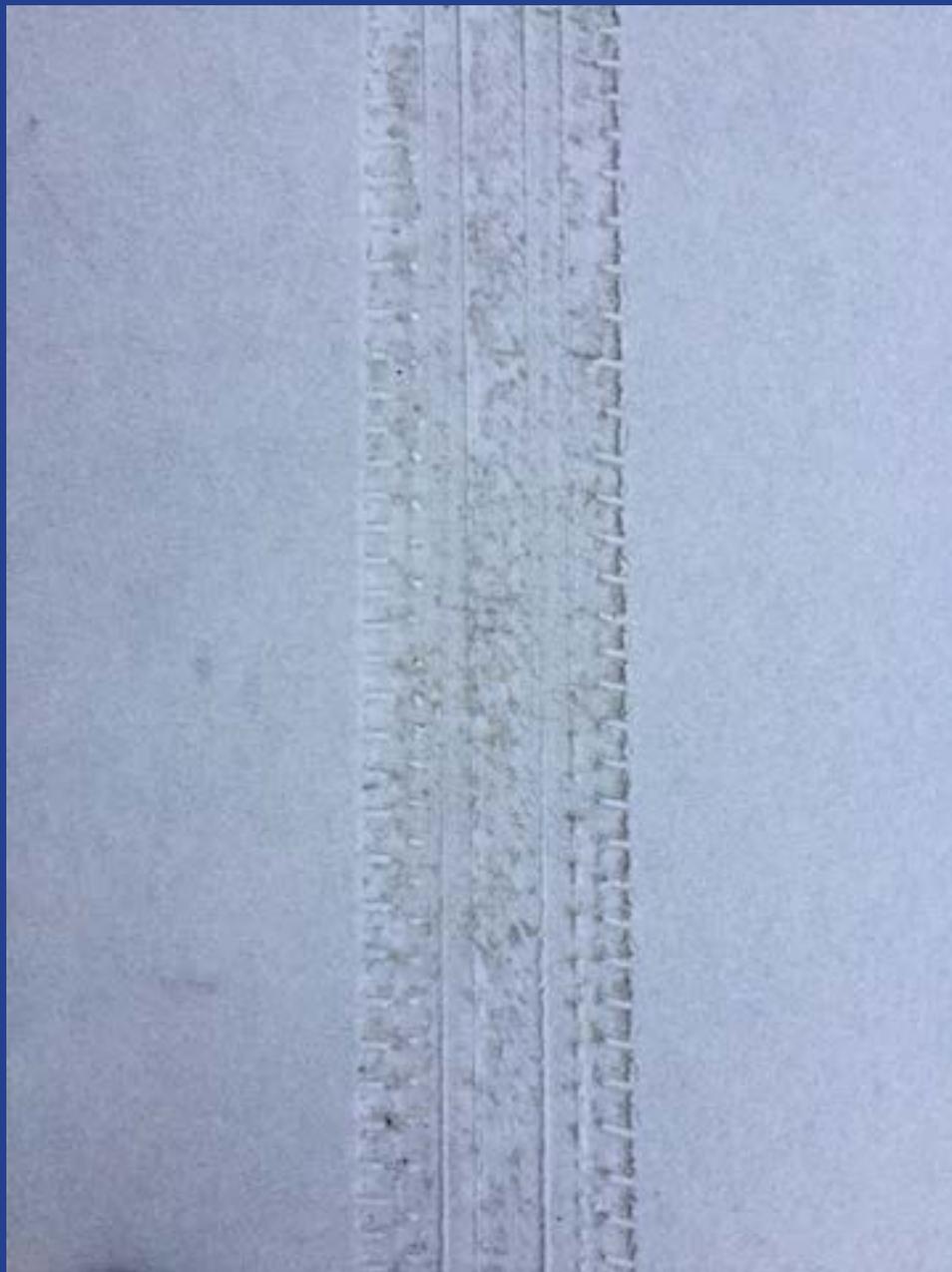


otata 25

(January, 2018)



otata 25

(January, 2018)

otata 25

(January, 2018)

Copyright ©2018 by the contributors.

<https://otatablog.wordpress.com>

otatahaiku@gmail.com

CONTENTS

<i>Tokonoma</i> : Italo Calvino	6
Paul Miller	7
Mark Young	11
Margherita Petriccione	16
Agnes Eva Savich	17
Antonio Mangiameli	19
Sonam Chhoki	20
John Levy	26
Tigz De Palma	37
Stefano d'Andrea	38
Tom Montag	40
Aditya Bahl	43
Lucia Cardillo	47
David J Kelly	48
Elmedin Kadrin	49
David Read	51
Eufemia Griffo	54
Debbie Strange	55
Shrikaanth Krishnamurthy	57
Angela Giordano	59
Patrick Sweeney	60
Christina Sng	62
Alessandra Delle Fratte	63
Adrian Bouter	65
Donna Fleischer	66
Clayton Beach	69

Tokonoma

In Ponge the world takes the form of the most humble, secondary, and asymmetrical things and that word is what serves to make us aware of the infinite variety of these irregular, minutely complicated forms.

There are those who hold that the word is the way of attaining the substance of the world, the final, unique, and absolute substance. Rather than representing this substance, the word identifies itself with it (so that it is wrong to call the word merely a means to an end): there is the word that knows only itself, and no other knowledge of the world is possible. There are others who regard the use of the word as an unceasing pursuit of things, an approach not to their substance but to their infinite variety, touching on their inexhaustibly multiform surface. As Hoffmansthal said: "Depth is hidden. Where? On the surface." And Wittgenstein went even further than this: "For what is hidden... is of no interest to us."

I would not be so drastic. I think we are always searching for something hidden or merely potential or hypothetical, following its traces whenever they appear on the surface. I think our basic mental processes have come down to us through every period of history, ever since the times of our Paleolithic forefathers, who were hunters and gatherers. The word connects the visible trace with the invisible thing, the absent thing, the thing that is desired or feared, like a frail emergency bridge flung over an abyss.

— Italo Calvino, from *Exactitude*,
in *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*,
trans. Patrick Creagh

Paul Miller

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

Mark Young

THE FROG *FICCIONE*

The flowers arrive
laughing at my oilskin cape –
vernal equinox.

Mizu no Oto (1694-1744)

DIY

So that not only
the eye but the

ear is engaged,
a soundtrack

will be added to
this piece, maybe

something you
wrote yourself.

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

In the evening
he would play

hillbilly songs
on a banjo. What

was worse, we
sang along.

PRELUDE

Begin with "melody inside." The implications of it. The song within. Within the poem, within silence, even within a song. It's what we listen out for, what we strive to hear.

Otherwise. Notes. Mundanities. Pick up the dry cleaning. Put out the cat.

persuaded zygotes

In a deterministic world

people think it's a no-
brainer that the world's
best nonfiction books are

morally responsible for
the addiction of street
kids to aerosol solvents.

Idolatry exists—

in absentia—
 as a chip in
 the corner
of a cat's eye.

diphthong

Arabesques, & foliate patterns.

The dancer bends forward.

The secret is all in the shoes.

They are often painted yellow or orange.

Jimmy Choo is supposed to be a man of peace.

trip

He passed the journey looking for marsupials, saw only the one, a diesel locomotive pulling a load of cement wagons.

Margherita Petriccione

withered rose —
the first hot sun
on my knees

Agnes Eva Savich

all the sun in a late white butterfly

short hike with grandma creaky trees

grandmother's grave my marble face

geese heading south marriage

s n o w h e r e

seven year itch hummingbird feeder

keeping the world turning ants

Antonio Mangiameli

pathway —

me and my shadow

Sonam Chhoki

The darkness within

Can you dream for someone who is too terrified to sleep? The night oppresses her with its layer by layer of thickening silence. Her secret demon comes alive in a dance of guilt and shame. Even the full moon glints with insinuation.

*deep blue iris ...
the swollen smoothness
of her broken face*

The name of things

Eyes dim with hopelessness he competes with the strays to pick the bins and gutters.

*his t-shirt logo:
My Daddy is My Superman
the homeless youth*

Talisman of grief

The path to the cave shrine meanders up the red clay hill. Through low-lying clouds, a shaft of light fans out. Guru's blessings! I thought as a child each time I saw such light. On the anniversary of my mother's death I come to propitiate our ancestral deities.

The old monk said, 'No red offerings, only flowers and fruits.'

In the main sanctum a four-armed Mahakala is chiselled on a protruding granite face. Encircled in a vermillion wreath of flames, he stands astride a lotus, his indigo feet pinning down an elephant. On his head is a crown of skulls and his third eye is ablaze with primordial wisdom. I remember a passage from the Bar-do Teachings:

'Between the first and second day you will see the light of Vairocana, the white light of the Mirror-like Wisdom. Due to past negative karma you will be frightened and want to escape this wisdom light and follow the light from lower realms....'

I place my offerings on the rocky ledge and pray that the torment of cancer has annulled my mother's bad karma and she has found her way through the bar-do. For an exquisite, brief moment a presence brushes me.

Bronze bells ring out in the cold mountain air. A line of pilgrims winds its way up the slope.

*silence in the woods . . .
the transparent tears
of pine resin*

Lest I forget

You would have tut-tutted that I leave the veranda lights on to scan the December night sky for the blue fire of Orion's sword and the red glow of Antares. In this hour of stillness the pain of your absence hurls itself at me like a beast of the underworld.

*horned moon
somewhere in the night
a fruit falls*

Crossing the line

I no longer accuse Shin-je, the guardian of death, of stealing our life story, berate the geometric serenity of the Big Dipper or refuse to make offerings at the ancestral shrine. There's nothing left to desecrate. Something in me has freed itself and fallen away.

*what I couldn't say . . .
first anemone
in the spring rain*

Gift of the ancestors

There where the goats drowse
on the light-filled slope
and where the wind
kindles the piney air of the firs
She roams alone
her voice limning chants
of the Dark Mother.

Clothed in skeins of lichen
she adorns her hair
with deep blue gentians
that grow in her head.

Crescent moon
for her bowl
She stirs
the elixir of hope.

Fragments of an unfinished conversation

There was harmony in our solitude. We were not afraid of where silence might take us. Even now I can hear you turn the pages as if you were opening a door to another landscape. And you did . . . you made landfall in a world beyond this.

*how to cross
the bridge of the bar-do . . .
a blue thrush whistles in the rain*

six years on

the things I still want to say . . .
now leaving it
to the poplars you used to visit
writhing in the winter wind

dusk deepening cotoneaster hedge

waking from a dream
tired wings of a moth
at the rain-blurred window

John Levy

The Noise Family

for Philip Rowland

(1)

I ask my new dental hygienist if
anyone in her family writes poetry.
No. She says she had to write haiku

in grade school in Guam. I reply they
kill poetry in schools and she says
they kill everything in schools.

(2)

Rebecca Elson's mother and father
never threw away the bird nests
Rebecca collected as a child, nor
the pebbles, tree bark, shells
and small animal bones
that Rebecca labeled
before she began writing poems

(3)

the page is being

prepared for the poem

sweep

each of its

four corners then

unscrew the dead light bulb

(4)

silence, the heir of the noise family

(5)

the poem's half-yes

lasts

firefly-like

(6)

Googled “self help books” on August 10, 2014, and got 315,000,000 results in 0.32 seconds.

In “30 Self-Help Books That Permanently Changed My Life,” Jane lists those 30 and at the top of her blog she (assuming this is her) points at Big Ben and the caption says

My confidence is now the size of Big Ben. BOO-YA.

It’s night and Big Ben is all

lit up.

(7)

My new iPhone rings. I don’t even glance at the number, assuming my wife is calling. “Hello.” “Hello,” a man says, “who is this?” “John.” “John?” “Yes.”

“Oh, I’m sorry, I got the wrong abortion clinic. I’m sorry. Sorry, bro.”
“That’s okay.”

a butterfly's
flight
to a flower's
much slower
flight
in
our
time

*Three First Lines by Donald Finkel and
Three First Lines by Ted Berrigan*

You will remember nothing.
The sweetgum stands ankle deep in a pool of leaves,
Arcadio says that tree's called Tree.

It is a very great thing
Every day when the sun comes up
Huge collapsed Mountain Enters from Stage Right,

raIN SOaked

Bible on concrete steps in an alley
on the top step open to the middle

black dog in a red sweater
at the end of a white leash
led — by a tall figure in a wet
yellow hat and raincoat — up the
dark sidewalk towards a front door

Postcard to My Cousin

Dear Betsy,

This postcard has a black-and-white photo of a tree that reminds me of the giant trees in front of your childhood home. Now we're in our mid-60s. If I would've imagined, back then, talking to you when we were this old I would've pictured ancient people like those in illustrated fairy tales, white-haired, feeble, stooped, wrinkled. I wouldn't have imagined the real old people I saw as being what we could become because our old age would've seemed too far away and make-believe. Here we are in 2017 and I'm thinking of those trees and you and my memories stretch above the child I recall in every direction.

Love,
John

on break, diamond cutters under umbrellas
watch drops lengthen from the green leaves

Letter to Don Cole

Dear Don,

I am about to read
various translations of Homer's
Odyssey and I wish
you'd painted — or would — not
illustrations, but visions

of some of the best
scenes. I can almost see
the Cyclops you'd paint,
his one eye

still in his massive
face (what color eye
would you give? Blue?
Green?) and
Cyclops blinded, his horrible
socket above a grimace or
howl. Then your

Sirens. I imagine
standing before them in your
studio entranced, suddenly
alone with them — as I imagine it
you are not in the room —
and I make myself
look away, turn to

your Circe. Perhaps
she'd be surrounded by the pigs
who'd been men or maybe you'd
do a portrait of her and Odysseus, choosing
the moment when she comes at him
swinging a sword. I know I'd

hold my breath
looking at what you'd create —
as with the paintings and
collages you've already
brought to life. This

Thursday morning you're
most likely on Vashon Island.
I'm in Tucson, as usual, and
Trump is in China basking
in Chinese flattery like
the wise leader Trump
will never be. In my
study it's quiet, Leslie

is off at Safeway buying
supplies for us while I'm
supplying these words
to both you and me at the same time.
I'd like to think
that as I write
you're painting something
I couldn't guess, something even
you wouldn't have known until

you make it
exist. Easy for me to
think myself into your studio —
I've been there so often. That first
time with Ed Cain when I first
met you and Ed helped you install
the studio windows while I

helped myself
to the paintings you'd
transported
to Vashon Island from New York.
I should bring in Joan now — who was
and is there with you — Joan

who creates
marvel after marvel with her
art. Perhaps the two of you at

this moment are in the two halves
of your studio working

or you could be at the gym or
in Seattle, but the good thing
is knowing you're "out there," as
they say, out there
and in
my head, vivid, active,
moving. Ezra Pound begins his
Cantos, in Canto I, with his
translation of lines from the Odyssey:

And then went down to the ship,
Set keel to breakers, forth on the godly sea, and
We set up mast and sail on that swart ship,
Bore sheep aboard her, and our bodies also
Heavy with weeping, and winds from sternward
Bore us out onward with bellying canvas. . .

I can imagine us, in your kitchen, reading
this aloud, perhaps pausing
at canvas while thinking (maybe
thinking aloud?) of your own work
on canvas, not beneath
the "bellying" sails. The pieces of yours
that hang in our house

take me out, onward — and
back to you, too. The painting in our living
room of the mountains, half-
abstract and all
crammed with presence and life — the collage
in my study, wild and perfect. And

more, other spots
in our home, vivid and
right. And right now I have to
go out into the world — an appointment
to keep — and so will
head out to the car, set tires
to earthen driveway and go forth

into the godly world we share.
I wave goodbye
from this stanza
and I wish you well.

Tigz De Palma

this island
box
without lid

one hibiscus spilling sun over a concrete sky

maddening
you persimmon
you

Stefano d'Andrea

*chiaro di luna
sulle bianche betulle —
notte di perla*

moonlight
on white birches —
pearly night

*i vecchi abeti
nudi fino al ciuffo —
tuoni lontani*

the old fir trees
naked up to the spikes —
distant thunder

giovani geishe con piccoli ventagli

— *farfalline blu*

geisha girls with small fans

— blue butterflies

nella fiammata crepitante il rovo porge una mora

in the crackling blaze the bramble proffers a blackberry

Tom Montag

from
NOTEBOOK: NEW MEXICO
January, 2016

Along Highways 60/84

Here they farm
under a wide sky.

Here they wait
for every rain.

Highways 60/84, Mile Marker 374

Where the wind
races grass, and
the grass is winning.

Highways 60/84, Mile Marker 366

Sky
at the
end of

the
universe.

I have
been there.

Highways 60/84, Mile Marker 346

Trickster plays
his tricks again.

Hawk is
not impressed.

Highways 60/84, Mile Marker 340

How much of this
do you want?
Trickster asks.

All of it, I say.

Aditya Bahl

poems from
since 1988

some of the steel pillar shows thru parts of a skinny actress

BOULDERS

once her slow-lipped groan
grown twice hard of hearing

ITALIC

do lilac lean a lil

tinnitus
minus
bison

incest in cents

OREO

or for
halo is
dude
doleful

BOSOM

a boo
thither
concealed

POLIS
enjoy your evening

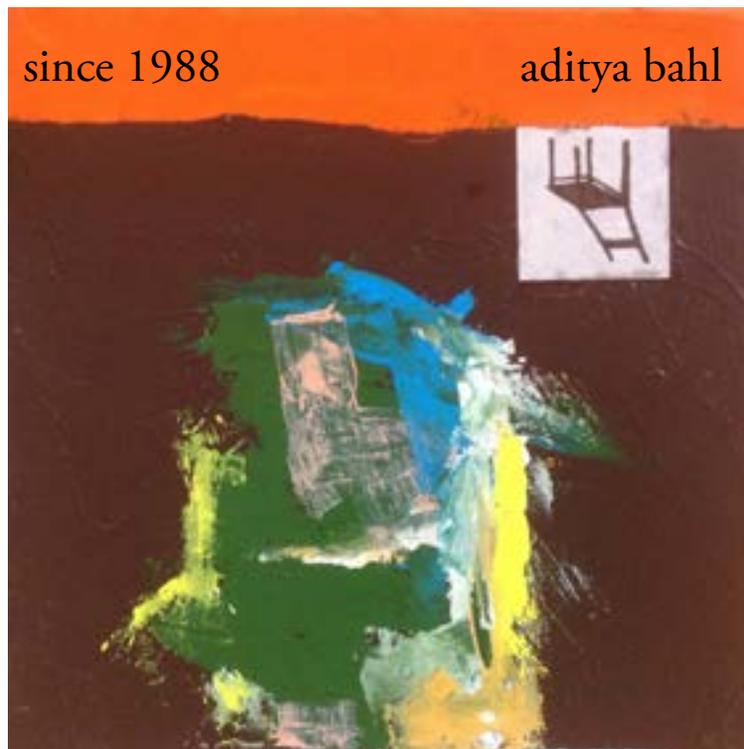
JEER

jesus to
the ear, sorry
to the eye

MARMALADE

for the simple tangible visible book

wanting to separate from the apron one mends one says I once twice



[Link here to the ebook from delete press](#)

Lucia Cardillo

*inaspettato —
nell'alba immobile
un frullo d'ali*

unexpected —
in the motionless dawn
a flutter of wings

*rami ormai nudi —
sperdute nella nebbia
ombre d'inverno*

naked branches —
the shadows of winter
missing in the fog

David J Kelly

aspidistra before you could say it

Elmedin Kadric

more
over

lark
spur

o
pen

a
cro

on grounds
of humility
common snowdrops

trail
a beige
monarch

looks after the rain

there there winter wind

David Read

olive moon ...
a bitter end
to the opera

winter night ...
my queen and I
in check

tree house ...
a rope ladder
to the stars

autumn leaves ...
wiping the blade
on his jeans

litter through holes the size of magpie beaks

receding into the low tide turtles

a car folds
into a pillar ...
winter rain

oxygen bag ...
the nurse maintains
his breath

the head falls
off the snowman
new moon

Eufemia Griffo

cold afternoon
grabbing a cup of tea
with both hands

winter sky
a snowflake shines
in a snowflake

Debbie Strange

brambles morph into resting stags morph into brambles

after the wildfires invisible sunspots visible

strung between a whale's bleached bones aurora

blue sky etched with gulls suspended animation

watersongs the differing frequencies of stones

Shrikaanth Krishnamurthy

Good for the Goose

I am Tom
the evil fellow
that always loses
to smart Jerry
much to
the
amusement
and approval
of all ye lot.
all those howls
of glee and mirth
as I get beaten to pulp.
not one of you sees me
for the poor moggy that is
starved of its rightful prey
like all those pets of yours
allowed to merely watch
the goldfish and lories
and call them "brothers"
while you set traps
for those mice
in your fields
and barns.
go kiss a cow and let it live instead

trip photos
the slum dwellings
picture-perfect

butter moon
another child
sleeps hungry

gift wrap
tearing apart
the silence

Angela Giordano

a new year
in the refugee camp
ancient spices

near the fire
Grandma weaves the threads —
melting snow

Patrick Sweeney

where I touched the wing
of the white butterfly
hailstones bounce

two Hail Marys, one Our Father...
in the center of my chest
Earth's rotation

freezing rain
the crow
asks not

countenance of Gary Cooper
the broken-footed
parking lot crow

a feather
the color of Montane grassland
I wherefore the sky

Christina Sng

dragonflies
at the playground
parents hovering

stubborn macadamias
my daughter's hands
tightly clenched

finally the kick
of her unborn child
tenth pregnancy

Alessandra Delle Fratte

*la notte e il nulla —
si ferma anche il respiro
dentro al silenzio*

night and nothingness —
breath stops too
in the silence

*invisibile —
questa notte mi sento come il vento*

invisible —
this night I'm like the wind

*ombre autunnali —
di arabeschi dorati
parlano i muri*

autumn shadows —
the walls speak
of golden arabesques

*di un melograno
chicchi rossi assaporo —
uno ad uno*

of a pomegranate
I taste red grains —
one by one

Adrian Bouter

blurry birthday...
the cake she used
to bake herself

singular the mute nightingale of your absence

entwined roots
your God as mine
as good —

for Hanane

Donna Fleischer

the nothing
r e m a i n s wind
on the grass

finch topples
the seeded dandelion's
springy head

this day mama may
get a bit of sun
on her headstone

below ground floor —
a clerk's office plant breaches
the window sill

through tears
a blue and white
pinwheel

bubble kisses
at the tidal break,
little fishes

Mourning

Leaving its post
Becoming silence
a once heard,

Clear hard
Pristine
Bell-
ring

Passing Through

University students make their way through the late morning. Ice the night before mutes this day world. Their crystalline green air of what remains between – these skipped steps among stopped tufts, a pair of stiff pines, and a grey stone bench.

*the whoosh
of Li Po's snow-stained robe —
a new year*

Clayton Beach

arrivals and departures blue field entoptics

sheer lace veils her soft form evening star

dark sky murmurs the surf replies in foxfire

climbing vines toward some idea of knowledge

worn stone a lone ant traces the lemniscate

cool breeze all day without incident roadside yarrow

alone once more the sound of rain in f minor

pond ripples from the carp's tail pitch bend

lotus blossom the horsefly's daily ablutions

