

# otata 46

(October, 2019)



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from otata's bookshelf

Kim Dorman, [\*the color of milk tea\*](#)

## TOKONOMA

[October]

I have always been very sensitive to Petrarch's Italian, even if I don't it well, wherever I open his books again. I feel that language (immediately, before all reflexion or analysis) as totally clear cut, completely porous, as made up of numerous openings (as if you walked through galleries all of glass and space). sound sweet and crystalline at the same time. But above all porous, for the divine infinite. Alveoles. A web of words that holds the sky or filters it as the trees do?

Language in harmony with the Tuscan landscape; the way I thought I could see lines from St John of the Cross in the landscape of Majorca, in the past.

— Philippe Jaccottet  
from *Seedtime* (André Lefevere, trans.)

*F.J. Seligson*

## ONE DAY IS A LIFE

You are born in the morning when you wake up. Writing a dream, a young man drives you in a self-driving chocolate colored car by shops with golden Buddhas and statues of fantastic beasts on the roofs. During meditation you see a male and female Buddha joining in love for all beings. Standing up, you sing the Five Taoist Healing Sounds and whirl like a Sufi. On the balcony you stroke the wings of a golden-brown butterfly who loves the violet peppermint flowers. A long legged light yellow and black lace butterfly dances about you and other flowers. Called by Poetry the computer opens for a few lines. The mind worries about an e-mail sent yesterday – *Am I misunderstood concerning ...? Better let it go*, but guilt creeps in through the day. Ride the 272 bus to an exhibition of Tibetan Buddhist Art at a temple. Friends greet you and the Tibetan Ambassador to U.K. tells you about his visit to the Five Holy Peaks in China, the cable car up and walking down.

Elegant paintings mix spirituality and sexuality – mutual adoration and bliss. Blue Third Eye – eyes on hands and feet. You hear Lama Glenn say, “Rest your mind in the pure light moment of sleep.” *Ah, that’s what I need – to rest my mind in the pure light moment of sleep.* But you wander out and through the Contemporary Art Museum. Next week they’ll be showing “The Big Sleep.” That’s another kind. You buy Vincent’s Garden for the wife in the bookshop. The checkout woman speaks kindly. Across the street are the Royal Palace grounds. A street vendor sells you a hot egg tart by the crosswalk. Clouds in the West create a spectacular sunset with sun rays blasting through. They light up a huge scissor-like dragon with the sun’s blazing eye in between. Other dragons, a white and a black, are streaming over sloping roofs to the East. Buy a warm doughnut for the wife. Board a 272 bus home. Seaweed soup comes for supper. Write a letter of apology. Prepare for class. Soon you are going to sleep. Then you will die, again.

*John Levy*

IN A DREAM AS I LOOKED AT A FRIEND'S LARGE ABSTRACT  
PAINTINGS

on big pieces of paper another friend, sitting back in the shadows, said, "The squirrel looks for the tomato." He said this as a pronouncement and at first I thought it was a commentary on the paintings. The paintings were fabulous and I couldn't tell if the remark was meant as a sort of critique or something akin to praise. Or was he saying that some people don't understand how to look at an abstract painting? I thought I recalled him saying this once before, but couldn't remember when that was or what he meant then either. I woke up. It was a little after 2:00 a.m., and it seemed important to me to remember the comment. I knew I'd forget it if I didn't write it down. If only I could also have been able to reproduce, even sketchily, the magnificence of the abstract paintings (which were mostly blues and blacks in harmonious clouds all the way out to the edges of the paper). After I wrote a few notes to myself about the dream I added, "I am seeing the red tomato while not knowing the meaning of the comment." Only later does it occur to me that I am the squirrel, looking for and seeing the tomato. The tomato is tomato red.

# *Kelly Sauvage Angel*

lifting our voices  
to the wind  
butterflies' glide

sweet dreams  
and, yet, the dahlia's  
mourning dew

surrendering myself  
to the  
thistle  
thistledown  
thistle down yonder

moonless night  
we dissolve  
into cricket song

curtains drawn  
an unfamiliar bed  
welcomes us home

first harvest gathering the last of the loves-me bones

the thrust  
of it  
autumn rain

silent his shudder still my sigh

the illusory art  
of forgiveness  
fiddlehead fern

the truths  
i dare not utter  
phthalo blue

whatever you need  
to feel loved  
cold snow moon

generations before and beyond rusting trestles

## *Kim Dorman*

All songs  
are a part  
of Him,

who wears  
a form  
of sound.

— *from the Vishnu Purana*

## *Joseph Salvatore Aversano*

On the day of the sacrificial feast, the tethered and dragged-in black bull got away. Crossed the busy street without looking left nor right. Knocked over stalls, whole shelves of food. Then made it out onto the highway. Its tether trailing behind as far as its tail. It took them till after dark to catch up with it. To where its bulking black mass stood under a tree. But if you ask me, the bull they were really after . . . had already become night.

My great grandfather, the Sicilian cobbler. Who made his own wine, played cards, and never went to church—no not when God would anyhow stop by to see him. Like the time his face went flush with tears they say was from drink. And no churchgoer would ever believe him, when he swore that the Lord, having come down to earth, went barefoot.

## *Kyora Umeda*

香りの無い空中庭園に蛍

no scent in the hanging garden the fireflies

秋の風動かぬ石を叱れども

autumn wind  
even when scolded  
the stone doesn't move

法師蝉「順路」はこちらと寺の庭

autumn cicada —  
“this way”  
in the temple garden

巨大な守宮ひよいと現る影画かな

huge gecko  
suddenly shows up  
at the shadow play

留守番の犬の世界や水中花

a watchdog's world — artificial flower in water

どつかりと上がりかまちに残暑かな

slumping over  
on the entry stoop  
late summer heat

マネキンの指先に秋の陽沈む

into a fingertip  
of the mannequin  
autumn sunset

日焼けした本の背表紙秋の初風

the sun-faded  
spine of my book...  
first autumn wind

ひとところに吹き寄せられる色紙片

to one place  
wind-swirled confetti  
settles

溶接の火花ちらちら楽園への扉

welding sparks flicker down a gate to paradise

*David Rushmer*

FROM 'ROTE'

WRITING XXII

flower sleeping  
in the skull  
of a butterfly

skeleton  
of your breath  
on the mirror  
where I wrote my name

WRITING XXXIII

wrote  
rote  
rot

WRITING XXXIV

Speak of me  
so you may hold me  
at a distance

in the sky  
a spine of birds

WRITING XXXVII

what is their form,  
an immensity of otherness

beautiful and rare

book of dust

A MATTER OF SILENCE

speaking of  
lilacs

a bruise of magic  
on the tongue

mirror

with wings cut

“...one closes the eyes of the dead so that they no longer look from our side...”

- Bernard Noel -

further  
beyond the form  
the flesh of it

the wind  
beating its lungs  
against your shell

the flesh of it  
from the beyond  
further

## *Elmedin Kadric*

what's left of  
the rain song

the laurels  
of bedrock

alone holding her own icicle sun

flagpoles  
40 watt  
bulbs  
in early  
spring

may you need to wasp  
~ 19 ~

## Vincenzo Adamo

*piango una bugia  
il morto  
non è mio padre*

I cry a lie  
the dead one  
he's not my father

*autunno  
mio figlio maggiorenne —  
il cielo canta*

Autumn  
my adult son  
the sky sings

*meditazione  
solo farfalle bianche  
in questa notte*

meditation  
only white butterflies  
on this night

*piove a dirotto —  
sul manifesto scorrono  
i titoli di coda*

it's raining cats and dogs —  
the credits run  
down the poster

*fruscio di canne —  
i cachi rotolano  
nel declivio*

a rustling of reeds —  
persimmons roll  
down the slope

*battito d'ali —  
una farfalla in cielo  
con mio padre*

flutter of wings —  
a butterfly in the sky  
with my father

*giglio fiorito —  
una ragione c'è  
se sono single*

lily flower  
there is a reason  
if I'm single

## *John McManus*

puppet show  
the kids behind me  
argue about god

non-stop rain  
she spits out  
all her pills

humming out of tune  
the man beneath  
the beard of bees

arcade claw machine  
a guy with prison tattoos  
paws at my nephew

empty cupboards  
birds swoop for crumbs  
in my neighbour's yard

nesting dolls  
describing the voices  
inside my head

childhood home  
with tears in her eyes  
mum throws a rock

mountain temple  
a mantis climbs  
my arm

## *Lucy Whitehead*

start of summer  
I kick over  
the glitter jar

hand-spinning  
a freshly washed fleece  
summer clouds

shaded tide pool  
shimmer of wind-blown water  
on stone

longest day  
waiting for a book  
of fairy tales

a cracked mermaid  
on the empty flower pot  
summer drought

dozing  
in my lover's arms  
a kite bobbing in the breeze

far from home  
a bronze lion  
opens its wings

height of summer  
surfboards ride  
a wave of light

inside a curled up leaf  
a single raindrop  
holds the sky

waking alone  
I mistake my heartbeat  
for the sound of rain

end of summer  
I pull a cloud-grey feather  
from my hair

my backup files corrupted summer's end

## *Lucia Cardillo*

*colline in autunno ...  
un velo di ruggine  
sull'altalena*

autumn hills ...  
a thin layer of rust  
on the swing

*spiaggia deserta ...  
porto l'estate con me  
in una conchiglia*

deserted shore ...  
I bring summer with me  
in a conch

*Joanna Ashwell*

gypsy tales  
a tail flick  
of thunder

fading now  
the bridal bouquet's  
brittle stems

flickering around me  
another moth  
drawn to die

swing bridge  
autumn leaves  
to and fro

the mizzle  
of an autumn morning  
upon my lashes

beam by beam  
the moonlight  
braids the barn

another bend  
where the river  
meets the hush

## *Elisa Allo*

*sera d'estate:  
nel suo ultimo giorno  
sogna l'oblio*

summer evening:  
on his last day  
dreaming oblivion

*separazione —  
staccionata infinita  
il nostro viaggio*

splitting up —  
an endless fence  
our journey

*pioggia autunnale  
ma il ciliegio fiorito  
canta di nuovo*

autumn rain  
but the flowering cherry tree  
sings again

*l'ape scompare  
rendez-vous tra i petali  
di ranuncolo*

the bee disappears  
a rendezvous between  
buttercup petals

*sposa d'ottobre...  
il frusciare dell'abito  
sopra le foglie*

October bride ...  
the rustling of dress  
on the leaves

# *Andy McLellan*

late summer  
wingbeat by wingbeat  
golden-ringed dragonfly

end of summer  
the pale sky  
etches a crow

trying  
each jumper in turn  
early autumn

# *Angela Giordano*

*fiori di zucca dentro l'orto del nonno il tramonto giallo*

pumpkin flowers inside Grandpa's vegetable garden the yellow sunset

*fichi maturi*

*l'animo fanciullesco di un vecchio artista*

ripe figs

the childlike soul of an old artist

*luna del raccolto  
le mani veloci dei contadini nei campi*

harvest moon  
the quick hands of peasants in the fields

*lunga notte  
i passi del vagabondo sempre più corti*

long night  
the tramp's steps ever shorter

*aceri infiammati  
così rinfrescante il vento autunnale*

inflamed maples  
so refreshing the autumn wind

*dentro il vigneto  
un grappolo di stelle —  
quiete d'autunno*

a bunch of stars  
in the vineyard —  
autumn stillness

*lo scoiattolo  
inizia le provviste —  
più secchi i rami*

The squirrel  
start the supplies —  
the branches drier

*sandali estivi —  
sull' unghia il nuovo smalto  
brilla nel buio*

summer sandals  
on the nail the new nail polish  
shines in the dark

*Isabella Kramer*

blue eggs—  
the poems I've only thought

war cemetery —  
juvenile foxes play  
amid the stones

# *Eufemia Griffo*

*foglie cadute  
nessuna conosce  
il suo destino*

fallen leaves  
no one knows  
his fate

*tramonto d'autunno  
le foglie cambiano  
dal giallo al rosso*

autumn dusk  
the leaves changing  
from yellow to red

## *Caroline Skanne*

wild rose breeze  
a cuckoo calls  
from the east

where to . . .  
the night breeze  
carries laughter

sun, moon, earth  
gently she curves  
a willow branch

love, you say  
tasting the word  
slowly  
before deciding  
it's a strawberry

waking up in a sparrow's dawn song

all day rain  
what about that book  
I never write

still wet grass  
finally a day without  
shoes

(soon)  
in the past tense  
wildflower meadow

the world  
doesn't need  
your flowers  
they say  
but I insist

stone steps  
down hops a fly  
with only one wing

unfolding the mind chaos of stars

going home  
an old oak  
with its crows

## *Brad Bennett*

mountain clouds  
walking through  
a moment

midsummer  
a kingfisher twitches  
its crest

blue morning...  
a patch of cosmos  
sways in the wind

happy to be  
here to there  
for the ant

the day  
laps against the shore  
lake swallows

*Mark Young*

IT'S NOT AN EASY FIGHT

Gunshot noise is  
very hard to  
replicate in its  
full glory. Some  
combination of  
contrasting colors

& fresh ingredients  
always seems to  
get in the way.  
Already there's  
less shrimp in the  
coastal lowlands.

AN UNAUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY

Came on a little edgy,  
a little strong. Nowhere else  
to go with it. Caught in the  
act, the truck backed up  
to the loading bay, half-  
empty with what was still  
to come. Not even that.  
But the engine running.

## FRACTALS

Self-  
symmetry under  
magnification. Snowflake curves.

## DAISY IRAE

A small shiny-black beetle  
crawls across the inside  
of the car window. The field  
is being prepared for rice. We  
watch a riverboat move in waltz  
time along the highway. A stop-  
light sings silently to itself.

[ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE]: THE BUSH / KERRY DEBATE

Like a  
comedy  
of manners

or a  
masque  
where one

protagonist  
wears the face  
of a weasel

& the other  
the face of  
a horse.

THE FINAL WORD

He avoided flying. The mall  
was air-conditioned. How could

she have been so stupid. The clouds  
were gathering, storm colors, in nat-

ural skin tones, based on status &  
dreams. The heat made the pave-

ment soft, forensic reports spewed  
from the coffee machine. The person

she usually shared the room with was  
overseas. She enjoyed the privacy.

## *Fractled*

quietly  
fishing for carp  
this stillness  
while hummingbirds  
surround me

a tight line  
the beauty of  
letting go

how long has it been  
to feel this moment again?  
in sway with the trees  
and to see things as they are  
on this homemade swing

deep summer  
the child in mom  
lifts her spirit

## Corrado Aiello

*bimbi irritanti  
io ascolto il suono  
delle stelle*

annoying kids  
I listen to the sound  
of the stars

*attese e attese...  
come cambia l'aspetto  
delle nuvole*

waitings...  
how it changes the look  
of the clouds

*pioggia serale:  
mi appisolo tra le braccia  
di madre natura*

evening drizzle:  
I doze off in the arms  
of mother nature

*luna crescente —  
aggiungo un'altra tacca  
alle mie ossa*

crescent moon —  
I cut another notch  
into my bones

*cadono i nomi  
dalle montagne – restano  
solo montagne*

names falling  
from the mountains – mountains alone  
last

\*

sole dormiente ...  
un poeta raises up  
il proprio dèmon

sole dormiente...  
un poeta evoca  
his own daemon

inkblot  
in the page  
of the sky

inkblot  
on the page  
of the sea

inkblot  
from the soil  
straight in me

\*

thunderbolt –  
thoughts gather  
let up

*John Hawkhead*

wishing for dolphins  
we purchase  
plastic inflatables

sky change  
the cold edge of grey  
in his last coin

## *Margherita Petriccione*

gutters' silence —  
splinters of moon  
under my feet

under the thumb  
wild plum stamens —  
lambs on the lawn

organ notes -  
picking up from the ground  
a fallen flower

"American Gothic"  
presses at every window  
a wind storm

green lightning!  
right there! an instant!  
on the horizon ...

white silence —  
the thuds  
of the rackets

# *Jack Galmitz*

a boy  
plays ball  
steps ahead of nightfall

*Jeannie Martin*

last leaves  
side by side  
fluttering

fallen leaves  
a deeper smell  
of the ground

October sunlight  
this stone still warm  
in my hand

*who just sat here?*  
warm boulder

# *Alegria Imperial*

## SMALL AND BIG THINGS

a squeal like the very big thing that bursts out of a hang nail  
howl from pitted clams a brrrrfitt for the wrong cause  
piping off a throttled throat twisted dogma  
mulch bed soggy with fog gurgling mealy poetics  
purplish cloud imprints carved into a seed if bells rebuke

## THE CITY FRAMED

crisscrossing (season-less)  
wind in a black plastic bag

his molting (scales, nails, horns and halfmoons)  
propped up in stoops

squirrely glance  
(webbed) embrace in a window

in a boxer's wet snores  
(evidence) wiped off his lips

# *Giuliana Ravaglia*

## Attimi

Spogli gli spazi lungo la riva  
ma guardando verso l'alto  
leggere sfumature s'alzano sugli occhi soli

toni su toni sempre più tersi  
imperlano d'azzurro fugaci orizzonti

cieli capovolti verso marine profondità  
a lambire - sulla candida pelle -  
attimi d'ambra

## MOMENTS

You bare the spaces along the shore  
but when you look up  
weightless shades rise to your solitary eyes

tones on tones always clearer  
bead the blue fugitive horizons

inverted skies over depths of sea  
lapping — on bright skin —  
amber moments

*i l sole basso:  
ai bordi delle vigne i settembrini*

the low sun:  
September asters at the edges of vineyards

*chiaro di luna:  
ancora nell'ombra le sue promesse*

moonlight:  
his promises still in the shadows

*sole di paglia:  
la luce del mattino sempre più lenta*

sun of straw:  
the morning light getting slower

*non sosta il fiume:  
profuma già d'assenza l'ultima rosa*

the river doesn't stop:  
the last rose already smells of absence

*lamponi acerbi:*  
*le domande di ieri senza risposta*

unripe raspberries:  
yesterday's questions unanswered

*crepuscolo:*  
*una rosa appassita sulla panchina*

dusk:  
a dried rose on the bench

*fiore in bottiglia:*  
*la gonna rossa dentro l'armadio*

bottled flower:  
the red skirt in the wardrobe

colori a cascata:  
fra stracci di luna una lacrima chiara

cascade colors:  
between rags of moon a clear tear

*caldo settembre:  
ancora fra i rami le capriole d'estate*

hot september:  
summer's summersaults still in the branches

*Roberta Jacobson*

foreclosed sign  
tacked on house -  
reindeer on the roof

under the plastic a beach

moonlight through the loopholes

the sun sets  
as the sun does

## *Carmela Marino*

*Alla finestra  
conto gocce di pioggia  
di questo inverno*

*Svanisce una goccia  
al tocco di un ditino*

At the window  
counting rain drops  
of this winter

one drop less  
at a finger's touch

## *Robert Christian*

WRITTEN INTO BLANK PAGES AT THE END  
OF A BOOK

Spaces here  
for my own book  
attached to that of  
Walter de la Mare

I came upon you  
poet extraordinaire  
because a friend once said  
How underrated you were

And I have found lines equal  
to any and thereby  
proof that love and memory  
Survive in words of poetry

24 - 25th September, 2019

TO JOHN

Finlay  
the exact  
antidote  
to rot

Philosophy  
curl away  
as cellophane  
browning

For use  
and temperament  
dictate  
only love

IN A CATALOGUE

To remember  
To be  
Always

## Antonio Mangiameli

*Sebbene non sia tanto presto la città è vuota, arrivo subito in aeroporto. Per me avere tempo è cosa insolita così ai controlli mi sento in una situazione di privilegio, non ho premura di passare, faccio con lentezza, guardo le cose intorno, le persone, le loro abitudini, le loro fissazioni.*

*le valigie  
l'utile l'inutile -  
paranoia*

*Il volo sarà in orario tuttavia manca ancora tanto. Adesso nessuno ha fretta, bisogna soltanto aspettare. Scelgo una poltroncina, mi metto comodo, scambio qualche parola, trovo pure divertente ascoltare le cose che le persone si dicono.*

*sala di imbarco -  
tutti uguali i discorsi  
dei passeggeri*

Although it's not very early, the city is empty. I quickly arrive at the airport. It's unusual for me to have time. I'm not in a hurry, I don't worry about rushing through security. I go slowly, taking in what's around: the people, their habits, their fixations.

*suitcase  
the useful the useless -  
paranoia*

The flight will be on time. No one's in a rush now; we have only to wait. I find a seat and make myself comfortable. I exchange some words. I find amusing to listen to the things that people say to each other.

*boarding room  
the passengers' stories  
all the same*

## *Robert Beveridge*

sweeping sugar  
get  
it all up before April  
brings ants again

salt  
trickles  
down

red velvet freckles  
smeared with sticky, half-melted  
cream cheese: milk drips past

## *Debbie Scheving*

sandcastle competition  
we wonder  
at the impermanence

## *David J Kelly*

clocks go back

recurring dream

no one thinks to change

the pillow cases

sundials

have a new scent

blue pencil  
left with **this**  
and this only

## *Maria Concetta Conti*

*inquietudine  
restare qui, fino all'alba  
per rimettere in ordine*

restlessness  
staying here, till dawn  
to tidy up

*fine del sogno  
non può essere solo  
l'autunno*

dream over  
can't be only  
the fall

*pronto soccorso  
sorridente come un angelo  
pioggia d'autunno*

emergency room  
smiling like an angel  
autumn's rain

# *Réka Nyitrai*

saying out loud  
my Hungarian name  
— quinces

sunny autumn  
a paper crane unfolds its wings

autumn voices the unfolding silence of a nest

watching with bird's eyes the high sky of autumn

autumn sky till a soaring raven becomes a dot

a hole  
made by a long whistle —  
river mouth

a waving troubadour —  
the waterfall at dusk

## *Dennys Cambarau*

*Nuvole nel cielo  
Sul terreno freddo rimangono  
foglie d'autunno*

Clouds in the sky  
On the cold ground remain  
autumn leaves

## *Dave Read*

a crow flies by the window I reflect on  
the shadows I can't will out of my thoughts

the clouds darken without my consent  
my son stays out all night with friends

it's dark before work and the mornings are cool  
I drive myself into autumn

a muscle car roars at 3 a.m.  
I wake to a racing heart

defined more and more by what I'm against  
the length of a border wall's shadow

passing old men on the bench  
the first cool autumn breeze

I wake stiff, sore, overweight, and nearly fifty  
a branch hangs cracked on its tree

## *Tomislav Sjekloća*

clear blue sky —  
clouded yellow  
lands on a buttercup

heavy fog —  
every few steps  
a surprise

lizard fight  
one a tail  
shorter

## *Matilde Cherchi*

*Foglie appassite  
Vedo nel mio autunno  
tanti tramonti*

Withered leaves  
so many sunsets  
in my autumn

*Foglie d'autunno  
Ogni goccia di pioggia  
un distacco*

autumn leaves  
every drop of rain  
a letting go

*Di passo in passo  
Ho perduto il profumo  
delle stagioni*

Step by step  
I've lost every  
season's scent

*Vento d'autunno  
I semi dell'estate  
migrano muti*

Autumn wind  
summer seeds are  
silent migrants

*Cielo a pecorelle  
Una calma mi invade  
all'improvviso*

Sheep-like clouds —  
suddenly  
calm invades me

## *Hansha Teki*

vespers with  
                  *ancient chants*  
breath wisps of  
                  *conjuring faith*  
aspirations  
                  *in my own tongue*

wolf hour  
                  *drizzle-drench day*  
black swans  
drift between  
                  *cold*  
                  *cuts in keener*  
sleep  
and non-sleep  
                  *than a sword*

to be  
traces  
of swan-glide  
slashed in water

*not to be*  
*a tomorrow*  
*that never ends*

winter ends  
my wisps  
of words  
to clouds,  
a bird

*lingering darkness*  
*magpies question*  
*the dawn chorus*

flutter-winged  
a butterfly  
beyond  
our here  
& now

*in a blink*  
*the beginning  
of time*  
*pinpointed*

words  
which embody  
*a universe*  
our  
very selves  
*edging to the precipice*  
in screams  
of nowness  
*where words  
wave back*

deep night vigil  
*sounds within*  
a flightless bird  
the sounds without  
rises within  
*something slips  
in-between*

before dawn  
*stillborn day*  
enlightenment  
awakens  
*a cockroach scuttles*  
to a drone attack  
*from the glare*

Otaki Beach  
*mythic chant*  
the cosmic silence  
*stillness roaming about*  
roaring within words  
*lonely places*

*the art of haiku boils down to this:*

shadows  
*a toothless old man*  
emerging  
from the fog  
*sucking marrow*  
while light dies  
*from the skeleton  
of words*

## SILENT LIVE STREAM

As I stroll along the banks of the Waikanae River, it becomes clear to me that the making of a poem is also the process of translating a pre-verbal phenomenon into an idiom that changes one's perception both of the phenomenon and of the language used to evoke it. Patterning words into poems has become for me an act of language-making that strains towards the unique utterance of what has hitherto been outside the apparent purview of language.

a mosquito  
    *what is not yet*  
leaps the length  
    *pierces my heart*  
of our caresses  
    *with its absence*

## *Sonam Chhoki*

### WHEN MARA VISITS . . .

Into the lichen-covered cave  
She arrives astride a tiger  
its eyes and nostrils aflame,  
singing the moss, a talisman to this day

In swathes  
of the deepest red brocade  
Mara appears  
from a haze of myrrh

he intones  
a deep-throated song:  
"Walk my path of love,  
Become be the One forever!"

Will the Sage's meditation  
by glacier lakes and peaks,  
in scorpion-infested lairs  
douse the flames of passion?

Images rise before her  
in fevered succession:  
Mara sighs, Mara cries,  
he dimples, he dances, he lunges at her

The Sage holds Mara's eyes  
and from her depths  
summons a lightning swell  
of the cosmic OM

It fills the ancient cavern,  
and shakes the oaks.  
Mara closes his ears  
writhing on the jungle floor

“This noise you make,  
churns me inside out.  
But I will not be quelled,  
this battle is yet to be won!”

She replies:  
“Ride my tiger of compassion,  
let us soar the Garuda’s heights  
to the Rainbow of Bliss.”

Mara spits, Mara swears  
he swivels his head and shrieks  
tearing the birds off their flight,  
startling the *nagas* in their sleep

The Sage opens her Third Eye  
of Crystal Light -  
In a whorl of ululation  
Mara dissolves

NOTES:

In Tibetan Buddhist iconography Mara is the god who creates cosmic illusions. He is famously depicted as the one who tempted the historical Buddha with visions of carnal pleasure. I’ve used this template to portray a female Buddha who is confronted by Mara’s illusionary promises. She is inspired by the eleventh century Tibetan Yogini Machig Labdrön (1055-1149).

## THE FEAR OF KNOWING . . .

Grains of karma  
blown here and there  
flicker the outlines of a face.  
The eyes  
violently empty of colour and light  
all seeing or unseeing  
I can't tell  
if they behold me or beyond me  
Are these eyes and I  
fractals of dream or reality.

## GEOGRAPHY OF MEMORY

the peaks have just turned pink  
and the blue pines ripple the waning light,  
in bursts of high-pitched calls  
a scops fledgling flails out of the canopy

beyond the flagstone courtyard  
paddy terraces undulate with fireflies  
the winding path to the house  
now slowly fades into the shadows

the bamboo blind at your window is raised  
to the distilled scent of lime-white musk roses  
I am no longer there  
yet I am all there in the stillness of your dusk

## *Madhuri Pillai*

falling through the cracks again this clinging grief

seed counter the length of my indecision

# *Maria Costanza Trento*

## *MEMORIE*

*Vedemmo le stelle nascere, brillare e morire  
Sentimmo il silenzioso rombo dell'universo  
Ma ora è buio  
E io non posso raggiungerti  
Dove sono io tu non ci sei più.*

## MEMORIES

We saw the stars being born, shining and dying  
We heard the silent roar of the universe  
But now it's dark  
And I can't get to you  
Where I am you are no more.

## *Elaine Wilburt*

chills—  
seeing you  
in a dream

last drops  
of homemade wine—  
recycling Pap's bottle

yard waste  
at the curb—  
heartwood

*David Boyer*

HAIKU ADJACENT TO SPRING

birds before dawn dream of a festival getting lost

uneven rocks in mist stay quiet about destiny

the soup in need of better verbs pepper or an asterisk

white sky early in the year a small dog creeps inside

a dream fed through a pasta maker daffodils droop

and in the and the end

