger into  
each other

open grave ...  
examining the depth  
of my shadow

floating  
upstream  
sunlight

cricket song ...  
a fish ascends  
through moonlight

wild thistle  
a patch of blood  
on his knee

autumn leaves  
rust colours  
my memory

*Pravat Kumar Padhy*

foreign tour  
the monument speaks  
through the guide

moving closer  
to the old *pipal* tree--  
I talk to myself

# *Alegria Imperial*

## *too late*

“dead cells”, they say of hair, same thing about nails,  
skin, too, that sloughs off tempers, hurts, lusts, and regrets,  
which send the heart hurtling in Hades

## *caterwauling*

flailing braided hair of nymphs, could they have been  
instruments of execution? and the mane of golden boys, pennants  
in the eyes of virgins... unbeknownst dripping of night

## *a prolonged moon*

on hair that has found its own rights and freedom, denuded by  
tectonic eruptions spewing inner fire, deluded by the burst  
of spring that by the time it booms, a live head

## *thuds on a stone grate*

## *firing off*

1.

in the distance  
a crow's  
sealed-in tweets

why even try  
to sustain a vibrato  
with a cicada

skinned birch  
I once owned this house,  
he says

2.

scouring dry ground  
wind turns a soiled paper plate  
belly up

molds  
an unseen rot  
in his heart

dead leaf racket  
ricocheting on steps  
to resurrection day

3.

lispings stars a million  
supplications for scraps  
in flood tides

partitioned winds  
read vortex where  
a mollusk opens

used to be muddied blue  
today the wishing well  
silent dark



*cackling*

the measured widths  
we shrink into

talking into the darkness  
late crickets  
heaving up a molehill

a cackle  
of office meniscus

summer drizzle  
a wet stone growing  
an ear

in a sonogram  
frog song

lollipops in the basket  
some promises  
we swap

war of the fishes  
in a pitted clam shell stilled

*Rupert M Loydell*

*FIRST THING*

the window  
& the mirror  
  
morning light

*DISSENTERS' BURIAL GROUND,  
PONSHARDEN*

The cracked language of stones  
all askew and fractured,

moss-edged, ivy-clung,  
on the edge of land & town.

We try not to disturb kaddish,  
tread carefully around the dead.

## *Bo Lillesoe*

*Digte er pumpguns  
rammer ofrenes sjæle  
genoplever dem*

poems are pumpguns  
hit their victims in the soul  
reviving them

*På gadehjørnet:  
En lille dreng på 5 år  
ser på dameben*

on the street corner:  
a little boy of 5  
studies ladies' legs

*Din morgenhilsen  
Læbestiften på spejlet  
formet som et kys*

your morning greeting  
lipstick on the mirror  
shaped as a kiss

*På vej mod lyset  
tilfældige skeletter  
med mennesker i*

on their way to the light  
random skeletons  
with people in them

*To svaner på træk  
elskov på fire vinger  
Grim ælling på vej*

two swans in the sky  
live show on four wings  
ugly duckling on the way

*Giv mig din varme  
lykken mellem to arme  
byd mig op til dans*

give me your heat  
happiness between two arms  
let's dance

*ISTANBUL*

Dolce è la notte di Istanbul.  
Dolce  
Come pannocchia di granturco  
Si sgrana  
Al lume di lanterna  
Che incede sul molo  
Nella brezza del Marmara  
A Kumkapi.  
Dolci  
Gli sguardi delle fanciulle di Fatih  
Che scherzano del nulla  
Sbirciando l'infinito.  
E dolce è la luna sovrana  
Che danza sul Bosforo  
Per la trama azzurrina  
Del ponte alto  
Verso l'Asia  
Dolce di profumi di sandalo  
E cannella.

*ISTANBUL*

Sweet is the night of Istanbul.  
sweet  
like maize  
graining  
in candle light  
reflecting on the pier  
in the Marmara breeze  
at Kumkapi.  
Sweet  
the glances of the young Fatih girls  
(joking on nothing) who joke on nothing  
glancing at infinity  
and sweet is the sovereign moon  
that dances on Bosphorus  
through the light blue weft  
of the high bridge  
towards Asia  
sweet sandalwood  
and cinnamon scents.

*Valentina Ranaldi-Adams*

I am the one  
who is not one  
in a room of seniors  
I am the one  
who is one

# *Margherita Petriccione*

*sui campi d'ottobre  
la nube d'oro dei moscerini -  
letame fresco*

on the October fields  
the golden cloud of the gnats -  
fresh manure

*spilla di turchesi -  
quelle lugubri campane  
di settembre*

turquoise brooch —  
those gloomy bells  
in September

*primi germogli  
sul mandorlo  
gatto in calore*

first sprouts  
on the almond tree  
cat in heat

*colombe —  
su piastrelle in cotto  
pane raffermo*

doves —  
on terracotta tiles  
stale bread



*profumo di Datura -  
questa sera è leggero  
il peso del silenzio*

Datura scent -  
tonight the silence weight  
is light

*sette e mezza -  
tra un treno e un altro  
parole di vapore*

half past seven -  
between a train and other  
steam words