

Otata 31

July, 2018



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Hopkins' letter quoted from John Pick, Ed. *A Hopkins*

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TOKONOMA

Manresa House
Rockhampton, S.W.
June 5 '82.

DEAREST BRIDGES, — My heart warmed towards that little Bertie Molesworth (I do not mean by this that he is so very small), so that if you were to bring him again I shd. be glad to see him. (But I am afraid he felt dull. He is shy I dare say.) However I expect he is no longer with you. It cannot be denied nevertheless that the presence of a third person is a restraint upon confidential talk.

Davis the gardener was discontented that I would not let you buy his peaches: he wd. have let you have them on reasonable terms, he said.

I have been studying the cuckoo's song. I find it to vary much. In the first place cuckoos do not always sing (or the same cuckoo does not always sing) at the same pitch in the same key; there are, so to say, alto cuckoos and tenor cuckoos. In particular they sing lower in flying and the interval is then also least, it being an effort to them to strike the higher note, which is therefore more variable than the other. When they perch they sing wrong at first. I mean they correct their first try, raising the upper note. The interval varies as much as from less than a minor third to nearly as much as a common fourth and this last is the tune when the bird is in loud and good song.

About the book I will not write.

Your affectionate friend

GERALD M. HOPKINS S.J.

Alessandra Delle Fratte

*bidoni in strada —
la grandine estiv*

a improvvisa una ouverture

street bins —
sudden summer hail an overture

*Roma al tramonto —
un vecchio tram sferraglia sui binari*

Rome at sunset —
an old tram rattles on the tracks

*finisce il giorno —
pesa un chicco di grano per la formica*

end of the day —
for the ant is heavy the grain of wheat

*fiore di cactus —
un solo bacio rubato alla notte*

cactus flower —
only one kiss stolen at night

*farfalla azzurra —
anche l'oceano non ha colore fra le mani*

blue butterfly —
even the ocean has no color in the hands

*fra i canneti sospiri di vento —
inizio d'estate*

among the reeds wind sighs —
beginning of summer

Alegria Imperial

**if the sphere is a shell
why then am I...**

pierced by the noiseless flapping of leaves playing life-like on grass
bruised from the swagger of kings and queens' consorts unleashed by the bald oak
fractured in my skull as the clang of hungry stones joins volcanic tiles
basso-grinding on loose molars
the flutist rants against wet sticky winds and I'm ripped "my notes cough out brownish stuff"
mimicked-screams rent my breast 'DECAYED', scrawled on foreheads of swine
said escapees from south of the border
a retinue of rainbow worms belly-creeping to an arc over the haze of fury leaves me
swooning as if color is also a blare of trumpets
over crystal orbs crushed by five-toed hooves my knees melt on promises
spilled into sand misshapen one-eyed masks
death-stilled as the theater fills—in legions muted mutated humans
un-climb off trembling vines
sparrows/doves/butterflies plucked off sleep tune in to a sextet
a soundless whimper that jags me heaving
first lines: a chorus of hands disentangles my joints
"un-clamp our ankles, un-cage our fledglings, give back our souls"
who is for whom? I agonize with ageing cedars burdened by a mummy-wrapped empire
entangled in echoes (its own)
what now? I fold and unfold elegies in my breast tucking in threadbare seams under my ribs
...squat in the stillness ballooning with darkness long deaf
to kings and queens' consorts trading un-proofed lies
speared wakened and asked: what do you see?
the sun growing big with the stench of unwashed mouths
enfeebled and yet through mist...I tear up
as the little boy tips his baseball cap at a Black-eyed Susan
shadowed by shaggy clouds I skim round a dandelion's
soundless pulsating heart
...balancing young night on a wobbly head
the weightlessness of my shell

Marta Chocilowska

hospital café —
the oatmeal cookie
like at mom's

Friday evening . . .
the pub door swings
in front of a boy

window-shopping
the red high heels
straighten me up

Tom Montag

from GYPSY POET TOUR

(6)

A long
silence

it is,
between

the going
and the

coming
home.

~

(8)

Not even
morning knows

what morning
knows.

~

(10)

Sometimes
wisdom is

in the not-
knowing.

~

(12)

He is
who he

wants to
be who

travels
this road

alone.

~

(16)

Oh, the lies
one must tell

to tell the truth.

~

(22)

Great blue heron
dragging wet sky.

The world weighs
heavy with waiting.

~

(26)

The old man
lifts his eyes.

The loveliness
does not blink.

It stays with
him all day.

Lucia Cardillo

*sorridi
ed io ti parlo ancora ...
fotografie*

you smile
and I still speak to you...
photos

*vecchia dimora ...
il bouganville nasconde
antiche ferite*

old house ...
the bougainvillea hides
ancient wounds

*lo stesso soffio
una sboccia una muore ...
rose*

in the same puff
one blooms and the other dies ...
roses

*l'ultima estate ...
nella mano stretta a pugno
una conchiglia*

the last summer...
in her fist
a small seashell

Joseph Salvatore Aversano

so how would you know
if you are
entertaining an angel if
she herself
doesn't know
her own wings being
much too transparent
& delicate enough
to beat in
the furthest
thing from a gale if
what she is rather
impressed by
is the frame
of some insect on the
tip of her finger
at the edge of the sky;
but that's how
you know
& that's
how you can
tell as she
walks off w/o
it occurring
to her
to fly

written in response to a photograph by Tamara Tracz

the shadows of the neighborhood
kids play on the local market wall

and not unlike the shadow puppets
Karagoz & Hajivat (Karagoz "The

Black Eyed" & Ivaz "The Pilgrim"):
as we need them, both of them

the shadow & its skin

as the shadow of each kid can
double her size, & double

his friends & their
play area

BOTTLED IN

ask the starfish
what it says and

five arms point
in all directions

what is meant
regardless of

if read the
open

sea

PHOKAEA

where still some
old plaster

the paint peeled
to all of the colors

this house has
ever been

Guliz Mutlu

in memoriam Hamide Gultepe (1914-1999)

*I was working on the proof of one of my poems
all the morning, and took out a comma.
In the afternoon I put it back again.*

—Oscar Wilde

,
i'm asleep, the stars behind the sun

once alone, i like mondays and cherry red

saying nothing, all left behind louder than words

back to where i started, until i become a memory

a simple life, entering my mind nothing to miss

friends, easy to remember or forget

friends, i easy listen each laugh

my silence, the forgotten and the unsaid

long road silence, the distance between our lifelines

undecided journey, the emptiness of where and how

i'm homesick, a child lost, found and stolen

everything happens to me, my feelings in the closet i ask myself why

star-crossed night, i complain under the wish tree

earth scent, a dream i tell in silence

›

i ask grandma: what is the speed of life? — a toll booth on highway

grandma's smile, a weight of heaven and earth

grandma's scent, the wind blows barely, barely

grandma's birthday, i hide one more candle for the next year

a tulip vase gift, children visit grandma, tall and thin

spring cleaning, grandma preparing herself to return home

the chestnut tree, grandma back home in the rain

grandma's window, all the storms and rainbows

grandma's promise, a bowl of cherries when tomorrow comes

long distance call, i only remember grandma's goodbye

not a crowded family, a rose from one name to another

the sick rose, early in the morning how old is your heart

dear ancestors, everywhere now eden

›

behind the rose another rose, i watch the dawning

my small window, one begonia to another

hands in my pockets, under a blue sky, the lady with sweet peas

tea picking, the taste of the sunset ripens in my mouth

peplos dusk, let's sail with dolphins the wine dark sea
amid the dolphin messages, being the universe solved, unsolved
starry night, listening wind with a bedouin
a handful of stars, clouds rolling but not for me
summer rain, i weep for me right on time
a bee, my overjoyed summertime
singing low, not me, a cicada
acorns and stars, i cannot leave the river stones
hazy moon, on my way home the smell of rice tea
the morning haze, a smell of rice tea from a memory
green or red, which way do i fall on this autumn day
my ink black umbrella at the bookstore, i'm dancing with the sun
day of the dead, my shadow dancing back from a grave
silk snow, my wet nurse getting older
storm window, each drop on my reflection
mellifluent moon, my clock is slow under snow
melting snow, the things i cannot
crocus or not, my young boyhood stands in the melting snow
japanese garden, i wonder who left behind the tree house

Elmedin Kadric

plain
moan

dawn
stone

a little sage
my big nose

thinking
about
never
using
a dot

waking
the dot

allot
if not
a dot

knew
snow

Corrado Aiello

*maestro silenzioso —
il modo in cui il pesce
muore*

silent master —
the way the fish
dies

vincent tripi

unknown flower
unknown butterfly
the nectar

of course
I pop one for
the Maker of the jewel weeds

Jeannie Martin

near-sighted
the things of this world
in close up

deep inside
the peony -
peony smell

from broken bottle
to blue orb
ocean

2 windows
a thousand petals
summer

rising
from the forest floor
roots

Peter Newton

pine

needle

rain

first layer of summer
our words under
a pine needle rain

locking arms
a slow walk through
forest pines

pine needles
drop sideways
parallel universe

the needlework
of pines
frame a red house

after a swim
shedding pines
needle the skin

longleaf loblolly pinyon
remembering the names
of my cousins

resting in my open palm
eventually
a pine needle

her little fistful
means peace
pine needle bouquet

speaking my language
pine needles
one to the next

John Levy

GIORGIO MORANDI

The man with secrets
in bottles
and vases
on tables
in his room where
he's
alone
with them
and
shifts
them

after he
examines
where they are.
How they are.
Not who

he is
and is
his eyes
on and with
their form

as they form
out of him
somewhere
we see.

in the dream another sort of inning

FLOATERS

The eye doctor tells the patient they're floaters, not ghosts. The eye doctor tells the patient that he's not the first

to think his floaters are ghosts. The eye doctor can tell the patient wants to believe in his ghosts and the eye doctor

doesn't blame him. He'd like to believe in life after death himself, even if we only come back as grey specks and spots

and blurs and motions across someone else's life, someone else's time, but not erased, not erased. I've

never told anyone, the patient confides, but I know who some of them are. Who am I, the eye doctor says, to say

you're wrong. You're not laughing at me? No, I'm not. And believe me, if I told you some of my thoughts. . . The eye doctor

pauses, not ready to confess any more than that. Same here, the patient says, the floaters are only the beginning.

"Death frequents the poems ..."

John Wilson writes, in an Introduction
to a book of essays on Robert
Creeley, of Creeley's later

poems. The entire
sentence
reads

"Death frequents the poems, but the intense
loneliness
of the earlier poetry

has subsided." Of course those are my
line breaks. The use of
frequents

as a verb
isn't
unusual, but somehow

gets to me. Wilson
continues and quotes
part of a poem by Creeley about his late

mother, "Mother's Voice." The entire
poem has that Creeley
listening to thought that's

felt and moves. He begins by saying it has only
been a few years
since she died and he can hear her

say "I won't want
any more of that." I won't
paraphrase the poem. Creeley

has been dead
more than a few years now (I'm writing
in June 2018 so more than 13). I saw him

twice, once in Canada giving a reading and then
30 years later in Tucson giving another. Now
he

frequents death, if it makes any sense
to use that verb in the present
tense for someone who died

even minutes ago. I bought
every book of his and
double copies of several, thinking

I'd use one to mess up with notes
and leave its double pristine. I always wanted
more of what he offers, still do. Where

he frequents, in his poems, doesn't
subside. At 66 now I recall being
about 21 in a small house in Seattle that

someone turned into a bookstore with
no one else besides the person at the
front. Alone in a room I found

a copy of *For Love*, a book I already
owned, and opened it again, facing the
corner, and while I can't remember

the specific poems I chose to enter I see its
cover, still
hold it open.

Gary Hotham

wild morning glory vines
the neighbor's fence
as high

grave to grave
no boundaries for
the dandelions

white papers
the child draws
melting snowflakes

childhood snow globe
each shake
a fresh layer

weakening the fog's depth
mourning doves call
back & forth

comfortable shoes
stone steps breaking
their silence

one street corner to the next
--
the rain heavier

joining the colors of sunrise
disconnected
clouds

wide sky
fences keeping the land
close to home

above the meadow
the hawk using air
to hunt

city limits
the wind losing
touch

night
silence worth
hearing

a series
of caws
sunrise

spreading thru the night
--
time between stars others named

sunrise
light imagines
the fog

Tintern Abbey
shadows of ruined walls
to walk thru

Robert Christian

Yes Spring
to us then
The next one
gone

Poems a line
(lived)
as written
it seems soon

Just then
and now
to have been
friends known
stirring again

in the month
of re-call
wanting
and forgetting
it all

Patrick Sweeney

Our May Queen
doesn't know the name
of the flower in her hair

My Viking daughter
reminds me drink
to the honored dead

those dark years
in my old dictionary
blind girl reading Braille

rainy Candlenut leaves
speak in the name
of the Lord

running with his rifle
the soft haired son
of the goatherd

eels in a tank
each one with two
green ears

Three sheets to the wind
down the narrow alley
of Cans and Brahms

Lisa Espenmiller

miles from the burning
white ash
on her black t-shirt

moving day
an upended tree
roots in the air

Christina Sng

chalkboard sky
my little girl charts
the constellations

Aparna Pathak

counting stars ...
the depth of my son's
open mouth

exam results —
he swears
god doesn't exist

zebra crossing —
a girl wrapped
in her long hair

Angelica Costantini

*guardando il fiume —
anche i corvi smettono
di bisticciare*

Watching at the river —
even the crows stop to bicker

*vento d'aprile —
scopro per caso com'è
la tua voce*

april wind —
I discover by chance
the sound of your voice

*mondo intatto-
il pallore lunare
nella rugiada*

intact world-
the moonlight
in the dewdrops

*candida neve
anche tu invecchi quando
tocchi la terra*

pure white snow
also you get older
once you touch the ground

Eufemia Griffo

*bambini rifugiati
lo stesso mare
di ieri*

refugee children
the same sea
as yesterday

*bassa marea
uno sciame di Perseidi
sopra le onde*

ebb tide
a swarms of Perseids
above the waves

*antico tempio
la nebbia eterna protegge
le ceneri degli antenati*

ancient temple
eternal mist protects
the ancestors' ashes

*nebbia primaverile
il grido ovattato
di un gabbiano*

spring fog
the muffled cry
of a seagull

Jack Galmitz

one morning
men in reflective vests
stood armed with chainsaws

one morning
men with chainsaws
cut down the landscape

The trees cut down
a mouse runs frantically
around the parking lot

The trees didn't scream
when the chainsaws
separated them from their leaves

reflective vests
lit up in the sunset
smoke cigarettes

At sunset
stumps and cigarette butts
and sawdust

Timothy Murphy

family values
wildhorsefire
fears

night spider
it all makes sense
astrologically

spoken bone charcoal words unheard moon

watching recorded dreams until the end of the series broken star

Mark Young

COUNTDOWN

6.
Messages were
left. On the

surface simple
cyphers. A

different meaning
underneath.

5.
Every body
dances, but

nobody

dances with
the man.

4.
Distance is what
you make of it.

Closeness some-
one else decides.

SNAPSHOT OF ANOTHER TOWN

Talking about Zukofsky /
Wilson Pickett singing
Mustang Sally in the back-

ground / eating Japanese
food for lunch & dinner /
still toast in the morning.

ABOLISH FOOLS.

Jukka pauses
in a
solid state
to tell it like
it is. No phasing,
deliberate phrasing.
Ethical. Optical.

COMPLICATED TRANSACTIONS INVOLVING MIDDLEMEN

How many schools have
their own Crash Test
facility with a deep voice,
& big eyes & mouth? The
potential is horrendous, but
wearing a sexy Red Riding
Hood costume on the school
fun run has nothing to do with
the education of the students.

A MIXTURE OF STATES

Schrödinger's dog perceived
objects in their right forms

but could not comprehend any
extortion attempt if multi-

disciplinary construction projects
were used in the commission of

the crime & may or may not have
come from stolen customer data.

A QUALIFIED VALIDITY

The model theory is
sound. Manufacturer

warranties remain
in place so long as the

ever-growing elderly
population keeps up

with the increased
provision & advances

in medical technology.
Truth is not a datum.

DAGONFLY

tranquility — a small
space that
hovers
momentarily
just above
the alligator pool

[ed. note: Dagonfly is not a misprint. Dagon = Philistine god of war and
story by H.P. Lovecraft.]

Sonam Chhoki

WHAT DOES THE SACRED PAST HOLD?

Crossing the rickety bamboo bridge we climb to the quake-destroyed valley.

*toppled dzong
eyes flecked with curiosity
a raven watches*

Hayagriva, the horse-headed guardian still stands in the ruins.

*ragged clouds
patterns of light and shadow
on the threshold*

The wooden prayer wheels are embowered in bracken and wild rose.

*as if in echo
of buried drums . . .
the sound of woodpeckers*

Broken prayer flag poles litter the courtyard.

*in stony solitude
wild poppies
amongst the flagstones*

night border patrol
the summer moon hurrying
through mist

pouring its song
over the hub of traffic
the yellow-eyed babbler

still in its wooden box
the Panama hat
you never wore

white frills of orchids glow late summer wood

Adrian Bouter

words & music
deep in the woods
an owl decomposes

family meadow the ignorant black lamb

smooth lake
swans cross the oak*s
old shadow

bugs in the streetlight free summer jazz

untitled skulls the war inside

morning
wet horsebacks
carry the opal sky

fear not to weep
ferns at daybreak

offspring
the pink marker
left in the yard

Gabriel Bates

inhaling
exhaling
hazy moon

death poem
will you take me
with you?

quarter moon tonight I buy another bag

something isn't right
inside me
lengthening shadows

Lucy Whitehead

thistledown
on the wind...
when we were young

death waits under my feet infinite space

Pere Risteski

a crow of a crow flew over a cloud

Beverly Acuff Momoi

spring rain glittering mudsnails

first rule in storytelling old fashioned bleeding heart

bespoke before readymade pincushion flower

focusing on the now perfect fig ripening

self portrait in blue not who I expected

autumn near buddleias and butterflies

no one left the grave overgrown with whispering bells

sometimes the stars make the case for moonlight

afterglow how long it remains operative

Angela Giordano

*a piedi nudi
inseguendo farfalle —
spenti i cellulari*

barefoot
chasing butterflies —
our phones off

*grigi palazzi —
l'arcobaleno chiuso
dentro una pozzanghera*

gray buildings —
the puddle encloses
a rainbow

*nebbia sottile —
sotto un lampione un cane
abbaia alle ombre*

thin fog —
under the lamp a dog
barks at shadows

*nello specchietto
una stella cadente —
auto allo stop*

in the mirror
a shooting star
a stopped car

*si spegne il giorno —
dentro gli occhi di un vecchio
c'è una fiammella*

the day goes out —
a little flame
in the old man's eyes

*tra fiore e fiore
il colore del vento —
un'alba chiara*

between flower and flower
the color of the wind —
clear dawn

*sopra la pelle
della luce i ricami —
un cappello di paglia*

embroideries
on the skin of light —
a straw hat

Corrado Aiello

a A. C. (Fenice)

*notte di Litha...
sboccia da una manina
un giglio arancio*

to A. C. (Phoenix)

midsummer night...
an orange lily blossomed
in a tiny hand

