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Featured Poet

Vassilis Zambaras
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Tokonoma

Probably we in the West are incapable of estimating this profound difference — the parting of ways between wisdom and technology is too far in our past. Plato knew it, when he recorded the Egyptian king’s pronouncement that the use of writing would lead to the deterioration of the human memory. Now we see storage of information so developed that human memory has come to seem only a short-lived and disposable substitute for technology. Yet what has been lost is wisdom; and love. It comes back always to love, that mysterious link, or medium, in which life has its being. The relationship of parents and children, or philosopher or holy man to his devotees and disciples, indeed of any true teacher with pupils whatever be the subject studied — all these are relationships of love, or information is nothing but a burden and a destructive mockery. Children learn from those they love and who love them, otherwise they leave school hating French because they had a French mistress whom they disliked, or the Church because the spirit of love has fled from it. The Indian link with the guru is a relationship of love, be it all those beautiful Punjabis with their Master at Beas, or Ramu in his relationship with Ramana Maharshi, albeit he had never seen him. Or Arabinda Basu, and Dr. Sethna with Sri Aurobindo. Through love they know themselves linked with the one living Self of the universe. Taped and recorded information cannot impart love, never wisdom never that living breath of poetry, only the words. All the same, does not something from Homer, from Shakespeare, from Valmiki, from Wordsworth and Shelley, from Yeats, travel still on the living network of love, to the end of time? What are the limits of that network? Is not all present past and future ever present within the one life?

— Kathleen Raine, India Seen Afar
(with thanks to Kim Dorman)
small
dust—gray
birds
groom
each other
among
the
leaves
a large brown millipede on the red tile floor

bare chest white cloth arms at his sides
as things
bodies
    fade
the unmoving
steadily
flows
something in the heart
surfaces


a small
white room
a chair
the river
that flows
nowhere
prima neve:
un ventaglio di luce ad ogni passo

first snow
a fan of light with each step

fresche risate:
ancora rintoccano le campane

fresh laughter:
the bells still ringing
mulinello di foglie oltre la soglia:
il canto delle sue mani

a swirl of leaves beyond the threshold:
the song of his hands

passi frenetici nell'ora di punta:
gocciola lenta una fontana

frantic steps at rush hour:
a fountain slowly drips

strade deserte:
suono d'un sax in lontananza

deserted streets:
the sound of a sax in the distance
vento d’autunno:  
il cappello del nonno sul marciapiede

autumn wind:  
grandpa’s hat on the sidewalk

temporale:  
profumo di resina e d’erba nuova

thunderstorm:  
scent of resin and new grass

nel sottobosco le fragoline:  
piccoli baci lungo il sentiero

strawberries in the undergrowth:  
little kisses along the path
cime innevate:  
scivola fra i larici acqua corrente

snowy peaks:  
water flows through the larches

cucina di mamma:  
i barattoli vuoti nella dispensa

mom’s kitchen:  
the empty jars in the pantry

tacita notte:  
nel silenzio di neve le ciaramelle

tacit night:  
bagpipes in the silence of snow
finestre chiuse:
risuona il passo del mendicante

windows closed:
the beggar's steps echo

fiori d'arancio:
nell'aria lenta mani di sale

orange blossoms:
salty hands in the slow air
nebbia in collina:
la sua lontana tenerezza

fog on the hills:
his distant tenderness

mare d'inverno:
il monologo dell'onda sulla battigia

winter sea:
the waves’ monologue on the shore
All things
touch

all things,
which

is the
mystery

poetry
knows.

To say the same
thing again and
again so that
saying becomes
the thing itself.
To expire is
to breathe out

and to die.
Every day

we do, twenty—
two thousand times.

Poets are
their instrument,

stars
trying to

make
something

of themselves.
The universe

doesn’t know
how else

to say it.
If not for
light and darkness,

what of thing
and shadow,

there and not there,
like rain and

after the rain,
what we can

and what we
cannot touch.
presumably the actions of a few
IS
not
for
giving

li
ke
ep
ic

whatever lump I am leading

REQUIRED
the fragmentary loop
I turn
to have
my picture
taken

as
pen
so
lid
TRYING TO

make myself
have enough

you've
tried it
before
luna calante —
gli occhi del gatto sulla ringhiera

crescent moon —
the cat’s eyes through the railing

solitudine —
un grappolo di stelle alla finestra

solitude
a cluster of stars at the window

primo mattino —
il suono del vento tra i rintocchi

early morning
the sound of wind between tolling bells
convalescenza —
una farfalla sui fiori del pigiama

convalescence
a butterfly on the flowered pajamas

la neve fresca —
le orme di un vecchio e di un bastone

fresh snow
the tracks of an old man and his stick

primi di marzo —
fiori di campo nello spartitraffico

early March —
wildflowers in the traffic island
nebbia — il silenzio dei colori
	none — the colors fall silent

panchina vuota — nell’aria il profumo della magnolia

an empty stomach — the first whiff of magnolia

la luce accesa — fuori dalla finestra scorre l’autunno

the light turned on — autumn slips by outside the window
notte di luna —
un vecchio pescatore
chino sul lago

moonlit night
an old fisherman
bending at the lake

risveglio all’alba —
sul cuscino deserto
la luna piena

awakening at dawn —
a full moon
on the bare pillow
I hear noises from the street below. I am in Edinburgh for one more night. A man's voice. Another man's voice. Can't tell if the two are talking to each other. Are they at a distance from each other or do they just speak loudly though they're close together? I could look down. But why? Cars pass below too and something is idling, probably a bus.

It is 8:15 p.m. on a Sunday night, the last night of this September in this 2018. Once again September has a mere 30 days while some other months have 31. "Size doesn't matter," a friend of September whispers, to console September because September feels short—changed. But September is also
fussy and corrects its friend by stating, "It's length more than size." The bus is moving now, louder than when it idled.

The men are further away. No, maybe they're just finally lowering their voices, though now they've raised them again, perhaps afraid to be called monotone in a poem being written by a stranger they almost imagine four stories above. But their imaginations are otherwise engaged. I could open my window and shout down, "You're in a poem now!" Would they be pleased? That's a rhetorical question. The other night when Leslie and I were in the kitchen eating she thought she heard music. She got up and looked out and sure enough, she had. There was a bagpiper piping (it was dark already, maybe after 7 p.m.) and behind him a dozen young men in kilts and white shirts. It was not part of a parade. We didn't know what it was part of, except our night, and theirs. I keep thinking of the great Frank O'Hara lines that he begins "In Memory of My Feelings" with:

"My quietness has a man in it, he is transparent and he carries me quietly, like a gondola, through the streets. He has several likenesses, like stars and years, like numerals."

Now my poem has O'Hara in it and I'm going to say he walks four stories below carrying a bullhorn and reciting this beginning
to "In Memory of My Feelings". And the passersby, awestruck, speechless, will soon tell the first friend they see or phone or text that an American on the street had said the craziest shite and it was great! "What, exactly?" the first friend may ask. "I'm not sure, but it had a gondola and stars."
Visiting My Late Parents

I haven't lived nearly as long
with my late parents

as I did with them when they were alive.
They were generous when alive

and loving. In my dreams

when they return, as they do
often, they are generous again, soft—

spoken, kind. They are middle—
aged in my dreams, almost never

as old as they became. Last night
my father knocked on the door

to the bedroom I used to have
as a child, though in the dream

I was probably in my 40s. He
was wearing a brown suit jacket, much

like one he owned, and simply wanted
to tell me to come see our guests. I was

almost ready

I told him. His posture was the same
as when alive, good but not

too tense. His face was relaxed.
There was nothing about him

"out of the ordinary." The doorway, a frame
around him.
strada d’autunno —
la vecchia carrozzina
rimessa a nuovo

autumn road —
the old wheelchair
refurbished

casa di cura —
una foglia verde
in rianimazione

nursing home —
a green leaf
reanimated
mia madre ride
mentre raccolgo fiori —
fine novembre

my mother laughs
while I collect flowers —
end of november

nel diario di bordo
una pagina bianca —
la luna nera

In the logbook
a white page —
the black moon
Tony Burfield

the snow
half here just
one glove

wind shield ice
she smiles at me
from inside
Anna Maris
Marietta McGregor

MESSY DREAMSCAPE

a vine's dead heart spreading outwards and upwards

Rolling in rolling his hips in then out. The pabulum's still steaming, put it on ice. We leave when the rhododendrons in the gorge turn red on film. Noises under the sink mean it's time for breakfast.

the big-headed baby lies alone in his cot
rain dimpling
a medusa shoal
virga clouds

island midden
every ghost
at the feast

mothlight
the boab's belly
feels warm
fish-spawn
beading kelp fronds
pearl moon

ants unzip
a sugary sheath
early peony

fresh culms
on the bamboo
family reunion
May Day
lily-of-the-valley
with my salumi

unwilling to lose
the last of day
a lily’s light

shadow
overlapping the dock
overlapping the shadow

teasels wool-gathering snow hats
The oncologist is young but balding. He runs his fingers repeatedly over the papers on his desk as if to smooth out what he has to say to Dema.

‘The scans and the histology reports confirm it is carcinoma,’ he says.

‘How long have I got?’ Dema asks.

He is taken aback by her unruffled air.

‘We need further tests and my colleague . . .’

‘How long?’

The oncologist meets her concentrated gaze. ‘A year maybe,’ he says.

Dema looks at the large white clock face on the wall behind his desk. It is three minutes past 9 A.M. How punctual he is! She thinks.

‘What about pain?’ she clutches the armrest of the chair.
'We need to assess pharmacological and other means …'

'What kind of treatment?

'Primarily use of analgesics to manage pain. Also, radiotherapy and chemo . . .'

The shock is focused on a point in her chest. She cannot breathe. The room seems to expand. The oncologist and his desk recede.

‘Radio and chemotherapy?’ She echoes.

‘To control the carcinoma growth.’

A shudder of cold premonition goes through her.

‘My colleague and I will assess what further tests are needed.’ He hands her an appointment card. ‘Please come back in a couple of days to discuss treatment and the costs for the hospital bed.’ His voice is a monotonous drone. She is in a bubble of fear and panic.

‘My PA will give you the bill for these tests.’ He hands her the papers signalling the end of the appointment.

‘It will be better if you bring your husband or another family member.’ He says kindly.

Dema looks out the clinic window at the rain—filled rice terraces shimmering in the heat. A haze of sunlight slants on the distant hills. Guru Rinpoche’s blessings! Her mother used to say.

In the clinic car park the heated steering wheel scalds her palms. She is struck with a sudden violence of thoughts. She is after all, going to die younger than her mother! What will she say to her twelve—year old son?
How will she tell her husband?

How will she pay for any of the treatments? The road from the clinic meanders through the patchwork of rice fields. Through the open window she breathes the scent of ripening paddy. She may not be around when the harvest is gathered.

*just out of the clouds*
* wings of a lammergeier*
* cast long shadow*

*Jinsek offering*
* the rising moon*
* curdles the mist*

*dreaming once more*
* of the ancestral shrine*
* embowered in wild roses*
head held high  
like an apparition of the river god  
a white—bellied heron scans  
the pebble bank in the dawn mist

rhythmically she thumbs  
the dark and worn Bodhi seeds  
of her prayer beads  
the blind roadside healer

the ladle you fashioned  
from a coconut shell  
is all that remains  
of what we once shared

silhouette of bare poplars  
against a vaporous blue sky  
how to describe the solitude  
of this troubling beauty

soundless rain  
and unyielding stillness of night  
what disquiet stirs the bamboo  
tapping at the pane
Madhuri Pillai

distilling heat the spluttering swing of the pedestal fan

ancient land wrought in pain the juxtaposition of genders

fluttering leisurely into my thoughts cabbage moth
solar panels the sun and I squinting

no stir in the air a raven drops a vowel
Stephen Toft

my greenest ink
not green enough
spring forest

wet with cloud the wire-walker

her perfume
fills the space
between us
summer rain i accept your currency

river baptism
waist deep
in light

childhood town
i follow my own footprints
to the beach

eviction notice
i skim a stone
into the mist
morning glories
a hand-drawn map
to her house

falling snow
my child teaches me
sign language
tangerines in our stockings
eating everyone’s
my alcoholic brother

Christmas morning...
a flea drowning
in the dog’s new bowl

Onsen heat
my eyes on
backwards
black ice
the long eyelashes
of the ragman’s fallen horse

suntrap cigarette
another golden teisho
on causality

in the freezing rain...
people who say they know
just how I feel

snow line
'club moss’ I say to myself
with that secret joy of knowing
I needed the violet shadow
of the scrub pine
on new snow

ice storm
beating 'it's twelve o'clock somewhere'
by three hours

after Noh
everywhere hands
and masks

because of the green troll
under the rickety bridge
I no longer use No. 2 pencils
long night
boldly revising the cameo
I played in her life

walking the iron sands of Subishiro
my body suspended
between stars
Ah! Thunder—red the Dawn
Come on and balanced there
to take away with
quiet show of power
the inevitable poisoned night

And as that space of red
Bowling smoke exaggeratedly
roof—tops and all
starkly shown perhaps
there may not be a God

But He may be Nature
For all we know
another look at red
against which nearby
winter trees bravely are spread

And so this poem’s short so I
can carry on with Don Quixote!

7.12.18
FOR CHERRY ISABEL

So that goes on to be read
as we survive
if in fact we do when dead
more than alive

Finding beyond trees for shade
simple summer
in her party frock and
oh so wanting her

To stay and be forever
ours a maid
for always my dream now
of you
Joseph Salvatore Aversano

INSIGHT LANDER

it took me forty—five years to hear
this Martian wind

in its own frequencies
of quiet within the

range of human hearing
worth all wait
Because Your Middle Name Is Salvatore

I was told to jump in
out of the heavy heat
out of my own summer haze

but the waves were just too
powerful to keep
two flailing children buoyed

that I had to let one go

as he was already beginning
to tread on his own

& as Asu approached
to take him off me

& as the smaller one
had a grip or a
stranglehold rather

& was going
to push
or pull me
down either
way

the savior
the drowned
A WAKE OF VULTURES

autumn’s end . . .
a vulture turns over
the pieces

urban garden . . .
among skeletal trees
a vulture waits

summer grasses . . .
a vulture circles over
soldier’s dreams

stricken ill
a vulture scavenges
extant dreams
dawn parade . . .
a vulture flies itself
at half—mast

moon halo —
the vulture eyes
a ring finger

Irish stew —
finnegan’s wake
of vultures

branching out —
vultures in committee
form a quorum

a vulture
sniffs out the state
of Denmark

seventh day . . .
vultures feed on the
afterbirth
pas de deux . . .
a vulture outsmarts
the crow

darkening sky . . .
vultures keep watch over
a vale of tears

empty sky . . .
a vulture returns
to fuck all

in between flashes
the presence of trees
no longer there

the glory of being not as it seems
cicada shell
  god—forsaken
I am
no w
  here
  the dessicated husk
to be seen
  on a tree

neither nor
  I rephrase
a stillborn’s
  known platitudes
afterbirth
  with wizened words

deepening darkness
  de profundis
the sanctuary candle’s
  a quiet alchemy
sacrificial light
  quickens my soul
breath of wind
  cave shadows
all lets go bit by bit
  each comes to bear
everything
  a new name

dragonfly—
  a distant mountain
my mind's wide eyes
  extrapolated
unseen
  from its reflection
headstone —

end of time.

I used to know you

the mystery of God

by heart

is

finished
TO MAKE A DECISION

Probability states that a notchless sliding design will put more bass in your face & force the intercept of a regression to be a combination of the coefficients.
A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT OR A KIND OF FISH?

At the civic fund—
raiser on Friday night,
wannabe MasterChef
contestants could be
heard trying to out—
spout one another by
sounding off along
the lines of:

"I wanted
to make an indoor
pond, & stock it with
bass, in order to compare
the basic syntactic &
semantic properties of
the additive particle."

Hi—bred

There is no start. How can there be a start when everything has antecedents? Same with an end.


A wedge—tailed eagle circling above the river. A wider arc as it rises. Eventually passing above
where he is standing.

Later he waited five minutes as a coal train crossed the street down which he was driving.
A TORRENT OF RUSHING LEAVES

Occasioned by beautiful handwritten sonnets, calligraphic works of calligraphic elegance, many boys fancy cartilage earrings. Such furious whispers. Snakes, dragons. Unique designs add accent to their ego.

A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

The guy was too imperial, too smart, sequenced in a manner able to strip a heavy vessel of its paid labor & continuing health.
Recast

Macau has great potential. Is a key shape. Is a fragrance stone. Is desirable for a friend, pulling women, & causing the death of those fictional dotmeisters.

Urban Transport

Contemporary cultural conviction is a constraining thing, should be dispensed with or else dispensed with modifying pharmaceuticals.
mulattiera —
dentro il solco del carro
un ciclamino

muletrack —
a cyclamen
in the cartwheel’s rut

il ponte nuovo —
un uomo senza gambe
tende la mano

the new bridge —
a man without legs
extends his hand

Haiku scritto sul ponte ricostruito di Mostar. Il mendicante che mostro probabilmente vittima di una delle tante mine antiuomo di quella guerra.

Haiku written on the rebuilt bridge at Mostar. The beggar probably a victim of one of many anti—personnel mines from the war in the former Yugoslavia.
in a pile of old rubbish
how the rain gathers
the sky

last day of the year
a lone tomato ripens
against frozen winds
Out of the earth

I squat on the dirt ground, long skirt trailing in the dust, and pull my hair back roughly into a bun. The sun has begun to fade, filling the sky with faint hints of pink and orange. Carefully, I position a large washing-up bowl full of water between my bare feet. Submerged to just above the eye sockets is a human skull, soaking. It is stained a rich honey brown, the same colour as the earth. With deeply sun-tanned hands, I brush dry encrusted mud from the top of the cranium. The colour, shape, and texture of the dome of the skull are not unlike those of a ceramic pot, crates of which are drying behind me. As I move my fingers slowly over the smoothly curving bone, I can feel all the subtle undulations, the unique shape of this person's crown. The earth inside is packed solid and has hardened, allowing the skull to survive undamaged all this time. I briefly lift the mud-filled head out of the water and am surprised at how heavy it feels.

As the cold water turns the crumbly earth to slimy mud, I begin to clean the face, brushing the cheekbones, moving along the chin. I run curious fingers across different parts of the skull, feeling the thickness and texture of the bone, becoming acutely aware of the structure of my own face beneath the skin and muscle. I trace around the corners of the eye sockets, imagining this individual's particular features and gently revealing the shape of their eyes. Touching the eye area feels especially intimate, especially personal. It is hard to perform these actions with anything but a sense of reverence; even though this person has not been alive for ten thousand years, something of them clings to these last remains.

The mud within the sockets starts to loosen and I begin to claw it out with my fingernails. Removing the jaw, I turn the cranium over. Soon I am wrist deep in cold clay, scooping it out until I can feel the strange rough curve of the inside of the skull.

I gaze into the ancient face one more time before leaving it to air dry in the growing twilight.

neolithic mound
the trembling of poppies
as the stars come out
LITTLE SISTER TOO MUCH MISSING STARS SINK

for Deger Deniz, my immortal

living is a horizontal fall
— Jean Cocteau

grandma’s promise a bowl of cherries near or where
childhood games shaping each other unknowingly
whispering grass waking up with ancestors
cold day bright sunny children
planets born moonbeam all here
hoarfrost way so close to home
sinking moon a wren blown in the afterglow
fairy tales quinces bubbling on the stove
blue hour longings in mild calm
cold moon a sparrow on my chest
geminid shower myth weaving in my lullabies
neon city cotton candy for a child
violet crown middle night full moon
morning cloudiness life too a lullaby
pleiades in a dream I aglow
inner child in the snow a hint of sun
imagining snow on the moon summer kisses
public toilet attention headaches of drag queen
nightingale foretasting rose jams
purslane joy each raindrop a rabbit hole
farther rain to question everything
moonlight I might go glimmering
hunger moon the butcher knife on a tavern table
melting snow unborn lambs of the slope
hazy hill ghost stories for another life
blessings kept with heartbeats
half moon minstrel’s mistletoe
starry poles I am a spy in the snow
falling star catch me in the dark
divination we discover the earth
halo around the moon the world sleepwalks
darling one ink blacked long nights
in the journey’s end the sun shines remember
no more goodbye the mountains becoming clouds
feedback the snake eating its tail
old love out in the cold for long
thick fog landing on moon
reminiscence inviting me to the home at heart
city orphanage volunteer mother holds my hand
ay me! they little know spring
caterpillar petal rain in the trail
lost time shadows fill shortest day
Eufemia Griffo

fine dell'anno
i vecchi ricordi coperti
di neve

year's end
old memories covered
in snow

solitudine invernale
un cigno guarda
il primo fiocco di neve

winter solitude
a swan watches
first snowflake
Natale passato
il tempo si è fermato
in un globo di neve

Christmas past
time stopped
in a snow globe

anche gli alberi
stanno cambiando i colori

migrating geese
the trees too
are changing colors
campana tibetana
il suono della neve
prima di cadere

singing bowl
the sound of snow
before falling

fiori di gelso
un manto di neve
culla il loro sonno

mulberry flowers
sleep cradled in
a blanket of snow

cielo invernale
anche le stelle diventano
più bianche

winter sky
even the stars turn
whiter
ricordi fugaci
un altro giro
di un vecchio nastro

fugitive memories
another turn
of an old ribbon

antiche zampogne
un vecchio attende ancora
il ritorno dei Re Magi

ancient bagpipes
the old man still awaits
three Wise Men

Via della Seta
senza le stelle
vaghiamo invano

Silk Road
without the stars
we wander in vain
Echolalia

I argue my way through imagined disputes.
A crow on the fence
caws at nothing.

Monterey

We search for him in every tidepool.
An old—timer’s voice
thickens with beer.
Yield

Downtown buildings are shrouded in fog.
He feels his way
through the want ads.

Day Five

A cell we can't see swims in the pond.
It's nothing
we evolved from.
Nude Descending the Stairs with clashes after what could Saturday could not morning have always been always been self ascendant her with
could not

Ron Scully
no need to listen
I intend to repeat myself repeatedly
write it down

winds of mars
vowels searching aimlessly for sound
for whalesong
Deborah P Kolodji

sea star arms wide I sink into sand

split milkweed pod the dog’s blind eye

light rail
downtown
a city’s curves
I miss the children
for they are truthful.
Sparrows fly off
when they are afraid
of men lumbering forward.
They have no tricks
up their sleeves.
They are not undone
when the train rumbles
the earth
or an old car backfires
like a gun.
They are the wind
that picks a leaf
from its stem
and lets it settle
somewhere else.
mare
un tramonto perfetto
anche d'inverno

sea
a perfect sunset
even in winter

pioggia
sull'albero un riflesso
forse la luna

rain
a reflection in the tree
maybe the moon
neve
i fiori appassiti
del mio compleanno

snow
the faded flowers
of my birthday

io e l'alba
oh mio dio
quante stelle sono sparite

dawn and I
oh my god
how many stars have vanished
Lucia Cardillo

quello che resta
delle foglie cadute …
passi d’inverno

what’s left
of fallen leaves …
winter steps

goccia di gelo
su foglia arrugginita …
fermo immagine

drop of frost
on a rusty leaf …
still image
fiocco di neve
leggero a mezz'aria ... il primo bacio

a snow flake's
lightness midair ...
the first kiss
rising
to what is —
new moon

a new year
eating an apple
core and all
long after
I close my eyes
sun spot

without
a
sound
first
snow
fall

day after Winter Solstice
I feel
about the same
early winter —
a pine cone opens
in my hand
un’occhiata alle cartelle
e l’altro ai dessert —
tombola in famiglia

one eye on the cards
and the other on the desserts —
family bingo

rami bruciati —
il bianco crudo
della neve

burnt branches —
the raw whiteness
of snow
incontri alternativi —
due ombre di bastoncini da trekking

alternative meetings —
two trekking sticks’ shadows

area PicNic —
una tovaglia di neve

picnic area —
a tablecloth of snow
wild garlic ...
my first turn
on bike

red  silk scarf in the old drawer —
my daughter’s first lampshade ...
— Skal jeg smile?
— Kan Du lide at smile?

et sted
i vores
glemsomhed

det billige
nips

fra
Venedig

— Should I smile?
— Do you like to smile?

somewhere
in our
forgetfulness

the trinkets

from
Venice
om natten synger og nynner metallerne i radiatorerne og rørene en smule som Saturn ifølge Voyager

ordet
blev mennesker

det er fordi

jeg prøver stadig

vi har skeletter

at tale
stilhed

vi kan sige
Ah—Um

at night the metals in the radiators and the plumbing hum and sing a bit like the Saturn according to Voyager

the word
made human

it’s because

how I still

we have skeletons

try to speak
silence

we can go
Ah—Um

~ 92 ~
ingenting

og
ordet
for det
tomt

nothing

and
the word
for it
empty

stadig
nat
igen

still
night
again
dybt i deres sprog fornærmethed og underlige biller

deep in their language offence and weird beetles

uden advarsel vender dine tankers sig mod mælk og kaos

without warning your thoughts turn to milk and mayhem
prayers beads —
counting dreams
one by one

afternoon tea —
the north wind
gathers clouds

boiled rice —
the moon shines her cold light
warrior pose
the long stretch
toward forgiveness

downward dog
my spine
a little straighter

falling into stars
the balloon
and I
Nicholas Klacsanzky

petrichor . . .
father's diary
losing track
of my scars . . .
of stars

under the glittering
snowdrift . . .
the withered

former—future me
leftover snow
Rosa Maria Di Salvatore

agli di ghiaccio —
pennellate di sole
su un dipinto

icicles —
a sunny brush stroke
on the painting

mare d’inverno —
la distesa di sabbia coperta di neve

winter sea —
the expanse of sand covered with snow
caution:
uneven pavement
the path home

wild sea
when i am ash
pour me in
Hifsa Ashraf

winter solitude
the patterns of snow
on a cracked window
MIMICRY

waxen white petals
fringed feathers
    in a moonlit marsh

orchid
egret
moon
ON THE MOUNTAIN

doubt dissolves along
this sliver
  of stream, mica glints

chain fern blazes jade,
moss coats
  a swamp chestnut oak

canopy limelight
leaves like fire-
  flies, signaling spring

mountain laurel cups,
surprising
  as overnight snow

painted trillium
sepals spill
  magenta splatter
snowy slant-line moth
masquerades
    as a false petal

in a mountain seep
silent stream
    gold birch leaf, falling

the miracle now,
a winged
    mountain maple seed
lass walks past carrying cloth bag reading "not real"

sign in our park
— bats aren't blind
— they are clean & sociable
lying-a-bed this morning in our council flat &
there's estate-agent clumping round next door

outside on pavement after
‘this tree — don’t worry about it
we can chainsaw the lot take it right down’

troubles? we are belfast

— if yu fall, we’ll always pick yu’s up
pioggia gelata —
le case di cartone sotto un ponte

hailstorm
cardboard houses under a bridge

sui panni stesi il profumo del pane
un vecchio borgo

the scent of bread on clothes hung out
an old village
freschi limoni —
le guance avvizzite
di mia nonna

fresh lemons —
the wizened cheeks
my grandmother’s

primo giorno d’inverno
strade deserte ed il silenzio

first day of winter
deserted streets and silence

mulinelli di neve —
l’odore del pino e del muschio selvatico

snow whirlwinds —
the smell of pine and wild moss
alba invernale
sui rami nudi l'eco di un canto

winter sunrise
on the bare branches the echo of a song

sentiero montuoso —
un fiore di cappero dentro le pietre

mountainous path —
a caper flower in the stones

sul marciapiede
un vecchio violinista —
inno alla luna

on the sidewalk
an old violinist —
hymn to the moon
Gardener

The dogwood I planted on his back has borne flowers in a fortnight. I wake to my garden shears’ lengthened teeth. I could now prune the honeysuckle and gain a pail of baby spiders. What if the dogwood begins to bark in the night? Or the old man sprints to the kitchen for a chicken leg?

The chicken soon remembers the hour and crows because he turns out to be a rooster. The moon steals through perforations on the roof and inundates the creaky floor. I would have to wade through pots steaming beef bones and pans melting eggs like trapped suns.

If I reach the altar of doomed flowers, the baby spiders would have woven a whirling river, washing away the dogwood man, the honeysuckle, the pots and pans and the rooster crowing at all hours. And I in the slush would grow gills.

comet splinters
a spider in the rose window
MY LAST COLD MOON

confessing our crimes eye-to-eye raccoon and I
manacles they say when touching hurts

who struts nude with me his rumpled beard
banging against the wall an empty head wind

swallow-clouds the undulations of my years
tunnel vision the thickened night maw

a goldfish coughs up what's unspoken
hue-less air fills borderless eyes

the loon's wail stirs waves of resentments
wriggling rain a crow-loser

for whom the shared solitude? horned owl
jumbled alphabet a stone in pieces

the tip of my nose all I see
lamb puffs into the blue I coil into my inheritance

[Author’s note: The next winter solstice moon (Cold Moon, Long Night Moon) occurs in 2094.]
SHADOWING

a rain moon slung on the clothesline each drip a longing for Orion
hobbling into midnight a tiger from his breast musing on eyes
pallid stares sobbing strangely the who the them

mottled hands tracing ribs of leaves as if of human hearts
strapped on backs of dolphins beached in the dust ridged skin
like the hide of bulls, crusty cheeks of ageing men

I wash the knife off chopped-beets-blood
a dog buries my bruises

what substance this life?

if
an iced seat but the abyss at the end of a wound
my voice a thin mist curling out of prison

or if
wanting kingdoms that come not laid on silver we conspire with soldier ants
pile up more bones on brittle pages of graves
when words turn oblique contrasts to the oft disdained squall

but what if
broken lines reconvene on a queen’s egg-swarm
a mound in my sole the sky ghosting tremors in patches
on the dead fountain where sipping rain pools

what matters then?

if
in the rib cage of sleep who to blame could only be the hissing brambles
or a shadow entwined that uncoils on a passing cloud
voiding the eyes, the soundlessness
of turtle miles
Vassilis Zambaras

Twelve Poems
A FOUND POEM: WHEN I WAS TWENTY—THREE

—for Elisabeth, whose words I found wise beyond age

Back then, I felt nothing
Like what the doctor had ordered.

Strange

How perception can change
Over time, and not so bad

My younger self, I think now,
But as I say that’s not how

I thought then — ugly
I thought then, sad

To remember that
Perception now but better

Than nothing feeling nothing again.
ALMOST ULTIMATE HAIKU

That image running
Through your mind could be your last —
Try to make it last.

BLISS IS

Falling asleep next
To your snoring

Five-year-old grand-
Daughter on your right

And your wife sawing wood
Next to her — goodnight.
DUMBSTRICKEN BY A LINE FROM MALEBRANCHE*

Playing our latest “smart”
Game with my six-year-old
Granddaughter to sharpen
Our powers of observation,
We watch patiently the dense
Overhanging jasmine vine
Above and in front of us
As it jettisons its white,
Five-petaled flowers
One-by-one, both of us
Anxious to see who’ll be
To be the first to shout
There it goes! whenever
The next star falls dumbly
To the oh so equally
Dumb and patient ground.

*Attention is the natural prayer of the soul.
EARLY SPRING HAIKU

Bashō stares at fronds
Shaggy with blue frost ringing
Frozen froggy pond.
GLOAM

Slowly pedaling past black ornamental
Cast ironwork railing round small candle —

Lit cemetery cramped by too many large marble
Tombstones crested with white crosses where

No matter what you may be
Thinking, the mind always reaches

A blank there.
MISSIVE TO JOHN LEVY IN TUCSON

Hi, brother —

Since you asked about Rita
In your last letter and after
Reading your poem about her
In the latest Otata, I thought
You might like to hear
Your foraging hunchback dwarf
With the unflagging energy
And large beautiful bouquets
Of overwhelmingly sweet
Smelling narcissi who kept
Coming back to your door
On her little red bike in 1984
After you'd already bought four
Of them and placed one
In each of your house's
Three small rooms plus
Bringing one to my mother
As a nameday gift is now
Where her siblings put her —
In an old folks' home
In Kalamata — that's all
I know for now but
I might add here all this
Reminds me of how fiercely
She fought and persevered
Against the ugliness of people
Surrounding her, so I also like
To think her new surroundings
Are chock full of like flowers, too.

All the best from your brother in the boondocks
Of the Southern Peloponnese
PATHETIC FALLACY

Bubbles bubbles bubbles
Bubbling buoyantly
In the gutter they call life

Floating by — oh,
Oh, the joy of it!
To see how hollow

They follow one another all
The while going pop, pop, pop,
Never asking why

They leave their troubles
For the sweet by-and-by
PHYSICAL

My eighty-year old
Mother-in-law, now

Well past recalling
Anything that transpires

Over a minute after
It flashes before her

Alzheimer-riddled mind,
And so

Thin and frail you can see her
Bones pressing against

Her flimsy night —
Gown still remains

Sharp enough to tell
The young

Doctor feeling her
Body for any

Tell-tale signs of
Imminent danger

To go to hell the moment
He touches what now passes

As her breasts.
QUOTIDIAN

Of the innumerable
Times you have

Fallen prey
To your own

Indifference to the world
Around you, you should

Have noticed by now
How it is

These recurrent lapses
Of your “better”

Self reveal
Their selves

Through the manner
In which they move

Across your smug sleeping
Visage come the first

Light of day — though
You can't see it, you do

Sense there’s something
Out there trying

To work it-
Self out through you

From under a skin so
Thick it can’t

Tell the difference
Between night and day.
THE QUANDARY

Nesting inside
A healthy beast

Lies another less
Healthy beast

Inside another
Less healthy one

And so it goes —
Therein lies

The key
To the puzzle

No healthy beast wants
To solve.
THE WEIGHT

Forgive me love but you were so
Light and transparent, I didn't feel you

Flying head over heels with me
Over the deep end.