

otata 32

August, 2018



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TOKONOMA

What afflicts young people is not any lack of capacity, however; it's that they are forbidden on pain of appearing old —fashioned, to draw strength from the great restoring myths of mankind. Ours is a decadent society that has declined from the level of Greek tragedy to the clichés of escapist comedy. (How much lower can one sink?) Ours is the age of publicity and the point system, of totalitarian governments and armies without flags or bugles or services for their dead. ... I hate my own period with all my heart. Today man is dying of thirst.

There is only one problem, General, only one problem in the whole world. It is the need to restore a spiritual meaning to men's lives, and to reawaken their capacity for spiritual disquiet. Were I a believer, once this "thankless job" was finished, I would listen to nothing but Gregorian chants. All men need such a rain to pour down upon them. It is impossible to survive on refrigerators, politics, balance sheets, and crossword puzzles, you see! It is impossible! It is impossible to live without poetry and color and love.

Listen to any folk song of the fifteenth century, and you can measure how far we have fallen. Nothing remains but the voice of the propaganda machine. (You must forgive me.) Two million men hear nothing but the robot, they understand nothing but the robot, they themselves are becoming robots. All the creaking disorders of the last thirty years had their origin in two things: problems created by a nineteenth century economic system, and spiritual despair. [...] Men have tested Cartesian values and found that except in the field of the natural sciences they turn out rather poorly. Now there is only one problem, only one: we must rediscover the fact that there is a life of the spirit even more noble than the life of the mind, and that it alone can nourish mankind.

What I am saying spills over into the area of religion, but that is only one of the forms it may take. A spiritual life may lead one ultimately to some religion, but it begins when a human being is conceived as an entity over and above his component parts. The love of home, for example — a love that is unknowable in the United States — belongs to the spiritual life.

[...]

For ours is a period of divorce. We divorce a person as readily as we throw away an object. Refrigerators can be replaced. So can a home when it is merely a collection of objects. And a wife, and a religion, and a political party. One cannot even be unfaithful. Unfaithful to whom? to what? ... Far from where? Man lives in a desert.

[...]

What does matter is a certain ordering of things. Civilization is an intangible possession; it does not reside in things but in the invisible bonds that link them one to the other in this way and not in that way. Suppose we do achieve the mass distribution of machined musical instruments; where will the musician be?

—Antoine de Saint-Exupéry
from *Letter to General X*
Trans. Adrienne Foulke

Damiana De Gennaro

*quando ha svegliato in me
la ballerina,
è subito fuggita
con le stelle chiuse nelle mani*

*sono rimasta nell'eco dove l'aria
si frantuma tra i polmoni –*

*cos'è questa danza a cielo spento
che ferisce con i fiori
e costringe a camminare?*

when the ballerina
woke up in me
she suddenly fled
with the stars closed in her hands

I was left in the echo where air
parts between lungs

what is this dance in the spent sky
that wounds with flowers
and compels walking on?

*chi mi ha dato queste braccia
nella fretta,
ha dimenticato di chiudere la porta
fra l'essere e il non essere –*

*puntuali, ogni settembre
riappaiono i gigli selvatici
sulla terra stupefatta
immemore – solo in apparenza.*

The one who hastily
gave me her arms
forgot to close the door
between being and non-being —

punctually, every September
wild lilies reappear
on stupefied earth
forgetful — only in appearance.

*non ho io la realtà
di un compagno o di una figlia
che raccolga i tuoi capelli dal cuscino
o prepari, puntuale, la tavola al tuo arrivo –*

*mi accontento di nascondermi
fra le alghe dei pensieri
e talvolta farti scivolare
nel trasognato niente dei fondali.*

I don't have the reality
of a companion or a daughter
who gathers your hair from the pillow
or prepares, punctually, the table for your arrival

I'm content to hide myself
in the seaweeds of thought
and sometimes make you slip
on the dreamy nothing of seabeds.

*hai braccia che somigliano a rami
e dita che fioriscono
quando dolcemente parli
e sai di essere ascoltata –*

*dolcissimo è per me
cadere fra i tuoi rami
e sentirmi fiorire fra le mani
che sono i tuoi discorsi.*

your arms are like branches
and your fingers flower
when you speak gently
and know you've been heard —

sweetest for me
is falling into your branches
and feeling myself flower
in the hands of your words.

[Note: poems drawn from De Gennaro's stunning first book, *Aspettare la rugiada* (*Waiting for the Dew*), Rimini: Raffaeli editore, 2017. http://www.raffaellieditore.com/de_gennaro_damiana. Trans. ed.]

Jim Kacian

waiting for the bats mosquitoes

(for Thomas Nagel)

is! is! is!
waiting in a story
not being told

(for Peter Yovu)

distant lightning
upon the vast water
a small boat

(for Shiki)

honey
these words
don't
rhinoceros

(for Scott Metz)

on a green day
if there is green
the blue sky if

the hard parts of a soft life written in graphite

nothing
comes of nothing
the first day

fa[r]ther down
in the burnt jungle
of my dreams

vincent tripi

watch hawk

hawk watching it all

always room
for the tears of joy
the dragonfly's compound eyes

still frightens me
after all these years
fisher cat, God

John Levy

I WRITE IN ENGLISH

It's a talk with the language.
The planet is in each letter's

form and every word's
noise. Others determined

what the words would mean. I step
into them, that is, the words, not

the others. Most of them have died, those
others who made up and defined,

those givers. I don't want to bite
their hands because they feed me.

What I want is to take a bite
out of the fruit they grew

and speak with my mouth full, which I know
is rude, but my tongue is on loan

and I'll have nothing to say
when the bodylord evicts me, the

planetlord; together they write the lease
then tear it to shreds.

Richard Gilbert

Forbidden Fruit

not much written
the silence of apples
awaken

what cannot reach —
being left behind —
a thoughtful moon

forbidden fruit there
provided it hopeless hang
where paradise is found

what is heaven?
colors of a cruising cloud
gambrel of sky

that day you praised me
sweet with summer
gloom of a vaster world

with summer
comes a conscious state —
no one sees the stone

be larger as the sea
dwell — a little — everywhere
ride

indefinite

we talk in careless
plummet again just
how deep

try the sky! among
redwood trees — coself
emself: zir, unbound

behold the atom
and subterfuge is done —
a soul sways

seeds endow the day
mountain to the evening till
a sole cashier

my purple sowing
yet no art to say — to your
simplicity

fiction — when
its small enough — need not
be a haunted chamber

zirself behind zirself
concealed — an assassin
in our apartment

maker firmament metropolis
fragment — origin — sand and hue
to fetch make believe —

in music —
faint — filaments of
diviner things

far abroad — a summer's day
glimmers prove — dissolve — suggest
— enchant

flings in Paradise —
harrowed — a face among birch
iodine of the moon

to be alive —
existence in itself
— able as a god

inspiration & extracts
here and there, Emily Dickinson

Jeremy Seligson

JUST LIKE THIS

Maybe if I sit,
Listen to the bells
Of my brain,
Then the drum
Of my heart
And feel my breath
Spiraling ...

Ah, how soothing ~
Attending to
What's going on ~
What do I find?
A dragon has been
Waiting here
All of the time

THE FROGS

Lonely I return to the pond at 8:00 pm. I can hear the small frogs fluting their delicate songs here and there to the left and right of the footbridge. But as I venture on it they fall silent as if sensing danger.

Although I stand still they stay apprehensive and refuse to sing anymore. I cross the Bamboo Bridge and walk to the sandy shore of the pond, facing the water, the green leaf pads and rows of Irises.

After a while I squat, purse my lips, and start to flute, trying to imitate the gentle frog sounds, but there is no reply. I give up, let go and just sing sounds freely, low as well as high without any expectation, just the sheer liberation and simple joy of singing. Frogs here and there in the corners of the pond reply, one by one in their various tones, until there is a whole chorus from both sides of the bridge, singing with me.

Not only that; wood frogs around in the trees and shrubs begin clacking, chattering in their raucous way, too. This grows louder and louder until I actually become afraid of being swallowed up in the cacophony of both woods and water frogs celebrating with me.

They know that I am friendly. They know that I am trying to communicate with them, that I am singing love, joy and hope. They understand and accept me fully to the point of drowning me out. Gathering courage, I sing to my heart's content until inexplicably they fall silent and so do I.

Then I rise and walk the quiet woodland path, no longer lonely, home.

Jack Galmitz

My wife sings
all day long she sings
and I make faces

Tom Montag

It always rhymes
with where your
breasts are,

in the teased
moment. O,
the loveliness

of this shore —
line, the waves

coming, the light
receding.

POET

You work
the way

you work
whether

that's what
you want

or not.

Where the sun
becomes a tree.

Where the tree
becomes a hawk.

The color of
this light.

Blue, as
a color,

the absence
of knowing,

lost like
what you might

have said.

Mr. Death
said, *Come*

with me.
No, I said,

not yet.
Said he:

we'll see.

Elmedin Kadric

con
test

con
fine

con
sole

con
tent

sens
or

sigh
lens

al
one

tou
can

or
as

ash
ore

May
be
loved

the air
I come
to breathe

day
break
one
egg

BACK HOME

a kiss at the core
of her palm

like drinking water
from a stream

Guliz Mutlu

FOR MURAT CEHRELI

do not move stones
— Sappho

undecided words, thrown away on a wrinkled paper
spaceship window, one galaxy to another
my silence, the forgotten not the unsaid
the secret and lies, when it rains it pours
storm window, the last raindrop on my reflection
barely spring, black sheep clouds gather in the dusk
deep water, the heart shaped stone still there
the road to santiago, a pilgrim drinking some rainwater from a leaf
blossom haze, barely the zephyr blows the dawn
crescent moon, white plum blossoms yellow birds
soaring skylark, puffs of bloom scent the vale
mom talks, the endless petals of a pink poppy
rainy moon makes no sound, birdbath cheers
thinning green of rainbow, a drop of lime for bee balm tea
bee balm blooms, the garland weaver elsewhere
a sunrise circle, bee balm blooms round the well
windswept rainbow, bee balm blooms along with butterflies
windswept rainbow, a colorful ribbon with polka dots
open window, the soccer cheers of neighbors
a very colorful hat, the heads of the window shoppers
lovebird sky, with bliss of i do's summer groom
the sultan's eyes, another folk name for fireflies
a jar of fireflies amid the purslane and strawberries
a floral kingdom, all about the queen bee

a shared kitchen, some mustard seeds for the bee
mostly sunny, when homesickness is a desert lullaby
cotton fields, children blow confetti close to the city
crickets silent, the milky way as long as a dream
eyes on the shore, fishermen and gulls far from the flow
along with the gulls, fishermen whistle close to the shore
autumn clarity, the shapes of a crumpled paper
autumn millet, a small boy counting small birds
cold rain, the shadow of a bust crowded
a nightingale lost in the moonlight, longest night
waiting for snow cloud, slow moonrise
pocket money, the perfect grown —ups kidding me
under the polar lights, santa hugs me at the mall

SECOND PART

the mirror and memory, the mind and dream,
how easily i forget the time and being!
behind the subtle woven web, untouched
my birthday candles, mom gifts me a new one
u turn, the scent of homemade bread
great 80s back, i am big in Japan
a crystal prism, the sunrise fill the room with rainbows
both sides of silence, mom blowing a kiss when i sigh
being polite and showing respect, the unknown phone calls
still morning, mom's phone jokingly voice
coming to me, been there, i'm already away
hazy moon, the house sold when the cats out
a few blossoms, the damsel initiated his heart there
rosebud, the soft throat of a nightingale
lulling, a butterfly chasing dusk
butterfly speed, a difference a day makes
lingering clouds, orange blossoms, cotton fields
a soft sigh, silken mist or silver lavenders
purple ink, the soft musk of a lavender garland
scented shore, the flower necklaces garlands dresses
a sleepy horse, the amber, jasmine and rose
sand lilies, the mist going on
sunny sails, the sand lilies by seashell hills
summer sunset, telling blues ebbing away
starry night, the way I write our names
lyre, of all constellations the delicate
summer pictures, only ylang ylang
city sun, a disco ball for fun
morning haze, the sweet escape from waking up
morning cloudiness, maybe i am cotton picking
gentle wind, the autumn leaves of sandalwoods
by the sandalwoods, the sun, a golden autumn citrus
from a whisper, autumn sunset
autumn sunset, all the ways to say goodbye
autumn sunset, the speed of our silence
speechless, silently starless endlessly
old birdhouse, a few snowflakes cover the bread crumbs
long night, a spider silk, if not starlight
winter love, darling to jasmynes then stars
melting snow, the softness of a cuddle me bear

TROY, MOUNT IDA

troy, sharing a word, fate
the arched bow, if not raised, slept
mount ida, out of my hands a seed to tree
mused, i am also in the forest
the skirts of mount ida, amid the golden apples a hazy horse
the skirts of mount ida, i pick the golden apple for a horse
mount ida cloudy, a shepherdess singing amid the geese
the willows by the well, a shepherdess weeping within me
the bluebells under a cloud with its shadow, deep dusk
mount ida at night, the infinite reveries of nectar and ambrosia
waking up by the wild berries, i am dewy, drowsy
a thousand rivers, the shrilling song of mount ida nomads
the river a mirror, the closeness of a golden shepherd
a breeze from the mount peaches, the dawn, not yet

BOSPORUS, INTERCONTINENTAL LOVE

bosporus blues, under the wings of a gull
gulls and i, bosporus out of twilight
the fog rolling in, many gulls circling the leander tower

Vasiliki Katsarou

LOWELL HAIKU

click —clack Kerouac
in Lowell when we were young
we shopped Star Market

father figures

hard as a cloud,
softhearted boulder
to catch my heel
toe heel toe

self —definition
at hens
barn Parthenon
whitewash clap
black board
aptitude

a pinecone sculpts itself
a rosebud in wood

Joseph Salvatore Aversano

SPELLS AGAINST DIVISION

i.

in the full
moon's light

we're all in
the full moon's

light & in the
new moon's

dark who can
tell who is

who?

ii.

branches &
roots don't

divide they
branch out

the branches
branching

into sunlight
& air & our

bellies &
capillaried

lungs

iii.

in a back float
the sea has a mouth
open it breathes
meaning it
both inhales, exhales
the gull, the dragonfly
the sun w/ clouds &
blue cliff I
never swim
alone

ANGULIMALA STOPS

the one w/ a necklace
of fingers
each severed by
his own hand

while running after
his thousandth victim, & from the
nine hundred & ninety — nine
missing — fingered ghosts
of the rest

just stops

upon hearing the one he's
chasing after, who by the way
happens to be enlightened
say it's possible

possible to do what
no one else would believe
he's wanted
most

falling

water
enough

to wash
in the

cold

falling

awake

Alegria Imperial

had I (riddles)

...muscle to smash a coughing wall causing an orange mushroom swarm having failed
with sneaker waves mapped out for dunce-capped heads

...tears to un-salt with laughter a tale of eaten tail

what feverish strings cicadas improvise...had I the brain to configure as blistered clouds
sweep traces of blue in the shallows

I stand split-legged on mountain crags...were I a zenith sun etching furrows on lips what
spills off unconcerned moons the mourning
dove's alphabet
echoing mine

Mark Young

HITCHCOCK LIKED HOW

a chemical company
located on the coast
of Virginia with a bag

of transverse organics
remains tangled in
a legal battle with

the abstract sciences
over who holds the
rights to use the word

"mango" in anything but
an innovative, engaging,
& entertaining manner.

BREAKING

stride. The in —
cline. Or. The
sight of
ostriches on
the sky
line. Orna
&/or mental.

bucolic

Black cockatoos in the distance. Small
white flowers on a tree much closer
to me than to where the birds are. Fallen
flowers on the path from a similar
variety of tree, but these magenta. Close
to it, anyway. Darken as they dry, look
a lot like cranberries when they do.
But. No juice in them, therefore no joy.

increased food production

A recent study shows

that 24 per cent of species
going about their daily lives

have 43 per cent more
export opportunities than

the furthest fattest galaxy
thus far observed.

trapeze turncoats

Radiocontrast induced
nephropathy follows

your friends & favorite
celebrities to ensure they'll

be totally safe from the
updated Death Match.

FRANGI PANSY

I enjoy going
bowling, trying
to lose those vanity
pounds, being
highly respected
within the genomes
of cassava cultivars.

EVENTUALLY, FLY SPECIES

Children may resist the bug to
experiment at times & get adult authority

but their great rental yield is
inspirational & transformational

so I Entreaty for Your Collaboration
in Reception of a Help validating &

prioritizing old —growth forest remnants
& never went to the authorities.

least wile & vestment

I, Mark Young,

being of sound
mind & body, do
hereby bequeath

the letters of
my name to
anyone who can

make more out
of them than
Guk Mornay.

Antonio Mangiameli

*caldo —
il gusto piacevole
dell'acqua*

hot weather —
the pleasant taste
of water

Margherita Petriccione

*incidente d'auto —
nel cielo limpido
una luna indifferente*

car accident —
in the clear sky
an indifferent moon

*voci di strada opache —
confuso nei gas di scarico
un sole morente*

opaque street voices —
confused in exhaust gases
a dying sun

*trakking urbano
dalle pareti
le bocche di leone*

urban trakking
from the walls
snapdragons

*rivalutazione
di un edificio sequestrato —
colonia felina*

reevaluation
of a sequestered building —
feline colony

*occhi fissi
sulle scale mobili —
centro commerciale*

eyes fixed
on the escalators —
shopping center

*centrifuga —
gli occhi neri
di un peluche*

centrifuge —
the black eyes
of a soft toy

*casello stradale
profumato come l'erba
il plaid*

toll road
scented like grass
the plaid

*un'ape nella navata —
il ruggito di un canadair*

a bee in the nave —
the roar of a canadair

William Scott Galasso

the saddle cradles
my head, sickle moon
in a sable sky

new glove
the smell of oil, leather
and sweet summer grass

expletives...
the town drunk chafes
when coyote howls

Madhuri Pillai

pelting rain so sure of itself a lone camellia

ultrasound biopsy no wood to touch

Ashish Narain

this universe too with strings attached

high tide —
the moon washes ashore
again and again

back in the earth a seed of what came from it

Stephen Toft

a blackbird singing the river's new course

rising skyward
in a blue balloon
emptiness

rosemary scent the buzz of a military drone

autumn beach
the punch & judy man
performs to the wind

in the attic
we find
my summer
poem
dead from thirst

wedding day
the sky impossibly
cloudless

Alessandra Delle Fratte

*girasole —
e sto pensando a te*

sunflower —
and I'm thinking about you

*pane ammuffito in dispensa —
ogni giorno uguale agli altri*

moldy bread in the pantry —
every day same as the others

*carpe rosse guizzano nel lago —
campo di papaveri*

red carp dart in the lake —
poppy field

*ombre in giardino —
sotto i raggi del sole spuntano calle*

shadows in the garden —
callas sprout in the sun

*cesta di fragole —
risate di bambini dietro ai cespugli*

basket of strawberries —
laughter of children behind the bushes

*calura estiva —
grani di sabbia e sale sui costumi stesi al sole*

summer heat —
grains of sand and salt on swimsuits lying in sun

*lampioni a sera —
come me una falena stordita da un miraggio*

streetlights in the evening —
like me a moth stunned by a mirage

*primo mattino —
una fragranza di crostata giù per le scale*

early morning —
a cherry pie fragrance down the stairs

*tanzaku rossi si muovono nel vento —
fino alle stelle*

red tanzaku caught in the wind —
up to the stars

Angela Giordano

*chiaro mattino
il colore del vento tra foglia e foglia*

clear morning
the color of the wind between leaf and leaf

*pranzo all'aperto —
la siesta sull'amaca
sotto la quercia*

outdoor lunch —
a siesta on the hammock
under the oak

campo di ortiche
la mano accarezza una coccinella

nettle field
the hand caresses a ladybug

un canto alla finestra
semi di girasole dentro la gabbia

a song at the window
sunflower seeds in the cage

aria stagnante —
il bouquet di peonie
gli sposi inebria

stagnant air —
the bouquet of peonies
a tipsy bride and groom

*si profumano
le ali di un calabrone —
fiori di acacia*

they smell
the wings of a hornet —
acacia flowers

*caldo asfissante —
un tè ghiacciato al bancone di un bar*

asphyxiating heat —
iced tea on the bar

Eufemia Griffo

*foglie di edera
il doloroso intreccio
dei miei ricordi*

ivy leaves
the painful intertwining
of my memories

*spiaggia d'inverno
la conversazione silenziosa
di un vecchio pescatore*

winter beach grass
the quiet conversation
of an old fisherman

*solstizio d'estate
il grano maturo brilla
al chiaro di luna*

summer solstice
ripened wheat shines
in the moonlight

*tornando a casa
il tempo si ferma
solo per un momento*

homecoming
for just a moment
time stands still

Lucia Cardillo

*scialle leggero ...
il dialogo segreto
di mille uccelli*

a light shawl...
the secret dialogue
of a thousand birds

*il sapore aspro
dei limoni giovani ...
vecchi rancori*

the sour taste
of the green lemons...
old grudges

*assenza ...
così fredda la neve
di primavera*

absence ...
spring snow's
so cold

Marta Chocilowska

slice of bread
step in step with me
a seagull

jogging track
on the garden path
two busy snails

Sonam Chhoki

INTANGIBLE GIFT

As an eight-year old, I am in awe of the village oracle's extraordinary powers. How else is it possible that whenever someone in the family is stricken with some ailment or the other, that her cooling breath of mantras and her plant concoctions restore our life-force? There's a lingering hint of nutmeg and juniper about her, which is warming and reassuring.

A particular event confirms her special status in my eyes. At Ni-lö, the winter solstice, the oracle makes special offerings to the guardian of the valley. The children in the village are agog with excitement.

'If you're good I'll let you help me,' she promises us with a smile.

At the entrance to the village under the old cypress she sets up an altar to the Wilderness Goddess. In the centre she places a life-size dough image of the Goddess, richly attired in brocade and raw silk with strings of coral and turquoise and a paper mâché crown of the Five Buddhas. The oracle instructs us to lay out silver bowls of milk, ara, saffron-infused water and bamboo baskets of fruits and grains in the shape of the spokes of a wheel on the grass. The light of a large brass butter lamp radiates from the centre of this wheel.

I am intrigued by how the oracle mirrors the Goddess in her own attire. She too is dressed in brocade and silk with a necklace of precious gems and she dons a crown of the Five Buddhas. She faces the altar beating her pellet drum to conjure a hallowed space. Her incantation to the Wilderness Goddess like an ancient melody tunes us into a memory coursing in the streams, the hills, the passing clouds and in the roots and branches of trees:

*You're the Queen!
The life-bearing sun, your parasol
The fear-destroying moon, your crown.*

*You reign
over mountains, rivers, woods and fields
over the creatures of the sky, water and land.
Everything we have: trees, flowers, fruits and grains
We owe to your bounty.
From times beyond measure
You've blessed our forefathers
Once more we seek your blessings
We prostrate!*

The invocation over, the oracle's voice shrills to a falsetto and she goes into a trance. Her eyes are charged with a peculiar light as she transports us to the realm of the Wilderness Goddess. Swivelling her drum she leaps to and fro, spilling out words with breathless speed. We listen in silence as she names the sicknesses, conflicts and misfortunes which might befall the families. We beseech the help of the Goddess in overcoming these afflictions. The oracle intones the special rites that must be performed.

Suddenly the oracle collapses and moans. She sits up and removes her crown. She looks exhausted. The elders offer her ara. She dips her forefinger, sprinkles in the cardinal directions and drinks thirstily. She is our neighbour again. We prostrate before the altar and surge forward to receive the blessed offerings. The oracle often reserves some treats for her helpers. My favourites are juicy sticks of sugar cane and tangy goji berries.

*solstice dawn
the glow
of frost-encrusted persimmons*

*as if in obeisance
to the guardian of the valley
prayer flags bow in the snow*

*winter's gift
roosting calls of black-necked cranes
fill the river's edge*

*statuary silence of the peaks
in the fading light
this light snow falling*



shedding its skin
the cobra
slips into summer

lull in the rain
a raven on the prayer flag
watching the sunset

shreds of cloud
the Summer Triangle luminous
at the dawn

Reading Genji
I want to smell the incense
he prepares for Fujitsubo

Andy McLellan

meeting God
face-to-face
lady's slipper orchid

midsummer
from one world to the next
green woodpecker

summer heat
a police siren bleeds
into poppy fields

Lucy Whitehead

a girl at twilight
with a white balloon
moonrise

Brad Bennett

summersong
a second mockingbird
takes it up

pollen aureoles
ring traces of puddles
spring sun

blackbird blackbird; bullfrog.

Patrick Sweeney

chewing the burnt crust of pizza
my happy
brown-robed brother

not sure what
the mimosa wants from me
I stop and ask

Franco Palladino

Occhiali a specchio
Lucciola vagabonda sotto il sole

mirrored glasses
a vagabond firefly under the sun

Lucciola sola perduta nella notte
Nessuna scia

a single firefly lost in the night
trackless

Bruco in viaggio
Nel palmo della mano una farfalla

caterpillar on its way
a butterfly in the palm of my hand

Cancello chiuso
A destra della luna l'ultima stella

Closed gate —
the last star to the right of the moon

Corrado Aiello

*luna calante —
succhiando un gelsomino
pascolo il cane*

waning moon —
sucking a jasmine
I graze the dog

*tutta la merda
spazzata via in un attimo —
trombe d'angelo*

all the shit
blown away in a blink —
angel's trumpet

*falsi & cortesi...
l'abbraccio repentino
della dionea*

false & kind
the sudden embrace —
dionaea

sgranocchio mandorle —
un gatto affila i suoi guanti
sulla corteccia

munching almonds —
a cat sharpens its gloves
on the bark

*Inseparabili –
lei è una sui cinquanta
lui un pappagallo*

*Provate a indovinare
chi dei due bacia meglio*

Inseparable —
she a girl in her fifties
he a parrot

Try to guess which one's
better at kissing

*gargolle in lacrime —
ogni cosa in quest'inverno
è fatta pietra*

weeping gargoyles —
this winter everything
turns to stone

Jeannie Martin

expanding universe long on the exhale

life on earth
everyone
is born wet

light at the end of the tunnel birth canal

shucking peas —
will I be doing this
in the afterlife?

for fireflies
too
the Big Dipper

flicker of light
or is that a snake — —
forest path

[Note: a firefly named the Big Dipper dips its light as it flies.]

Kim Dorman

[found poems from letters I wrote in India to my family in 1996]

at night we
go up

on the rooftop

& gaze at
the Milky Way

Silently
it flows

like an endless
thought —

the River of
Stars

a mad dog
runs

loose
in the village

it killed a cat
worse

bit a cow

I saw it
before news

spread
an

ochre
Indian cur

with
a thick

curled
tail —

it ran at
me

reeling
& weaving

as if drunk

I knew something
was wrong

2 women
appeared

from opposite
houses

shouted
at me

I could make out
the word

“dog”

as it stumbled past
rounding

the corner

later
I wondered

what
became

of the cow



gray

shadowless

walk

the ant hill

hollow

tubes

dry

empty

ruins



wind's warm
embrace

out of
nowhere

colors
drink

the light

Johannes S. H. Bjerg

hede / heat

*i en døs disse dage
betragter
faldende fluer*

in a daze these days
watching
flies drop

•

klistrende
hede og
fluepapir

sticky
heat n
fly paper

•

heden bli'r endnu et lag hud jeg gerne ville afstøde

heat adding another skin I'd like to shed

•

nøgen

under

hede

under

sved

naked

under

heat

under

sweat

•

endeløst som vinter dette blå hvide

endless as winter this blue white

•

Ammundsen krydsede ikke det der hvide papir men en imaginær
opdagelsesrejsende med slæde og hunde

Ammundsen didn't cross that white paper but an imaginary explorer
with sleigh and dogs

•

*nogle dage
er citroner
dine venner*

some days
lemons
are your friends

•

og fluepapirer du ikke tænkte ville virke

and the fly paper you didn't think would work

•

*at blive kravlet på
det lille in
sekt jeg ikke kender*

to be crawled on
that tiny in
sect I don't know

•

*hvad er der i et navn?
et øre? en dør?*

*dét lille in
sekt*

what's in a name?
an ear? a door?

that tiny in
sect

•

en tømt kaffekande hvad denne halve dag har vist

an emptied coffee pot what this half day's come to

•

*kling —klang af is
terninger véd in
sektet det?*

cling —clang of ice
cubes does the in
sect know?

•

kling —kling og dryp —dryp mod stjernenedgang

cling —clang and drip —drop towards starset

•

krummer under bordet unavngivne insekt

crumbs under the floor unnamed insect

•

*måske ved sommerfuglen det
hvid om
igen*

perhaps the butterfly knows
white all over
again

o

*efter stjernenedgang
og du' klar
til at ånde*

past starset
and yr ready
to breathe

o

*uden at tælle fluer
går du ud
efter mørkning*

not counting flies
you go out
after dark

o

*korte nætter
din søvn er alligevel
ødelagt*

short nights
your sleep's broken
anyway

•

Rig Veda båndet på loop som fluerne

the Rig Veda tape on loop like the flies

•

unavngivet

*hver
eneste
af
fluerne*

*på
flue
papiret*

unnamed

each
of
the
flies

on
the
fly
paper

o

de kaldte den strand Fluepapiret jeg kom der aldrig

they called that beach The Flypaper I never went there

o

varmt nok til ikke at gøre noget og ryge

hot enough for not doing anything and smoke

o

The Cure indspillede en Regnsang der ikke virker

The Cure recorded a Rainsong not working

o

*men du kan
se isterninger smelte*

*og blive
til vand igen*

but you can
watch ice cubes
melt

and become
water again

•

raga Megh?

*men vi har ingen
monsun*

*og den kommer
ikke*

raga Megh?

but we have no
monsoons

and it won't
come

•

udtørret er græsset drømmeløst

parched the grass is dreamless

