

otata 33

September, 2018



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~ LINK TO OTATA'S BOOKSHELF ~

FRANCO ARMINIO, *POSTCARDS OF THE DEAD*
(*CARTOLINE DAI MORTI*)

TOKONOMA

The old woman was tiny, her face no bigger than a fist — like one of those babies who mumble with closed fists while the woman hums a tune over its cradle. The room smelled sour, of stale urine and vinegar. You could tell she made that sound day and night without even knowing she was doing it. She stared at the door with fixed eyes and never changed her tune, never said anything.

— Cesare Pavese, *The Moon and the Bonfires* (*La luna e i falò*)
R.W. Flint, trans.

John Levy

ON A HERELY BASIS

time gives me a piece
of its
mind

as a Finnish man beside me says
"on a herely basis"

which is how I think

time
ladles

WOLF

for Ken Bolton

While waiting for Little
Red Riding Hood in her
grandmother's bedroom the

wolf is trying to sing
"My Funny Valentine"
exactly

the way Chet Baker does.
He knows
he is failing. He doesn't put

his paw over one ear
because he doesn't want to hear how
badly he's

performing. He knows
Little Red Riding Hood is out
there, getting closer, and he gets

a headache as he sings. His eyes
wander to a reproduction, framed and leaning
against the wall, of a Vermeer. He touches

his wet nose to the milk pouring from the clay jug
into the two-handled bowl. Now he remembers
singing to the moon and to his mother. Is that

what Chet Baker was doing? Did Baker's
mother protect him when he was small?
Did she teach him about prey?

WHAT IS A PERSON?

How many times do I ask that? I
tried to shoo off a fly
and ended up dropping
a magnifying glass I've had for
over 30 years. The black plastic circular
frame around the glass cracked

yet holds the thick large disc.
It will probably let it go next time
I use it. Then I'll have slivers
all over my study floor and so out it
goes, I think. And the fly stays, whole, and for it
30 years would almost be like a taste of
immortality. The fly lands
on my hand immediately after I write

the previous sentence. Now
it strolls on my wrist then flies to the back of
my other hand. O fly, what
spirit! What hope to find something
to consume! Now it lands on my black
plastic Bostitch stapler. The stapler
as incomprehensible to it, with regard to its

function and why it's even there, as God is to
an agnostic, or *this* agnostic. A
terrible analogy. I won't delve
into why it's so bad. I could've initially asked

What is a self? And
How long does one last? The answer (for each
of us) depends

on
if you, reading this, hold yourself
to be the same self you were, say,
three Tuesdays ago. (Yes, that's
arbitrary. How about 11 Sundays
or 37 minutes?)

Is the self always becoming
and, if so, what
is it always becoming? More self? Are you
the selfest *you*

at this very moment? As for the very
fly, how about it? It lands
on a piece of white paper and
peers over the edge
as if on a cliff. What thoughts

do its compound eyes
generate
inside its
head and do those thoughts
make it now

lean over further

as if to contemplate the distance between its
self and the cluttered floor five feet below? Anything
nourishing down there? Then presto

it's back on the stapler before
it spreads magnificent wings and soars

somewhere else. Kobayashi Issa
would be fond of it. Issa
was a great
person, self.

I want to grab a book and quote
one of his poems, but the fly returns

to the stapler. What makes that plastic surface
so irresistible I ask just as it
leaves for the nearby plaid flannel

cuff of my shirt, lands a
second on my wrist and once again
abandons my flesh. It will die in here most likely.
Happy?

For over 40 years when I see and hear
flies I often think of Issa and his haiku
about flies, crickets, other "small" lives.

Kobayashi Issa (1763-1827), as translated
by Hiroaki Sato and
Burton Watson:

A butterfly comes and takes a butterfly away from my garden

"Issa is a hard act to follow," the fly proclaims, not
whining, just stating the fact.

A fly, translated by John Levy.

John Hawkhead

passing through
everybody
missed him

the play of light
across the walls
I put up

Peter Newton

BIOGRAPH

I was born in Detroit,
a ruined city threatening
a renaissance.

birthday blow-out
my dandelion
wish

Between race riots.
Before the summer of love
fell over us.

willow
a song
we both know

The doctor
told my mother I'd be a priest
because my hands were clasped

another winter
the homeless man
I recognize

together, as if in prayer
when I entered this world.
Today,

singing back and forth
the swing's chain deep
in the oak's embrace

I work alone in an old barn
on stained glass designs.
A monastic tradition.

kin to the cricket
the heron's stop-
and-start

I write in longhand,
my communion of choice.
My poems are my hands talking.

in a web
the size of its wingspan
Blue darner

Sometimes, I think:
A person could make a religion
out of just about anything.

swimming hole
not mine
not yours

Poetry, for example
is a survival technique
and a hunger strike.

constant contact
one rock
the river can't move

I hold out hope
of receiving word
of some new unknown.

another season stronger applewood

vincent tripi

avocet
curlew beaks
life's ups and downs

now beetle
what did you find
feigning death

Jeannie Martin

the window
half open, half closed
spider

basement apartment
a small corner
of sky

fish pier
eye to eye
with a herring gull

sleeping, not sleeping
full moon
at the window

liminal time
a yellow leaf
begins to thin

Alegria Imperial

ingressions

i see you in my veins river tide on heavy lids from night's
bowels a faint slurping

the pearl in his skull a porous sheen in a night bridge the last
star safe on the dark side

somewhat bruised the crescent's womb a shallow breathing
in the heat a pulse in the maple's breast

a labyrinth thickening in my hand an eel stuck in blue air
the tail vanishing eternally

on whale clouds hanging on to me for breath a swollen sun
sliding airless on sharpened knives

a monkey dangles from the orange crane musing on the position
of the rose vs allegation of lasciviousness

and why's

flea, for one the size of grit,
why thirst for blood a scarab clinging to saltiness
mother`s cameo

shirred wind our parallel shadows an abstract of fear
moth, why like me, do you
plunge into the flame

holes in the owl's shadow
night I plead with you spare my cloak
of not-there-ness

John Perlman

Photo at Assateague

Grandfather
outsprinting a wave
on an Atlantic beach
grand-daughter Lilli
smiles sardonically
with amazement
I see how thin
my arms &
legs

Twice on
a wind-driven
high summer day
a male goldfinch
perched on the
thistle feeder fails
to flee we stroked
its black shoulder
epaulette & over
its gold wing
wondering if
he's well

More than
a decade a
tsunami spills from
woods into the yard as
we faithfully maintain the
margins brambles clipped
clearing mowed & garden
hoed raking pine cones
til' we drown spent be-
neath the constant
surge of
seed

dry crumpled
tissue in a crack of
the living room couch

tears I didn't

hear

Shadow of a raptor passing
over the both of us buoyed by
whispers in unison *an eagle*
as eyes turn skyward to
witness a singular
creature wheeling
wide on the
wind

Guliz Mutlu

BURIAL PLACE OF SACRED CROCODILES

I have not been in Salamis without the sound of trumpets!
Roaming the sea nine nights long, my son, my child, I am old!
I am under the influence of a concubine!
Here weaving cushion covers!
I throw a deep shade on high cliffs!
Arise from sleep!
Arm yourself! Add strength! The shadows lengthen!
Do not steal my Dorian dress feebly shining!
A man in prosperity with clean hands!
Lower the sail by the swallow like Charybdis!
I have no memories without humans.
I'm a compound of ox, goat, bull and man.
I'm a fool thief, who left what is majestic!
I love morning walks reciting Homer!
I play a prelude with my life!
Tale teller, one more tale! Sleep fled away from my eyelids!
Teach me the use of arms!
A spring from which no water flows... There I wash my faults!
Burrowing in the sand the good fortune and the bad...
I threw one into the deep dug!
I am the beggar of future me!
Who is begging for the barley loaves?
Don't eat the bread of slavery!
I can scatter myself like sand.
Do I look fresh and smiling?
A jar of wine I waste away.
My heart beats up to my throat.
I'm speaking with a Lydian.

Bring me dyer's buckthorn!
The auspicious sacrifice cooked by the sun!
Other side of the river trusted!
Frenzied, who plaits my hair, making vain, arrogant!
Unknown birds hurling like thunder!
I'm half man, half brute.
I catch in a theft your illumination!
You are inventing new things.
I am shedding fair weather down upon the heart!
Hang down my leathern helmet burning with heat!
Sing me a song that tells my glory!
You are playing tricks with miracles!
Egyptians carry the images of the gods and bury them in sand.
Favor me! I'm under the ground of punishment.
The barley field newly cut off, the newborns there.
I bind my fractured bone with a splint of reed.
I used to catch birds with lime twigs.
I'm under three layers of stone!
Mine Babylonian thick cloak, yours Assyrian frilled mantle, we are all cold!
The embers of war sacrifice, which were the heat of the sacred crocodiles...
Let's share never ending waves!
Am I scaring the foe? Go first and lead the way!
Muddy hippopotamus fall asleep afterwards!
I am sold at twelve drachmae when two years old.
We both died young!
Carving ivy leaves on stone, making manly, I adorn.
Already living in the wedding bed!
The stones flew humming through the air.
Fallen bodies, the oars fell with a loud noise!
Those reeds are for the deep toned flutes!
Surpassingly talk of the veteran soldiers!
I'm averting evil! You! Turn away! I am ill-omened, away from men!
We used to live together by the purple sea, in the island, soaked by brines!
The painter's studio, once with colored Aphrodite...
Tell me the sweetly blooming spring!
Who tied up together my crimson cloak with a bunch of needles?
I am a fellow worshipper of Serapes!
Apply me medicine again!
The sun or the hissing of the Cyclops' eye!
I am not a sailor in the ship Argos!
Shining, glistening, swift-footed and bright eyed!
I bribed! I am bribed!

Wise or unwise, you are my want and absence!
I am a thief of plate, presented by freedmen!
I am a rock, over which the sea dashes.
Same misfortune, sinking together...
When the reasons are omitted, the virtue is important.
I am burning the sacred crocodile's heart for Hellas!
Today's Midas, yesterday he was whore mongering!
I put forth all my fury!
I'm wicked from new gotten wealth!
Because of my exciting distaste for food!
A fly, I stoop forward and vomit!
Virtue is transcendence beyond being!
Who comes in second in a race! How many times?
I am the lady of the house! I own my hair!
Not half beast! I am half barbarian half Greek with mingled cries!
Otherness! Step off my ship!
I am bold as a wolf! I am Lycian! I am lucky!
I bewitch with drugs and charms!
He doesn't talk like a dotard! Non sense!
We are not at the banquet to bribe all together!
Madness is my blindness!
I am a light troop by the horsemen!
Our whole is the virtue! Our whole is the universe!
You are a breath of life, hollowed eyed woman!
Our ever moving eyelids for mortal thoughts and intuitions!
Who is mourning for Adonis at the innermost sanctuary?
Ask me now the ripening fruits and corns!
For the sword on which I have fallen!
I am Ithacan, born in lawful wedlock!
If the bow and lyre, I give the right judgment!
I tremble with fear at your door!
Think wise and act ungodly!
Who embezzled the public money?
The Egyptian papyrus eaten by the poor, I prepare its fibrous coat for ropes; you prepare
the outer coat for writing on it. We are the root and triangular stalk of our virtues!
You never lose me from carelessness, like things lost from negligence!
Being gulped falling away, I am carried down by sea!
Rushing down upon pray a gull!
I tear into shreds and ragged!
Serpent's teeth! I bloom forth!
Don't come back! Rise from the horizon!
Pegasus stroked the ground with his hoof!

Mimicry is a round shield!
My serious words becoming a parody!
Fishermen, let down your nets! The shoals are coming!
Life destroying concubine poisoning my mind!
Who is being divulged of sacred mysteries not to be spoken?
This plate has a special place in my heart!
The Pyramid rose to top by our steps!
Now I am building ships. I used to fight by the sea!
Only the virtue of the whole!
Hand to hand, nothing but the one!
Judgement has given against me unjustly!
Gambol! I skip in childish glee my life!
Gay youth, tender for all! Without pains our patience, you, careless young!
Let not death sit heavy on my heart!
Birds! I see their flight! I hear their cries, even now! Alas! I cannot utter my omen.
Your seasickness! My qualmishness! We cannot cross the water together!
I make myself the slave of power!
The stars are shining above us.
You raise me high into air!
Zeus descending in thunder and lightning!
Never floating vessels!
Whenever the south-west wind blows, I put in mind your love!
I am practicing medicine. Alas! Oh! Woe me! My name is not Asclepios!
I open a new tomb!
What new plan are you meditating, Kairos?
I take a firm stand here!
The weight of drachmae heavier than you!
Written by ashes of your grave!
Pour me not honey and wine!
With a little flesh, eating little, faint-hearted! I lightly esteemed!
One out of a few, but not because of fewness of friends!
Am I the one who slip from the chariot?
Bird of prey like bone! Do not esteem it little!
Seafaring yearlong not for a harbor!
I am a white rock, white ankled and bare footed!
Write a name on the hieroglyphic stone!
Those good lives in my statues!
Keep me away! Fertilize the soil! Add less water!
Broke all our hearts, snap off and gone!
Such youthful promises! I am the youngest of you two!
I have equal rights! We have equal city states!
Newly imprinted political inventions!

Ten managing the sacred rites, I see the victims are perfect!
 I am the conqueror in the games!
 Who is the miserable is hard to make out from the signs!
 I throw myself ashore! I carry out to sea!
 Is this a hunting of wild beasts? I am a villain!
 Once for all nice and tidy absolutely!
 Harkening to the upper story!
 Four winds suffer the sea, not me!
 I take half the honor now!
 Generally dark, feeling alone!
 Surpassing me all in virtue!
 I chant of paeon! Yours, the unwillingness to hear it!
 Who is moving around! Who is sounding as rushing water!
 Cyclopean me, living here savage and unsocial!
 The vine branches loaded with purple painted grapes!
 Sister, I am a child untimely born! I am not here to be approved or applauded, bombastically!
 In my archonship, this is the place where I meet you!
 Do not speak of evil and abuse me!
 I am a boy cheater playing the boy!
 I am resting between whiles!
 In time gone, the seamen run aground!
 Good hard stones! Goodly race of children!
 I look shaggy with horse hair!
 The state is the cause of city's wrath!
 Late in the evening, the diversity of votes!
 All those knavish tricks for being evil! I am not evil!
 I cry aloud! I praise loudly!
 Nobody irksome or troublesome at the Corinthian Gulf!
 I am of like appearance with you! You are playing me well!
 Stop! Are not you my slave! Bring me water for bathing! Now, pour water into the bath!
 Noble daughters wear such a garment!
 I am not that Athenian adulterer, but I thrust the radish up the fundament!
 A fair voyage lasting, I sense it! Then, grief...
 Unfurl the warlike sails fit for battle!
 A poor portioning out his daughter!
 The deed of daring, the shoemaker's knife!
 Who is shouting in answer to my calling? Joyous voice!
 A battle of elephants up there!
 The lawyer's speech! Are you speaking freely or denying me utterly! I deny you strongly and
 persist in denying!
 I am Icarus, the chief comedian! I am a chief pilot, a chief shepherd!
 I rip up old sores!

I lost myself in hunger, ever unceasing thirst!
Gourmands using emetics, I am vomiting!
We already recognized our fighting power!
You left me behind, when the olives beginning to ripen!
I cannot be a star gazer! I only see a star!
Not even a star gazer! Not even an astrological sophist!
I denote the true new moon!
Who leads the wrong bride to the bridegroom's house!
I fall in ruins of war!
No more city bread for those who broke our earthen vessels!
A kind of beer, Themistocles!
Fellow soldiers, adjoining lands!
You are only a tax gatherer!
I am as clear as crystal!
Not our same habits of life! We have a boss!
Tell me marvels, my marvels! Marvelousness will be told!
I stand before the shepherd's lamb!
The country on horseback... I am the person here and there!
Well then! Come here! Give me the right judgement! Now, go away!
I alter my soldier uniform! I am remodeling war and peace!
I changed men's persuasion!
My neck breaking words on the chariot road!
Am I shooting crows! Am I old as a crow!
Your beautiful eyes looking down and touching me!
Maybe I pale with envy. Gold is pale!
What is the highest earthly happiness? A cicada singing with its wings!
Tell me honey tongued! Sing me sweet voiced! You are my melilot!
I am holding ink! The ink, black and dark, dark and obscure, then, blacker!
My light is blackness! I have dark gleaming black wings!
I am the black robed, the black eyed and black hearted!
The keeper of the crocodiles provides me the food!
I am black skinned, black cloaked, under black soil!
I am a night traveler!
Cuckoo! Now! Quick!
You are the commander! Do not go to bed! Do not sleep!
I lay pride in the kermes-berry chamberlain!
Not a kind of cake, this is cement!
Who build before long walls from the altar of agora! Who steal the state gods' gold
and bring off secretly copper! Fellow workmen, helpmates, who steal our houses!
In Salamis to go, to go away with snow!

Mark Young

AN INTRODUCTION TO A BOOK OF DREAMS

I am writing the
introduction to a
book of dreams. This
is the first dream.

OUT OF OXYRHYNKHOS

Trans-
lations a-
bound. Trans-
literations, inter-
pretations, extra-
polations, the do-
nut holes of
torii ex
-plored
-ploded
-ploited. Seven
words. On the
third.....stone.....
rolled.....came
.....garden.....

branding & communication solutions

if the pool of susceptibles were lessened
does not get taught at an early age
you've got to have some sort of instrument
at another time would form
did women simply prefer city life
the intensity of the plot is happily relieved
is crucial to several promising applications
Jhung Yuro appeared on all the right blogs
eliminating his stock interest through merger
what do you like to do for fun

the urban landscape

La discontinuité sémantique
encloses a world of war-
time horror & diminishing

salt marshes. There is al-
ways a consensual orgy
of schadenfreude. That

picture is filed under "Home
& Garden & Crafts." & nobody
has yet conceptualized dystopia.

defector parasites

Antagonistic coevolution between letters to the editor in this week's Bucks Herald

& a creaturely organism like us in spirit, but who has been shot multiple times, has lead to

this latest collection of dreamy, tender songs — now available at the iTunes store — from a

bunch of Springsteen-worshipping apicomplexan relatives living in an underground bunker be-

neath the sub-Saharan pavilion from last year's Venice Biennale.

PORTENT

The curtains
are drawn,
but the morn-
ing magpies
still manage
to bring the
outside in.

— Yiminishuqilibi Khan. (d. 645(?) CE)

Translated by Umberto Allegruzzi included in: *Rivalling the Six Dynasties: Poems
from the Eastern Turkish Khaganate*
The Uzbekistan Historical Society; Bukhara, 2000.

Ronald Scully

snowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnows
nowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnows
owsnowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnowsno
wsnowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnowsno
snowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnow
nowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnowsnows
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rainrainsnowrainrainrainsnowrainsnowrain
rainrainrainrainrainrainsnowrainsnowrainr
ainrainrainrainrainsnowrainsnowrainrainra
inrainrainrainrainrainrainrainsnowrainrai
rainrainrainrainrainrainrainrainrainrainrain
rain rain rain rain snow rain
rain rain rain rain rain
rain rain rain rain rain
rain rain rain rain rain
rain... ice

Marietta McGregor

persephone

into
a grotto
descending
Silurian fishbone
thought seeps along
the bed of a stream
inside a stalactite hop
from wet rock to rock
blind cave cricket this
deeper sense of damp
traced out of spider-light
microbats and after that
underground rushing up
still i vacillate, gravel in
his voice the deft plunge
of darkness, sand in a
dank mouth stubborn
loss of ages dimly
torchlight strobing
gasps i recognise
low light how
unflattering to
the ghosts
of us

LINES OF CARNAC/ MARTYROLOGY

black Virgin
clogs lined up
in the market

cloister prison every legend dies again

all the blues:
chamber pots
feed hydrangeas

encircled processional uncovered bones

hilltop dolmen
old faces
old villages

twelve turn a column evermore

shingle-toothed
gap-ness of
house roofs

transgression the gods trumpet whatever

Paimpoul
boat-riggings
tink tink

the Maiden and Death a double-edged scythe

feast day...
Madame la Comtesse
second-best

cobalt red and gold polychrome razzledazzle

train viaduct
chuntering through
a Queen's duchy

severed head... jewel of La Martyre

menhirs laid flat
this ruined
alignment

a chapel built by lunatics of good intention

Elmedin Kadric

ON FOUR

o
ne

tw
o

thr
ee

four!

al
so
me

in
deed

be
hold

the
pur
pose

wind
in
oaks

here
by

of rhythm
in air

to living
for a dot

it's a dot
Sisyphus

he need not be
tied up in knots

after she's gone sailing something smaller

enough is enough mulberries

on the mountain
at the top
of his voice

thoroughly mist

shreds of
pieces

of rain
you know

can rolling

over it

the air

I reap

to sing

myself

to sleep

Joseph Salvatore Aversano

extrapolated a herbarium
into a landscape
line by hand-drawn line
until a line that is yet
another line
is also the horizon

sowed one line & then
another & w/ each
according to its eachness
whether w/ striated
or even leaf

& w/ each according
to its potencies
for some healing or other
& to be chanted over

enchanted line
by enchanted line

written in response to a visual piece by Sabine Miller

wishing tree tied cloth ribbon shade

the beach

impressed so
ever lightly in
the sole:

a splint a
stone sea
shell half of
a sunflower
seed

frances angela

long pier
a girl dancing
with her mother

bedsits the years before mother came back

near blindness
mother's card
in another hand

the undertaker's white gloves my fingerprints on mother's coffin

scraping nicotine from mother's wardrobe door late dusk

her flat empty now mother's scent on my sleeve

my fall on the rocks i stay in the garden listening

another summer another blackbird marking my book

breathing new life into grandma's tablecloth summer breeze

latchkey
the last child
on the swings

school truants
the park gates
missing

old lepers' well
a paint brush
in the grass

the hunger to be older seamed nylon stockings

fox's cry
the hospital
at night

hometown
less of me
with each visit

musical box the tune we both remember

the light before it goes two crows

Tom Montag

from GYPSY POET TOUR

(77)

Earth, air,
and water

want us. All
around us

the world
returns to

the sweet cold
darkness of

waiting. Soon
we shall join

with shadow.

(79)

Red tail sits
straight against

rain. This day
is like this

day, is like
every other.

(83)

The vultures
want

what they
want

and they
know

they can
wait.

(84)

Crow chews
his mouthful.

He can't
stop to talk.

(87)

Vultures circling
the death they know.

They do not know
their own death.

Tim Murphy

HEARTHS

rooted shadow pattern
shadowed root pattern
patterned shadow root
root pattern shadow
shadow pattern root
pattern root shadow
root shadow pattern
shadow root pattern
pattern shadow root
rooted pattern shadow
shadowed pattern root
patterned root shadow

shipwrecked open star clusters green ink moon

the becoming shape abstractly expressed planet

wavelength
developing the image
of an angel's wing

summer solstice
the gallery installation
stares back

Peter Yovu

SIX WORDS

PLUM

To say the word, slowly; to feel what it does to the lips, tongue, teeth and throat; the blue aftertaste of chant resonating as you linger there. It is a word which opens onto others as I playfully indulge: plum/Paloma/ palomino. As clam does onto calm and column; as snow does onto sinew.

plum penumbral palimpsest

SNIPE

The common snipe deserves a better name. A beautiful, oddly but wonderfully proportioned bird whose plumage resembles the marbled pages of antique books. A plum's weight in the palm, if a large plum.

In snipe I hear sunup, when the bird has ceased its erratic, nocturnal flight and one no longer hears the whirly whistling of its tail feathers. There is a word for that sound: "winnowing".

snipe synapse Sunapee, New Hampshire

KNEE

For that silent k, like a cap it was born with. Not silent from the beginning, of course. It would have been pronounced: *kuh-nee*. How it changed from the French word *genou*— Anglo-Saxons bending to a new language— I don't know.

What a difference a vowel makes! The high pitched *ee* of knee; the open oh of know. The all too often appropriate keening of "my knees hurt!". Yes, I know.

knee canoe can he?

VERY

Seems like the sense of “truly” has been lost, or at least it’s no longer in the fore and the word mainly acts as an intensifier in some objective sense. But maybe that’s useful. There is a big difference between, say: this rose is very red, and this rose is truly red. And there are distinctions to be made between I am sad to hear it, I am very sad to hear it, and I am truly sad to hear it.

My fondness for this word comes from something my daughter said when she was four or five. I think it was a Sunday morning, early, too early for her parents to be up just yet. She came into the room, clearly unhappy, because, as it turned out, the dog had shredded a newspaper and made quite a mess, and announced: “That dog’s a very damn’ dog”.

The intensifier, for me, was forever intensified.

very vireo the green green wood

Snow

Most words that begin with the letters *st* convey a sense of the stationary, of being stuck or still. One might say that story is an exception, as stories change, though people seem to prefer to stick to them as they are.

Interestingly, many words that begin with *str* seem to break out into some kind of movement: stream, stray, strike.

Words beginning with *sn* often convey of sense of sneering. In his book on poetry John Frederick Nims includes a photograph of a woman, her nose lifted in disgust. Think snicker, snake, snide.

Why does the word *snow* behave differently? Is it just that snow— what falls and fills the branches of tall pines— may be considered beautiful where a snake (for many, reflexively) is not? I cannot quickly come up with another word that combines the *sn* sound with a long *o*. The vowel seems to carry the word beyond its origins.

All yesterday it rained. This morning when I woke and looked out my window, yes: swirling snow. Strange that in January, in Vermont, that was a surprise.

I may not have said it out loud, but I did think: *oh*.

snow so now is known

HUBBUB

For the way it doubles *ub*, and for having, among 6 letters, 3 bees.

Bee 1: a social colonial hymenopterous insect

Bee 2: a piece of hard wood at the side of bowsprit to reeve fore-topmast rays through

Bee 3: the letter b

I suppose porridge, at latter stages of cooking, could be called a hubbub of bubbles, which, said out loud, enacts the way thick oatmeal feels in the mouth.

So that's a shout out to another word—bubble— that has 3 bees among 6 letters.

I think also of giggle, goggle and gaggle. A whiz of gees.

The gag with gaggle is, if you turn it upside down, you see three geese. (Unless your font features looped gees, which may remind you that geese are pretty loopy).

hubbub the hub of above Abba

Zach Groesbeck

from BUS NORTH

Cypresses bare another autumn every exit driven past

Approaching hills knob defining a horizon time is self-evident

Not a word accumulating rainwater draping this window

Settling fog saws a woods in half—burl-bloated stumps

December sunlight hummingbirdsong

paul m

her singing
from the garden
to-do list

old scout house
pine needles point
all directions

cabin bookcase
a mouse has been
here

where I learned
to tie knots
dueling crows

no
knowing
how
deep
its
roots
go
the
heat

Roadside
heat

dust
a

tilted box
loose

cherries
warm

from tiny
hands.

Small

brass
nails

protrude
from

the
wood.

Call her
now

hawk cry
a hundred-foot drape
of kite string

Mother, it is
not that we

don't see God's
light, but rather

it is all we see,
so complain

about the fray
ed edges. The

old wallpaper.
How a figure

on one sheet
doesn't quite

meet itself.

thunderstorm ...
the water bottle
a singing bowl

Eufemia Griffo

*il grido di un corvo
un villaggio abbandonato
sulla riva del fiume*

a raven's cry
an abandoned village
on the river bank

*finestra dell'ospedale
una scia di rugiada disegna
i miei pensieri*

hospital window
a trail of dew draws
my thoughts

*sole allo zenit
sotto il cappello dello spaventapasseri
l'ombra di un gecko*

sun at the zenith
under the scarecrow's hat
shadow of a gecko

*abbazia in rovina
tra le erbacce spunta
un girasole*

ruined abbey
among the weeds appears
a sunflower

*stelle infinite
un pescatore disegna i confini
tra il mare e il cielo*

endless stars
a fisherman draws the borders
between the sea and sky

*notte nebbiosa
da qualche parte le stelle
brillano ancora*

foggy night
somewhere the stars
still shine

*foglie congelate
le fate della neve intrecciano
ragnatele di ghiaccio*

frozen leaves
the snow fairies weave
ice spider webs

*pioggia al crepuscolo
i colori mutevoli
dei cachi maturi*

twilight rain
the shifting colours
of the ripe persimmons

*fine estate
solo il vento del nord
sulla riva*

summer end
only north wind
on the shore

*crepuscolo
ondeggiando le spighe
con il vento*

twilight
ears of grain sway
with the wind

Angiola Inglese

so close
the midnight train —
north wind

work-in-progress
a hornet's
come-and-go

small station —
the long film
of train windows

silences —
my mother's
pearl earrings

Angela Giordano

*dietro le sbarre —
i sogni di libertà sulle pareti*

behind bars —
dreams of freedom on the walls

*fruscia il kimono —
tra le dita di un vecchio la pelle fresca*

the kimono rustles —
between the fingers of an old man the fresh skin

vacanze estive
sull'isola di Lesbo —
vecchie leggende

summer holidays
on the island of Lesbos —
old legends

*calpesto foglie gialle sotto i piedi
il seme germoglia*

i trample yellow leaves underfoot
the seed sprouts

*una finestra
lo divide dal mondo —
rianimazione*

just a window
divides it from the world —
resuscitation

*pesca a strascico —
tra i capelli l'odore di pesce fresco*

trawling —
the smell of fresh fish in my hair

*la mareggiata —
un sandalo e una bottiglia sulla battigia*

the sea storm
a sandal and a bottle on the shore

*profonda quiete —
dentro gli occhi di un gatto la luna piena*

deep quiet —
inside the eyes of a cat the full moon

Corrado Aiello

*sorrido appena
se mi chiamano "maestro"
... fiori scheletro*

I barely smile
if they call me "master"
... skeleton flowers

[The petals of skeleton flowers (*Diphylleia grayi*) turn transparent in rain.]

*scritto sugli alberi
il poema del vento —
tigre di carta*

written on trees
the poem of wind —
paper tiger

*Otata 33
Son di un anno più vecchio
o più giovane?*

Otata 33
Am I one year older
or younger?

[The poet turns 33 this month.]

Antonio Mangiameli

*sibili —
il volo circolare
di un calabrone*

hiss —
the circular flight
of a hornet

Lucia Cardillo

*vento d'autunno ...
piume stropicciate
nel nido vuoto*

autumn wind ...
crumpled feathers
in the empty nest

*il sole è alto ...
formiche sempre in marcia
senza sudare*

sun high in the sky ...
ants march on forever
without sweating

*foglia su foglia ...
lentamente autunno
sulla veranda*

leaf on leaf ...
on the veranda slowly
autumn

*guscio di cicala...
parole su parole
sempre più vuote*

cicada shell ...
more and more empty
their words

*sera d'estate...
attraverso le nuvole
cadono tuoni*

summer night ...
across the clouds
thunder tumbles down

*bocciolo ingiallito ...
un amore impossibile
mai sbocciato*

yellowed tight bud ...
an impossible love
never blooming

Margherita Petriccione

*16 agosto —
resti di petardi
sulla spiaggia*

16th of August —
firecrackers' remains
on the beach

*tramonto autunnale
nella grotta un respiro
di mare e vento*

autumn sunset
in the cave a breath
of sea and wind

*scogli di cozze —
odore di bassa marea
a tarda sera*

a shoreline of mussels —
the late evening smell
of low tide

*mare d'autunno —
una bacca di mirto
dal sapore aspro*

autumn sea —
a myrtle berry's
sour

*pesca subacquea —
un guscio di cozza
acuto*

spearfishing —
pierced by
a mussel shell

*spiaggia di sassi
saltellando a piedi nudi
prima di galleggiare*

pebble beach
hopping barefoot
before floating

Alessandra Delle Fratte

*notte piovosa —
nuovo sake riscalda il cuore*

rainy night —
new sake warms my heart

*melanconia autunnale —
fra vecchi vasi in giardino perdo il mio
ciondolo*

autumnal melancholy —
among old clay pots in the garden I lose my pendant

*via lattea —
un aereo in volo segna la mia tristezza*

milky way —
a plane in flight marks my sadness

*lo stagno freme al tocco del vento —
gocce di rugiada*

the pond quivers at the touch of the wind —
dew drops

*erba estiva —
una verde marea avvolge il mio corpo*

summer grass —
a green tide hugs my body

*vento fresco a sera —
sembra che dorma nel suo ultimo viaggio*

fresh evening wind —
it seems she's asleep on her final journey

*meduse a pelo d'acqua —
gelatina d'agrumi come dessert*

jellyfish on the water surface —
citrus jelly as a dessert

Patrick Sweeney

rouge high on both cheeks
I want to eat
all her blackbirds

impact craters
on the dark side
of Burt Lancaster's face

Merino clouds above
the thistle hiss
of my wrong turn

hand paintings
the Passion at the center
of every palm

"Oh, a firefly," she said
as the night
tingled

the sound of the sea
has gotten into the branches
of the silver oak

long after the firestorm
a pacifier in the mouth
of the Dresden teen

the lime green moth
on the white aluminum siding
no one will come out to see

ignoring the "what does it matter" school
I wait for the grasshopper
to leap clear

pine soot ink
the rainy night
on the skin of it

ringing the chemo bell
the arc of her
answered prayer

field of butterflies
it seems like their hearts
should be bigger

between "being
and nothingness"
cabbage white at dusk

Bill Cooper

molting crab eyes fixed on blue marl

first grade
a fledgling oriole spreads her wings
and hops

removing wing dust
above the school doorway
Labor Day

roll of the sea
a hawksbill nipping
sponge

bufflehead bobs among the floating cranberries

piccolo
a pincer cloud releasing
the sun

a minnow eludes
the wing shadow
reddish egret

water wings
tossing my child
one last time

bee bending iris bending bee

Nikolay Grankin

migratory birds
a scarecrow's hat
askew

Lucy Whitehead

moebius strip
I wake to find I'm still asleep
inside a dream

padlocked chapel
dad tells me about
bede's sparrow

paleolithic handprint the span of a life

suddenly a stag
in the lamp light
waking from a dream

amber necklace
the ancestors
in my bones

ancient causeway
the ocean
at our heels

Madhuri Pillai

flapping away in the drizzle mynah's ambition

Christina Sng

moonless
the day I gave up
on us

Jack Galmitz

Playing Hearts
alone
with the computer

When Aretha Franklin died
is it any wonder
that I cried and cried

Marta Chocilowska

gunshot –
a pair of eyes
bulges above duckweed

the yoke—
on a water carrier's arm
a butterfly

sharp bend
in pieces of a bike mirror
the bright sky

lost friend
in the mountain's shadow
green boots

Kim Dorman

for Jonathan in Tel Aviv

we have seen what lies can do
to children

as they grow
 & now these
stained lives

broken
 hearts

was it just a dream then

who did we follow?

o

time sleeps by the river

a white stone

these glass beads
are really
sand

grains gleaming in your hands

at dusk

lived out
of brown water

o

the river
flows around you

body
upright

in the stream

o

crows on the banks

mothers
washing clothes

childhood
under

mysterious
trees

in the rain

o

the waving
lamp

flickering
flame

words that are
sounds

heartbeats

o

devotional
acts

secret
teachings

unknown
prayers

childhood
fears

o

now is the time
of division

of heretics
& the faithful

time to stand alone
not

in exile
or denial

but in the clear
air

of tragedy

the elegiac
sense

of a story

played
out

as human

o

nothing not
even

prayer

can restore

what we
lost

