

otata 29

May, 2018



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John Martone, editor.

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from otata's bookshelf

John Levy, *On Its Edge, Tilted*

In memory of Marlene Mountain

TOKONOMA

*Il s'est passé quelque chose à Carnac,
Il y a longtemps.*

*Quelque chose qui compte
Et tu dis, lumière,*

*Qu'il y a lieu
D'en être fier.*

Something happened at Carnac
A long time ago.

Something which matters
and as you say, light,

There is reason
to be proud of it.

— Guillevic, from *Carnac*
(translated by John Montague)

F.J. Seligson

By
Gandhi's

garden,
grass

pokes
out

of
puddles

*

Down—
stairs

hand
waves

over
hedges

— a
bird

wings
on

and
on

*

“Gandhi
could

reduce
himself

to
zero

and
come

back
100%”

*

See
G’s

bed,
grasp

G’s
cane

feel
G’s

desk,
count

G’s
beads

*

Stray
dogs

haunt
alleys

to—
night

Small
girls

go
for

a
stroll

*

Beauty,
with

babe
in

arms,
asks

you
for

“a
rupee”

Hesitant,
you

miss
a

step,
sprain

an
ankle

With
a

pink
and

orange
sun

the
Ganges

catches
fire

Mid—
night,

we
drift

along
with

birds
and

bugs
and

cold —
our

candles
drift

in
dishes

far—
away

Come
dawn

we
row

by
corpses

burning
and

men
in

water
washing

clothes,
too

— it's
cold,

how
can

they
survive?

Joseph Salvatore Aversano

Listening Again to Istanbul

When Orhan Veli wished he was a fish in a bottle of raki, didn't he know that he would have ended up as a dead fish? Yes, his most celebrated of lines express nothing other than the death wish of a fish (and of one kept separate from its sea).

But his one true love wasn't raki. It was Istanbul. And when he listened to it, all of it, with his eyes closed, and yet opened like one of those nets tossed across the Beykoz Bay . . .

there would be the bells of its water sellers, however faint, however far away

after an open parenthesis
or an open white parasol
the bareness of light re-
phrased

No Djinn in Aglasun

a trained pigeon
from a non trained pigeon:

it is always easy to tell
by its flips its
midair stops and
ability to fly as if
backwards.

and there are cases
when after a
trained pigeon's master
passes from this world
the bird will
join a local flock;

and while the rest of
the flock flies
in its predictable manner
there is the one
that flips and

has us wondering
if that is really
what just happened
if in the sky
up over the poplars
a djinn winked;

or one might see in it
the hand of some trainer
watching proudly
 from the other
 side

*Aglasun,
in the Western Taurus
24 Mar, 2018*

The Exotic Here

a mostly green then blue
head to tail streak of a parrot
from a palm grove
to a eucalyptus top

a parrot that sure isn't
the local pigeon nor gull
nor any longer anyone's
pet nor anything anyone
who expects to see only
pigeons or gulls would
even see if close up

nor hear in its lush
throated screech

its far off air

*Fuar Park, Izmir
08 Nisan, 2018*

Sabine Miller

Native Object

To hug a tree—how silly
can one get, he said, but to dance

with it—like the wind, said
he subtracting

craving from contact
& The rose

in the garden among evergreens
after a soaking rain blooms

no wider
than this

Carrying the Metaphor

The German word "Morgen" also takes on another meaning, specifically, the size of land strip "which an ox could plow in a day without giving out." As such, a "good morning" could mean "a good day's plow." (Wikipedia)

Something passes, right
to left. Sound rides
 the channels
 ear no tongue
No, no. The channels ride--

Or tend to it, say
something, carry something

across: Good morning, morrow, field
and furrow. Zero the zero
between the river
and where the words
pour out.

John Levy

The One Thing

The one thing I remember Mr. Fred Eiseman
teaching us in science class in high

school was stated with anger:
"If your heads weren't screwed on

you'd misplace them." It seemed
fairly apt

at the time and as time continues
distressingly.

the crow's
sheen leaves nothing
to be desired

Wading

Out in the ocean
up between the ankle
and the knee
and the unseen sand
down into which
feet press
their human shape
forcing whatever lives
in the sand
further down.

Wading
makes a sound
as does the ocean
around the wading
and then there's
the voices
with their human
word shapes.
The words
not revealing everything
or sometimes even
anything
that lives in the mind
further down.

Not Stopping to Eat

A red crow of fire
painted on this same afternoon
TV announcers interview
experts on terror. The
advertisers list side effects
though the painter with a remote
mutes the commercials and turns
back to add a silvery sharp beak.

Involvement

Looking into the rose from
above the rose a
fresh rose that is not alone, but
singled out and the single petals
involve and curve. What is meant
is mint condition involvement.

Diamondback Rattlesnakes Mating, 4/7/18, Tucson

It took hours. They took hours.
I took photos. Color, then black-and-white
then color, back-and-forth.
At first they looked like one
long snake curled upon itself.
Then I saw the two rattles touching
each other. One snake
moved its head, almost constantly, while
the other kept its head

underneath its own or the other's
body (how tell them apart?) until more
than half-an-hour later the second head
emerged. They mated in cactus shade.
Leslie had seen another couple
mate in our yard and they shook
their rattles, but this couple
made no noise.

at night in-between lightning I can't see the crow

Eufemia Griffo

Milky Way
drawing lines
around our silences

cold spring
the candles shimmer
with the stars

Tre haiku tratti da “Komorebi” la rubrica italiana di Valentina Meloni sulla rivista Euterpe (sul tema dell’emigrazione) e tradotti da EG.

[Three haiku on emigration from Komorebi, Valentina Meloni’s column in the journal Euterpe, translated by EG.]

*ultimo abbraccio
il profumo del mare
tra i suoi capelli*

last embrace
the scent of the sea
in her hair

*mare in tempesta
una bambola attende
sull’arenile*

stormy sea
a litte doll awaits
on the shore

*solitudini
silenzi condivisi
sotto la luna*

solitudes
shared silences
under the moon

il blog del poeta:

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

Donna Fleischer

winter morning,
may i become
your blank page

snowfield –
sound of deer's hooves striking
the moonlit road

in the woods
snow shoals sun squalls,
a green triangle

Tom Montag

HOW TO

Begin
 with a word,
any

you would
 like, then
lay in

another
 with like
sound, round

or sharp and
 lay it
in again.

A little
 of this,
a little

of that,
 some morning,
some light,

some noon,
 some after
and darkness,

then soon
 lay in
the end.

THE GEESE SPEAK

The geese speak
as if spring
has come. Ice

on the pond
says other-
wise. Somewhere

in this talk
patience waits
and I wait

and the small
birds keep on
with singing.

ALONE

Only
the color

of
sparrow-

hawk
against

grey
day.

WINTER TREES

The red flesh
of winter
trees in long

light. Letting
go takes us
home.

EVENING

Should crow
show more

than his
cheap tricks,

his small
dark arts?

Helen Buckingham

DRINKME
small print
rose-tinted

whyno

home
sweat
home

come hell
or high water
common wealth games

blue remembered chills
watergate on the wireless
d. frost on the taps

old school
peas
for bullets

last dance
all eyes on
each other

Pythonesque finger
points to church
bingo

Glastonbury Glamper
the pose of the kidult

sleep
ever slower
to download

dawn
a star
too far

Johannes S.H. Bjerg

det næste du hører er klikket da tågen letter

kuling fra vest

*sådan
uden videre*

det'

*fyldes
din indre dialog*

sådan set
det

op med fisk



next thing that you hear is the click when then fog lifts

Western gale

*just
like that*

well

*your
internal
dialogue*

that's
it

*fills up
with fish*

var der ingen, der fortalte dig det? elskende er lavet af mælkebøttefnuller

der er
en falden

*hvis
der er
tid nok*

i dette

*antag
havets*

ordet
tø

åndedræt



didn't they tell ya? lovers are made from dandelion fluff

there's
a falling

*if
there's time
enough*

in this

*adopt
the ocean's*

the word
thaw

breath

vi bli'r enige om, at melodien i vort sprog efterligner den, dovent mudder har

nu
i en alder
min far
engang
havde

*at afholde sig
fra skoleskyderier*

kaster også jeg
en skygge

det synes

når solen
skinner

*som en overkommelig
faste*



we agree that the melody of our language replicates that of lazy mud

now
at an age
my father
once had

*abstaining
from school
shootings*

I too cast
a shadow

*now
that's a Lenten fast*

on sunny
days

*that seems
doable*

Miles på vinyl og jeg rejser mig og sætter mig og rejser mig og sætter mig for at vende den om og vippe med mine fødder

sådan
er
det

*hjer
ne kemi*

sne

min fantasihund

på
sne

dufter af jordbær



Miles on vinyl and I get up and sit down and get up and sit down to turn it over and tap my feet

there
you
have
it

*brain chem
istry*

snow

*my imaginary
dog*

on
snow

smells of strawberries

ser de andre skovle sne og tænker: hvorfor ikke?

fra spørgsmålet
i gåden

*min sweater
falder
hinanden*

inde i mysteriet

*men jeg trøster
mig selv med det faktum*

lommefnuller

*at sutra
betyder tråd ...*

alt er hullet alt *er helligt*



watching the others shovel snow I think: why not?

from the conundrum
in the riddle

*I watch
my sweater
unravel*

in the mystery

*comforting
myself with the fact*

pocket
fluff

*that sutra
means thread ...*

all is holey *all is holy*

hun frygter, at boblen i vaterpasset kan holde op med at virke

slud

ennui

sikkert
det bedste

*spørger ind til
hvad jeg'et er*

ord
for
det

*sammenlignet
med et nys*



she fears the air bubble in the carpenter's level may stop working

sleet

ennui

probably
the best

*questioning
what the I is*

word
for
it

*compared
to a sneeze*

i søgen efter et yngre selv ringer jeg et nummer, jeg engang havde og får ”udenfor rækkevidde”

beskeden
forlænget
vinter

*“Vi burde tale
om de store ting i livet”*

min
sjælsransagelse

jeg foreslår

ender
med

Blåhvaler



dialing a number I once had in search of a younger me I get the ”out of reach” message

prolonged
winter

*“We should talk
about the big things in life”*

my
soul
searching

I suggest

ends
in

Blue Whales

der er håb og håbløshed og - afhængig af form og størrelse - begge kan være i en tændstikæske

ikke
ud
af
det blå

ned i afløbet

pollen

månen

og manglende
tænder

i regnen



there's hope and hopelessness and - depending on form and size - both may fit into a matchbox

not
out
of
the blue

*down
the drain*

pollen

the moon

and
missing
teeth

in the rain

stop, jeg må holde op med at støvsuge for en times bossa på radioen

ved roden
af bønnen

*det' ikke
ensomhed*

en grav

jeg er blot ved at lære

der sprænges
af lys

en sten at tale



stop, I have to stop Hoovering for an hour of bossa on the radio

at the root
of the prayer

*it's not
loneliness*

a sepulchre

I'm just teaching

bursting
with light

a stone to speak

Ved kærter lys læser jeg om en mand, hvis øjne blev røde af at læse i kærter lys. Han er en fiktiv karakter fra det 12te århundrede og jeg kan ikke se mine egne øjne af af mig selv.

B for Bach
selv russere
ved dét



By candlelight I read about a man whose eyes turned red from reading by candlelight. He's a fictional character in the 12 th century and I cannot see my eyes on my own.

B for Bach
even Russians
know that

Mark Young

stopgap shutdown

Translation memories are
created by human hands,

but the ammunition is
carried by the Inspector-

General of the Social Security
department. It features

nice cosmetic upgrades in
either Mocha or White accent

colors. Tap to unmute
the plurality of recesses.

democracy

is a song
that every-

one sings
but no-one

knows the
words to.

Six untitled poems

Unable to reach
the best mangoes.

Collect the ones
knocked down by

last night's flying-
foxes. Those from

three days ago
are almost ripe.

±

Instead of reading
out of books

he read things
in to them.

±

If the songlines
are unfamiliar
then look to

the rhythm of
the piece. The
ear plays tricks,

but there are only
so many ways
the heart can beat.

±

out of
creamed
corn, so
irregular
verbs
on toast
for tea.

±

Singing along
with the street-
mime's song.

±

Then there were
those other
times when the
moon got in

under his finger-
nails like a
fragment of
a Bach cantata.

Madhuri Pillai

pale morning the whiteness of the raven's stare

to be or not to be a curled snail

Anna Maria Domburg-Sancristoforo

flying in the wind
the seagull's cry —
suddenly april

Quiet lake —
clouds sail
on the water

foggy station —
a man holds
a red rose

Debbi Antebi

spring morning
the unseen neighbor
parting curtains

the weight
of a cherry petal
water dimples

early spring
the bird feeder
in motion

early morning
an empty stroller
fills with fog

Alegria Imperial

forked flesh

white when done and on tines flaky

forget pink blood left over
from unhealed wounds

what next in the humming oil
transparent smoke that warms the chin

turn back the timer on cruelties impinged by appetites
flavored with chopped roots

where to chill the stems tossed in with limp sprouts
weaned too soon from hidden lives

an inch to breathe above the stalks awaiting
for numbers to leap in the pan

warnings of un-worded head-spins
that freeze the brain

let flame rise un-minded except to heed pendulum swings
time slurping fodder for the flesh

till ripened in soft night into purplish pain
then dulled in steam

white when done and flaky on tines

zags

onion peel
a fragile crackle
of verbs

until winds die
tongue petals
on scratchy grass

stone pillow
fishes snoring
in the rain

Venus waking
in place of brown liqueur
a blink

a cloud
armless
heron's shadow

protrusions ail
the moon
turtle eyes

heather bush
for watering
shaved off white lies

a trail
of bees
pulling in
lavender bomb

who is death?
uncut fingernails

picking
weed flowers

Lucia Cardillo

*a bocca aperta
guardano su i passanti ...
gerani rossi*

amazed
the passersby look up ...
red geraniums

*sera di festa ...
ospite clandestino
la malinconia*

festive evening ...
clandestine visitor
the melancholy

*sulla siepe
sfumature rosate...
azalee*

on the hedge
pink nuances ...
azaleas

*brezza leggera ...
tra le azalee in fiore
la sua foto*

light breeze...
among blooming azaleas
her photo

campanellini ...
sull'ortensia candida
il crepuscolo

wind chime ...
on the white hydrangea
the twilight

*un girotondo
tra tegole di sole ...
rondini*

turning around
among sun tiles ...
swallows

*muro al confine ...
lentamente l'edera
nasconde i varchi*

border wall ...
slowly ivy hides
the passages

*un gabbiano
appare e scompare —
nebbia al mattino*

one seagull
appears and disappears —
morning mist

*caléndula ...
arancione il tramonto
lungo il sentiero*

marigolds...
orange the sunset
along the path

Sonam Chhoki

The Bridge of Prophecy (Lung-ten Zam-pa)

Trails of vapour and the drone of idling engines fill the Bridge of Prophecy. It was at this spot, seven-hundred years ago, that the harbinger of Bhutanese Buddhism, Pha-jo Dru-gom Zhig-po, met his consort, Sonam Pal-dron, fulfilling an ancient augury. Their journey of hearts and faith brought forth our tiny nation. Three decades ago, the bridge was a wooden, roofed commemorative walkway, which swayed in Thimphu's notorious dre-lung the 'devil wind'. Today, it is a concrete, multi-lane funnel at the mouth of the valley, designed and built by an Indo-Bhutanese co-operation project.

I decide to take the shortcut across the bridge to work. On the narrow pedestrian strip, I can smell and feel the morning traffic. Each vehicle zips the chilling current of Thimphu Chu onto my face. Across the barriers I notice an elderly man in an old army fleece. He is stranded on a section, which allows no pedestrian exit. How did he get there and how will he be able to cross? He is looking in the opposite direction. I'm not sure if my voice will carry over the din.

All of a sudden he turns towards me and it is as if I am looking at my father. I squeeze in-between two Land Cruisers with headlamps throbbing to tail lights in a holdup. A driver rolls her eyes as I step beside the old man.

'You can't cross here,' I say.

'I want to go to the Chor-ten,' he says pointing towards the memorial relic on the hill. Dedicated to the late King it is a popular pilgrimage centre. I take his deeply-veined hand and we make our way to the other side of the bridge in a lull in the traffic.

'All these cars make my head spin,' he says. The timbre of his voice reminds me of father. He wheezes up the incline thumbing his prayer beads. At the painted railings of the relic, he smiles, a slow crease of eyes and lips, and waves me on.

*fork in the road
the sibia's plaintive cry
drifting with the mist*

*lull in the wind
the hum of prayer wheels
in the spring sun*

Singing the Landscape

News has come that the old oracle, the family healer and friend, is going into retreat.

'I have dreamed of her recently but I can no longer make the journey,' my father says. He asks me to visit her with some offerings. I climb the bracken-covered slope and make my way through the bamboo and pine forest. The rhododendrons are in bloom.

*out of the mist
a buzzard rises
and keeps on rising*

'Here you are,' the oracle says, as if she had known. The last time I saw her was a decade ago at my mother's death rites. She seems smaller and frailer. Her cheeks are sunken but her eyes are bright and attentive. Her hut is on a rocky ledge, sheltered by wind-sculpted junipers. The valley stretches below in the distance. Here and there, a glint of the river in the sun. Every sound is amplified.

*pervading quiet
hollow boom of cataracts
echoing in the ravine*

A slatted bamboo frame closes like a lid to the entrance of her hut. The earthen floor is swept clean and a yak wool rug and quilt are folded by the wall. She has made an altar to Guru Padma-sambhava and a butter lamp glows in the tranquil dark. Twigs and broken branches of larch, bamboo and juniper are heaped in the far corner. 'We have much to do tomorrow,' the oracle says, burrowing into her bedding. I am content to sit by the fire.

*roof of night
powered
by crystals of stars*

The sound of the oracle's hand-held bell and drum wakes me. Venus is luminous in the east and sunlight rims the hill. 'You must make the offering,' she says. 'Conjure the four cardinal points of your village in your mind,' she prompts me:

*'To the north
beyond the ridge of larches
hidden in the grey of monsoon clouds,
are the sacred peaks, abode of our guardian deities.
Their temple lies at the foot of the range
by the Buri River that cuts through the valley.*

*To east
the stupa dedicated to Dorji Dro-lö
stands amidst the paddy fields.
Here too, straddling the hills*

*is the old mule track that brought
pilgrims and traders to our valley.
The Brahmaputra plains
beckon in the southern haze
where the spur dips from the foothills
to the tea plantations of the Assam Dooars.
Here, tigers, rhinos and elephants roam
the teak and sal forests.*

*To the west,
high above the plains of Bengal,
where the Mahonia* thrives
rising from the mist-wreathed pines
in the Darjeeling Hills
looms the mighty Kanchenjunga.*

Her rich voice limning the landscape of my ancestors fills the cold, clear dawn. She murmurs mantras into a handful of rice and takes a silk kha-da from the altar. 'For your father,' she smiles. There's a note of finality in her voice and her eyes brim with tears. 'Your father dreamt of my going,' she says clasping my hands. Ever since my mother's death I have been locked in grief like a room no one enters. It is as if in the clairvoyance of her own dying the oracle has opened a door into a luminescence she had in her keeping.

*sky so blue
the peaks lit in a prism
of sunrise*

*in slow flight
a black eagle's wings
kindled by the sun*

*rise and fall of wind
the scent of rhododendrons
ablaze on the hill*

*Note: The bark of the Mahonia is used in death rites.

bit by bit
the late thaw releases
a lagoon of iris

pouring its song
in waves of wisteria
the pale-footed warbler

snowy dusk
the face
at an unlit window

light rain
the boom of a Rufus hornbill
echoing in the trees

Adrian Bouter

sharp wind
the baby's mouth
in each daffodil

soft shoulders the promise you made

mining town
the rain
not cleaning a thing

pear blossom
sometimes
it snows in April

Elisa Allo

*giardinaggio...
guardando il sole
sboccio coi fiori*

gardening...
staring at the sun
I bloom with flowers

*aquiloni in cielo
sui rami in fiore
pensieri intrecciati*

kites in the sky
on the branches in bloom
braided thoughts

*senza fiato...
fragoline di bosco
a capo chino*

breathless...
wild strawberries
with head bowed

blue moon
whispered words
between the sheets

blue moon...
parole sussurate
tra le lenzuola

*un bucanave...
oggi la mia ricerca
si è conclusa*

a snowdrop ...
today my research
has ended

*mattina ventosa:
la voce martellante
di mio figlio*

windy morning:
the pounding voice
of my son

solitudine...
la voce di Ed Sheeran
nei miei sogni

loneliness...
Ed Sheeran's voice
in my dreams

pioggia d'aprile
l'azalea di mamma
non fiorisce ancora

April rain
mom's azalea
doesn't bloom yet

i nostri sguardi
all'ombra del glicine -
senza parole

our eyes
in the wisteria's shade -
without words

Beverly Acuff Momoi

another false positive longing for lilacs

spring settling on pink petunias

this summer desert instead of hollyhocks

the constant probing all day long billed curlew

Fatma Gultepe

from **Words and Things**

For Ahmed Gultepe

migratory birds
father's handkerchief
under the pillow

song books
sister's calligraphy
of the beatles

spring joy
brother measuring
newborn feet

lilacs in bloom
daughter keeping
mom's cut hair

autumn leaves
mom's whistling
sewing machine

four seasons
my beautiful
flower album

Sevim Gultepe

high
on the kitchen tile
an apple sticker

Eren & Ece Cehreli

birthday stars
the bread crumbs
on the way home

Corrado Aiello

*vapori di tè...
tra le nubi un dragone
è già svanito*

tea vapours...
a dragonish cloud
vanished

*prima rugiada...
cose che mai sapremo
l'uno dell'altra*

morning dew...
things we'll never know
of one another

*senza riguardi
la spina del ricordo —
rose appassite*

with no regards
the thorn of memory —
withered roses

Christina Sng

solitary journey
of a leatherback hatchling
the space between stars

Andy McLellan

winter wind
all over the lawn
a single leaf

February moon
the unmistakable
scent of fox

Margherita Petriccione

*la vela bianca
ci sfiora e se ne va —
mezzogiorno*

the white sail
touches us and goes —
spring noon

porta sbattuta mentre il caffè sale un'ultima lacrima

slammed door while the coffee goes up a last tear

*emicrania —
scatti di cavi elettrici
nel vento di primavera*

migraine —
snaps of electric cables
in the spring wind

*compleanno —
un vaso troppo grande
per una sola rosa*

birthday —
a too big glass vase
for just one rose

*bambini al tennis
e uccelli sulle olive ...
pomeriggio al sole*

children at tennis
and birds on olives ...
sunny afternoon

