

# otata 37

January, 2019



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(January, 2019)

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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)

*Kim Dorman*

*from Kerala notebook / november 2018*

small

dust—gray  
birds

groom  
each other

among  
the

leaves

◦

a large  
brown

millipede

on the red  
tile

floor

o

bare  
chest

white  
cloth

arms  
at his

sides

o

as things  
bodies  
fade

the unmoving  
steadily  
flows

something in the heart  
surfaces

°

a small  
white room

a chair

the river  
that flows

nowhere

# *Giuliana Ravaglia*

*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

## *Tom Montag*

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.

*Elmedin Kadric*

do  
un  
to

to  
un  
do

[E]WW (1, 2)

presumably the actions of a few

IS

not  
for  
giving

li  
ke  
ep  
ic

whatever lump I am leading

REQUIRED

the fragmentary loop

e) m  
g) o  
o) r

I turn  
to have

my picture  
taken

as  
pen

so  
lid

TRYING TO

make myself  
have enough

you've  
tried it  
before

## *Maria Teresa Piras*

*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*

fog —  
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

*John Levy*

## Last Night Here for Now

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.

## Vincenzo Adamo

*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*

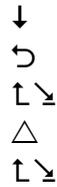
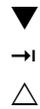
the snow  
half-here just  
one glove

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

## *Sonam Chhoki*

### CONTRABAND OF LIFE

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

## *Patrick Sweeney*

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

## *Réka Nyitrai*

a twig  
without its crow...  
unburdened heart

## *Robert Christian*

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

# *Hansha Teki*

## 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 —  
finnegans' 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*

*Mark Young*

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 combi—  
nation 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.

Therefore. Time frames. Marked out like an archaeo—logical dig. Strings across. Within which.  
Not time but.

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  
sonnets,  
works of  
elegance, many  
cartilage earrings.  
furious whispers.  
dragons. Unique  
add accent to

by beautiful  
handwritten  
calligraphic  
boys fancy  
Such  
Snakes,  
designs  
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.

## Antonio Mangiameli

*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.

*Lucy Whitehead*

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 of 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

## *Guliz Mutlu*

### 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

*oche migratrici  
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

*Dave Read*

*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.

# *Ron Scully*

Nude  
Descending  
the

Stairs  
clashes

self  
ascendant  
her with

after  
Saturday  
morning

what  
could  
have  
always  
been

could  
not

asterisks  
black  
hearted

plosive  
dark  
nameless  
never  
forgotten

crows

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

## *Jack Galmitz*

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.

## *Maria Concetta Conti*

*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

*Jeannie Martin*

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

# Margherita Petriccione

*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

*aglio selvatico ...  
il mio primo giro  
in bicicletta*

wild garlic ...  
my first turn  
on bike

*sciarpa di seta rossa nel vecchio cassetto —  
il rimo paralume di mia figlia ...*

red silk scarf in the old drawer —  
my daughter's first lampshade ...

# *Johannes S. H. Bjerg*

— *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

*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 tanker sig mod mælk og kaos*

without warning your thoughts turn to milk and mayhem

*Anna Maria Domburg-Sancristoforo*

prayers beads —  
counting dreams  
one by one

afternoon tea —  
the north wind  
gathers clouds

boiled rice —  
the moon shines her cold light

# *Katrina Lehmann*

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*

*aghi 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

*Lisa Espenmiller*

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

*Mary Katherine Creel*

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

*sean burn*

lass walks past carrying cloth bag reading "not real"

sign in our park  
— bats arent 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 — dont 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*

# *Angela Giordano*

*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 capperò 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

## *Alegria Imperial*

### 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

Bashô 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.

