

# Otata 47

(November, 2019)

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from otata's bookshelf

[John Levy, SILENCE LIKE ANOTHER NAME](#)

## TOKONOMA

What an inspired idea is the notion of infinity in juxtaposition with the brief span of human life. The very concept is infinite. Not that I am convinced so far that man is the yardstick of this whole construction. What about plants? There is no yardstick. Or maybe it is everywhere — in each tiny particle of the universe. That would not be too good for man; there's a lot he would have to give up; nature would not need him. At least on Earth, man has realized that he is standing face to face with infinity.



How terrible and ignoble to feel that you do not owe anything to anybody. Because that can never be the case. It's an attitude that can only be adopted with great effort; by shutting your eyes.



Man has simply been corrupted. Or rather, little by little people have corrupted each other. And all through the centuries, right up to the present day, those who thought about the soul have been — and still are being — physically eliminated.



Thank God for people who burn themselves alive in front of an impassive, wordless crowd, or who walk out into squares with placards and slogans condemning themselves to reprisals, and all who say 'No' to the go-getters and the godless.



Since the [Second World] war culture has somehow collapsed, fallen apart. All over the world. Along with spiritual criteria. Here, quite obviously, apart from anything else it's the result of the consistent, barbaric annihilation of culture. And without culture society naturally runs wild. God knows where it's all going to end. Never before has ignorance reached such monstrous proportions. This repudiation of the spiritual can only engender monsters. Now as never before, we have to make a stand for everything that has the slightest relevance to the spiritual.

— Andrey Tarkofsky

from *A Time Within Time: Diaries, 1970-1986*.  
(Kitty Hunter-Blair, Trans.)

*F.J. Seligson*

## The Spider's Last Wish

"I wiped a dead spider from a Buddha statue's lips" are a poet's words I read last night, perhaps the only ones of his I love. What kind of life did that dead spider have? Was the writer revering the spider or the Buddha? I prefer to think the former. At least the Buddha would have, declaring the temporality of our lives.

Why did the spider choose to die in the Buddha's lips? Perhaps he thought that the cold statue was hungry and that she could warm him up, or that she might hear some comforting words.

Her soul must feel disappointed to have been wiped away by an unperceptive human. Or after wiping her away, did he gently take her up in his arms and implant her safely in a matchbox coffin under dear Mother Earth?

Where is Gregory, the poet now? He might be with her, too, down under ground, or perhaps burned up and puffed out like smoke as another Buddha. And what about me; shall it be the way of the spider or that of the Buddha? It might be up to my wife and children.

## A MAGICAL CHAIN OF EVENTS

Preparing for tomorrow's class on Einstein's Theory of General Relativity I left home late and arrived 45 minutes late for Lama Glenn's talk on the Meaning of Emptiness. Fortunately he was 45 minutes late as well. I learned how to soar like an eagle through space. Also I learned what it feels like for a woman to come up to me and stroke my cheeks with hers like a cat. I was already soaring through space like an eagle. Then I took the subway and arrived 45 minutes late for Rosh Hashanah services but the rabbi was overjoyed that "the oldest Jew in Korea" had arrived. He taught us the secret of happiness; "keep a kind heart and clean hands." Returned home and watched another Einstein video. In the morning I lay on my back in meditation, got stroked by the cat and soared like an eagle.

Then I watched more Einstein videos and read more pages but it was daunting for someone who had never studied math or physics. The reason I was chosen to teach this class was because "You look like Einstein" and "are the same Jewish." In fact the Korean professor introduces me as "Einstein's grandson," to the great joy of the students. At home I read that Einstein liked to eat spaghetti. It just so happens that my wife has left some cooked noodles in the kitchen. So I heat them up on coconut oil and marinate them with tomato sauce, add some leaves, look at them for inspiration and eat. Walking to class I think about spaghetti and the curvature of space-time watching the contours of the sidewalk and the land around me the hills and valleys I cross over to get to class, and I consider noodles.

Last class on Special Relativity I got away with showing a video with a look-alike Einstein actor talking in a European accent talking about the subject, and this time I have an even better one. But it doesn't happen. Instead I let go and become the actor. I tell them about my walk through space-time on the way to class, and how I'd been thinking about spaghetti noodles. How one noodle is a curvature of space and time and it rises up second by second and inch by inch through one's life like frames in a film, and that all of them make a life. How each of the spaghetti noodle in my round wood bowl is a student's life and all together are shaped and contained by it, like the universe contains everything else. I got out a crystal ball and showed them that it was a star and how by relaxing my palm and fingers around it, I shaped space-time, and then took a large cat's eye marble and circled it around the star to show how a planet's course is determined by the curvature of space--time made by the mass of the star.

I jumped off the podium to show the free fall in an elevator through space, illustrating the absence of gravity, and then the principle that gravity and acceleration are the same phenomena. I solved the twin paradox, too, proving how the twin who flies away to the star in a space ship comes back younger than the twin left on earth – because of her acceleration on the return. Once done, those Mathematics majors at the 2nd best university in South Korea applaud.

The professor has asked me to start a half hour early, so we finished a half hour early. I followed the curvature of space-time to a local movie theater, the only one in Korea playing *The Blue Note*, and the only time and day available. A friend had recommended it, and because of getting out of the Einstein class early I was right on time. What I got out of that – throw your whole life into your work, improvise, trust the process and don't stop until it's all over.

## FAREWELL

Lacking sleep, and arms throbbing, if only you could lay down somewhere and sleep. The royal place is filled with tourists. In the back are terraces, shrubs and trees over a grassy lawn. You sit on a stone step and look at the wind blowing the leaves. You are as light as one of those, about to fly off up into the sky. No goodbyes to your wife and children. No will and testament. All of your life's writings could be consumed by the fire, deemed worthless. You close eyes and listen to the wind, become the wind and float away. The body stays there behind the palace residences, lifeless. Nobody seems to notice. Japanese and Chinese boys and girls walk by minding their own business, holding hands, smiling at one another, feeling, It's a wonderful day to be alive.

# Stefano d'Andrea

## OGNI TANTO ALZA GLI OCCHI

*Quando ero ragazzino, talvolta aiutavo mio papà a coltivare le rose nella nostra campagna. Si trattava di “tirare la manica”\* per farla scorrere meglio nei passaggi tra i filari, e poi innaffiare diligentemente i fiori, uno per uno.*

*Io, ansioso di far bella figura, ma anche assecondando la mia naturale inclinazione alla scrupolosa attenzione – forse una premonizione della mia futura attitudine zen – stavo sempre concentrato con lo sguardo nel punto esatto dell'uscita dell'acqua.*

*Ma trascorso un certo tempo, sentivo dietro le spalle la voce di mio padre che suggeriva: “Ogni tanto alza gli occhi”. Stupito per questo strano consiglio, che andava contro il buon-senso, gli chiedevo sempre: “Ma perché, Papà ?” E lui, finalmente, una volta rispose: “Per guardare il cielo”.*

*Quando, pochi anni dopo, mio padre morì a 56 anni dopo avermi solennemente promesso il giorno prima che, appena fosse stato meglio, avrebbe comprato un grande canotto a motore per portarmi a pescare insieme a lui, finalmente capii...*

*Da allora, qualsiasi cosa faccia e ovunque mi trovi, alzo spesso gli occhi per guardare il cielo.*

così vicino  
alla polvere del mondo  
– così lontano

\* espressione ligure che significa fare scorrere il tubo di gomma da innaffio.



## LIFT YOUR EYES SOMETIMES

When I was a little boy I sometimes helped my father grow roses in our field. I had to “pull out the sleeve”\* to move more quickly through the passages between the rows, and then diligently water the flowers, one by one.

Eager to make a good impression, and moreso indulge my natural disposition for scrupulous attention — perhaps a premonition of my future Zen outlook — I used to stay focused on the exact point where the water came out. But, after a while, I'd hear my father's voice behind me suggest: “Lift your eyes sometimes”. Feeling surprised by this strange piece of advice, which was against common sense, I'd always ask him: “But why, Daddy?” And, finally, he once replied: “In order to look at the sky”.

A few years later, when my father died at the age of 56, after having solemnly promised the day before that, as soon as he was better, he would buy a big motor dinghy in order to go fishing with me, I understood at last...

No matter what I do or where I am, I have often lifted my eyes to look at the sky since then.

*so near  
to the world dust  
– so distant*

\* A Ligurian expression for unrolling a hose.

# *Giuliana Ravaglia*

*intreccia ottobre origami d'arancio:  
quieto abbandono*

october orange origami plaited:  
quiet abandon

*foglia caduta:  
chiaroscuro attorno di paglia al sole*

fallen leaf:  
chiaroscuro around the straw in sun

*ultimo viaggio:  
le nude trasparenze della luce*

last trip:  
the bare transparencies of light

*voci d'autunno:*  
*i bramiti dei cervi nelle radure*

autumn voices:  
the cries of deer in the clearings

*le vigne rosse sulla collina:*  
*rughe di primavera*

the red vineyards on the hill:  
spring wrinkles

*di vino scrivere:*  
*senza segreti le sue parole*

of wine - divine - to write:  
her words without secrets

*luci d'ottobre:*  
*agita lanterne l'ombra del silenzio*

october lights:  
the silence of a shadow shakes the lanterns

*fontana:  
pioggia di sogni nei miei haiku*

fountain:  
my haiku the rainfall of dreams

*la sua carezza:  
soffio d'eternità sul cuore a sera*

his caress:  
eternity's breath in evening's heart

*bosco giallo:  
la luce fuggitiva dell'estate*

yellow forest:  
the fugitive light of summer

*scivola sull'acqua il silenzio delle onde:  
così chiara la tua voce*

the silence of the waves slips over the water:  
so clear your voice

*di foglie rosse l'aria nuda volteggia:  
prima di sera*

bare air swirls with red leaves  
before evening

*vaga la luna:  
sul sentiero già scritto non c'era il mare*

the moon wanders:  
no sea on the path that's been written

# *John Phillips*

## THREE POEMS

I

### PRACTICE

I sit for hours  
facing nothing

no word  
to witness

the silence

my mind  
refuses

is prayer

## II

Someone else  
might not  
          think  
this  
          this way  
even if  
          this is  
what  
          they think

## III

SLANT

through

rain

sieved

light

silence

slurs

## Vincenzo Adamo

*allaccio abusivo —  
il clochard si rade  
con il rasoio elettrico*

unauthorized connection  
the homeless man shaves  
with the electric razor

*tuoni invernali —  
tra le mie gambe pure  
un cane finto*

thunder in winter  
even between my legs  
a fake dog



*l'ombra di un airone  
oscura i miei ricordi —  
alzheimer*

the shadow of a heron  
obscures my memories —  
alzheimer's

*fontana dei desideri —  
tra le monete  
un suggerimento di mio figlio*

fountain of desires —  
among the coins  
my son's suggestion

*brezza serale —  
le foglie cadono  
nel buio dei miei sogni*

evening breeze —  
the leaves fall  
in the darkness of my dreams

# *Lucy Whitehead*

sorting broken tiles  
into colours  
summer's end

a silver moth  
among the strawberry roots  
autumn chill

# *Maria Concetta Conti*

sunrise  
passed me by  
solitude

autumn rain  
she can't change  
a thing

autumn poem  
just a step away  
from the sky

*Peter Yovu*

## READING JOHN LEVY'S POEMS

If I write a letter/poem to you, following  
something you have done so many times,  
you know I am half, more or less,  
writing to myself, thinking in your direction  
so to speak, but I hope less annoyingly than  
and at least as amusingly as  
those people one comes across at bus stops  
who, without clearing their throats or saying  
“excuse me”, start talking to everyone  
there as if believing everyone there  
will be captivated by whatever  
they have to say, and saying it loud and long.

Well here I am as if at a bus stop  
as if no one else were here though there is  
a small billboard advertising something. Look,  
I've removed the obnoxious message and left  
a blank white board on which to imagine  
a picture of you, smiling. That's enough  
to keep me on track. Revision:

here I am as if at a train station.  
Here it comes and here it is. I'm on.  
Others are on board too, the same ones I find  
in my dreams, that might be relatives.  
But here you are, that's for sure,  
the train is rocking  
so you wobble as you walk toward me  
steadying yourself on the backs of seats  
in which people that might be  
your mother and your father are sitting,  
that might be poets and painters you love  
and you love so many,

you've got the same smile I saw at the station  
so I know I'm on the right train, on track.  
You stop and ask for my ticket. It's small,  
but somehow I've managed to fit this whole  
poem onto it.

## *Carmela Marino*

*un guscio vuoto...  
non tramonta il sole  
nel suo occhio*

an empty shell...  
the sun doesn't set  
in his eye

## *Joseph Salvatore Aversano*

my training wheels at times  
wouldn't even touch the ground

as they weren't fastened right  
or rather, they were fastened so

my training wheels at times  
wouldn't even touch the ground

& I wouldn't even notice, but go

day moon  
light as  
air

train whistle something romantic

a rain  
bow

if as

here  
as it

isn't

a rain  
bow

if as  
as if

sea wall  
of sea

wall of  
sea wall

of sea  
wall of

sea

shoe  
shine  
guy's

own  
shine

into  
each  
shoe



*Jack Galmitz*

A box of pastels  
returned to the shelf  
an autumn sunset

## *Rosa Maria Di Salvatore*

autumn equinox...  
changing the colour  
of my lipstick

# *Eufemia Griffo*

*cielo nebbioso  
volano bassi  
gli ultimi uccelli migratori*

misty sky  
the last migratory birds  
fly low

*castello abbandonato  
un corvo sta di guardia  
sulle antiche pietre*

abandoned castle  
a crow stands guard  
on the ancient stones

*suonatori di ghironda  
quando tu mi cantavi  
un'antica ballata d'amore*

hurdy gurdy players —  
when you sang an ancient  
love ballad to me

*dopo la vendemmia  
il fischio allegro  
dei contadini*

after the grape harvest  
the cheerful whistle  
of the farmers

*frances angela*

crushed into a ball the pound notes by mother's bed

pregnant that winter mother knew where to go

quiet now the smell of his cigarette on the stairs

family holiday slipping in the donkey's saddle

the tin bath when we could both fit in christmas eve

it doesn't come this evening second crow

sunflower a grandchild's drawing with mother's letters

lightening waiting for dad to tell me

## *Lucia Cardillo*

*sera d'autunno ...  
una vecchia canzone  
riavvolge il tempo*

autumn evening ...  
an old song  
turns back the clock

*Halloween ...  
il venditore di castagne  
soffia sul fuoco*

Halloween ...  
the chestnut seller  
blows on the fire

*crisantemi*  
*bagnati di rugiada ...*  
*vorrei tu fossi qui*

chrysanthemums  
wet with dew ...  
I wish you were here

*piccola nonna...*  
*dietro i vetri aspetta*  
*chi non ricorda*

little grandma waits  
at the window for someone  
she doesn't remember



# Hifsa Ashraf

نیلوفر

دیوار پر چمکتا ہوا نیلا ستارہ

morning glory  
the blue star shining over the wall

کسی گزرگاہ  
چالیس کے بعد میری ذات کی آگے

glass bridge  
my self-discovery after forty

کالائینس

ایک اور سایہ میری کہانی میں رکاوٹ بنتے ہوئے

black swan  
another shadow intercepting my narrative

گر می کا اختتام  
باغ میں گھاس ارغوانی رنگوں کے ساتھ

end of summer  
grass in the garden with purple shades

لیمن گراس کا قہوہ  
تمام لوک داستا میں بھری زبان کی نوک پر

lemongrass tea  
all folklores on the tip of my tongue

یا قوت سحر  
اہم ترین عقائد کی استقامت

sunrise ruby  
adhering to the beliefs that matter most

دہی ساگ  
موسم گرما کا اختتام، یادوں کو تازہ کرتے ہوئے

desi saag  
refreshing the memories of late summer

برگئے  
محبت کی لے، شام کے افق پر پلچل مچاتے ہوئے

bamboo flute  
the symphony of love stirs the evening horizon

مہکتے گلاب  
چاندنی رات میں اظہار کردہ راز

tube roses  
the secrets we shared on a moonlit night

دریاؤں کا ملنا  
جیسے میرے گہرے خوابوں کا سمندر میں شامل ہونا

river delta  
my deep-rooted dreams end up at a sea

*Sheila E. Murphy*

WHY DON'T WE

Just rest  
Hold still  
in breeze  
Defining  
This  
Not this  
And this again

*John Levy*

CHEST

stethoscope  
skinscape, under a shirt under a blouse  
under a dress, naked, beneath a breastplate  
or armor or Kevlar, beneath a lover's  
fingers and palms, one of the shores,

Modigliani nude  
in a different home from  
a Lucian Freud nude,

the chest of an infant, those who see  
the chests of clouds, the chest  
before the next breath

## A Statue in a Front Yard in Minneapolis

It was a large person on a pedestal, about  
two blocks from where I lived. Once

and only once I was with a few friends, we  
were all about 6, and we were playing freeze tag

in that front yard among big trees and big trees  
across the street too. When I was tagged I became

the statue, then, a couple of minutes  
later, became a tree across the street.

## THE OTHERWISE EMPTY PASSENGER SEAT

The sound of the garbage truck on the dirt road  
is the work of tires and the driver and my ears  
and the dirt and the air and sound

waves

and none of these things are gifts from friends.  
Some people have ears

that look enormous. I do not have a book of  
500 photos of close-ups of 500 different people's

ear lobes, but if you or an institution gave me a grant  
I could take those photos within

one year. That's a promise. Black-and-white or  
color, whichever or alternating. Some people tear

pages out of art magazines. I'm one of those. Almost  
always, though, only advertisements for shows with  
another ad on the back so I am not mutilating

any of the articles that I may never reread. This poem  
is not a gratitude workshop; I'd like to think of it  
as a gift to a friend. The garbage truck driver is unlikely

to be stopping on the side of the road for a poetry  
break, lifting lovingly one of the poetry books

stacked on the otherwise empty passenger seat,  
reading a poem aloud several times before  
starting the engine and getting back to

helping the population not get buried in refuse.

Most people don't wish they'd never thrown out  
what they did throw out six weeks ago, which makes  
the garbage truck driver's life less tortured.

How many of us remember putting a hand over  
our heart  
during a pledge of allegiance in a classroom?

During that pledge is it probable that one student  
was scrutinizing another student's  
ear lobes

or recalling a favorite cloud? The colors of the flag

were like water that the pledge's  
words  
skipped over like stones

if the eyes took in the colors while the mouth  
stopped and started the sounds. Do you remember  
choosing stones you thought

would be the best ones to skip over the surface  
of nearby water? Are you one of the only people  
who have a photo from your childhood

selecting such a stone? Is it framed?  
I wish I could frame the stone, though that  
would mean I'd have to go back in a time machine

and ask you if you'd mind if I transported it  
to the future. Would you have been surprised  
to see me?



# *Gary Hotham*

## XI HAIKU

1/

flowers on the casket  
her shadow stays  
with her

2/

filling night  
with explanations  
dog barks

3/

child's ocean  
less color in the crayon  
with each wave

4/

stepping out of the pond  
sounds the dog gives  
morning

5/

sinking into the lake  
the child's one rock  
after the other

6/

sunrise at Gettysburg  
between unknowns  
a full name as silent

7/

under the bridge  
water follows  
water

8/

my sister's birthday  
summer clouds crowding  
the pond

9/

stuck in the rain  
the high end of the playground  
teeter totter

10/

autumn colors  
leaves finding  
darker versions

11/

window to window  
--  
never an old cloud

# Antonio Mangiameli

*profumo —  
l'ombra delle spine  
dietro i petali*



fragrance —  
the shadow of thorns  
behind the petals

## *Hansha Teki*

receding light  
    *at dead low water*  
my interior landscape's  
    *where meaning lies*  
inverse presence  
    *and distance ends*

compline—  
    *we enter*  
shadows seize my breath  
    *our perfect expression*  
in soundlessness  
    *without words*

*Mark Young*

EIGHT GEOGRAPHIES:

WABAYUMA PEAK

The meadow mouse, aka the vole, lives in groups. That increases chigger burdens, but decreases the risk of being recognized as the subject of a Theodore Roethke poem. Habitat is very important to them.

KORENGAL VALLEY

There is fighting in the next valley. Shouting. Of anger, orders, frighteners, pain. & metal on metal, a rare sound for this village where houses are built of thatch & timber, & implements are adapted from conveniently-shaped branches.

## Guayaquil

K-Time BAKED TWISTS are on  
special this week in the  
Cosmic Ten Pin Bowling Alley  
on the Av Francisco de Orellana.  
That's where the local kumi-daiko  
drumming ensemble are  
preparing to challenge a  
visiting Greek death metal  
band to a winner-has-to-  
buy-drinks game of marbles.

## FLORISSANT

A standardized way to manipulate  
the browser has revealed proof of  
a huge Chinese land deal as well as

angry crowds protesting a second night  
under curfew in the town of Ferguson,  
MO. Elsewhere it's an amorous vista.

## KRUGERSDORP

Wildebeest fly at an altitude of 3000 to 5000 feet. Their ideal domain includes either an observatory or a chapel with earth banks along which many thorny plants grow. The animals most often nest amongst the thorns. That nest is the place where displays & copulation will occur. Though thorns are an advantage in many domains, here they mean that the wildebeest end up with an unusually restricted breeding season.

## ERBIL

Des #Kurdes abattent un #hélicoptère turc.  
#Ankara garde le silence.  
Our quotation simulator

will let you get a first estimation of your helicopter transfer rate.  
Getting your first period

is a big step in becoming a woman. You may have to choose which customer problem to solve first.



## DALY CITY, CA

USPS First Class Mail  
is a visual book-  
marking tool that helps  
you upgrade some of  
the most prestigious  
war antiques & antique  
weapons around.

## AUCKLAND

& as I leave the  
men's loo at the Inter-  
national Airport

an interactive board  
asks me to rate today's  
washroom experience.

*elmedin kadric*

at the touch  
of birdsong

the first blush  
of spring

# *Lee Gurga*

must you  
speak

native  
dream  
catcher

in wine  
country

as it  
is

with  
out  
you

seen from  
above

songbirds  
a  
light  
  
on  
the stone  
head  
  
in  
the  
garden

stone  
grotto  
  
as  
good  
as  
  
car  
bon  
footprints

touched by  
you

day  
light  
on your  
skin

ah  
ha  
a  
ohm

## *Francesco Palladino*

*rughe vermiglie...  
nel colore un sapore  
di melagrana*

ruby wrinkles...  
in the color a flavor  
of pomegranate

*calde parole...  
nell'odore il sapore  
del primo caffè*

warm words ...  
in the aroma that first  
taste of coffee

*fredde parole...  
nel sapore il calore  
del primo caffè*

cold words ...  
the first scalding  
taste of coffee

*fichi appena colti...  
la ruvida dolcezza  
di mio nonno*

freshly picked figs ...  
the rough sweetness  
of my grandfather

*in bocca un osso...*  
*il sentiero del cane*  
*dentro l'ortica*

bone in mouth ...  
the dog's path  
through nettle

*magnolia bianca...*  
*il tocco vellutato*  
*di un gelato*

white magnolia ...  
the velvety touch  
of a gelato



# *Kristen Lindquist*

moose crossing sign  
the first red leaves  
of the swamp maples

channel marker  
cormorants gathering  
above the mackerel

wondering how  
it feels to fly  
question mark

it's not you  
it's me  
shadow darner

wild blackberries  
the taste in my mouth  
of certain words

## *Jeannie Martin*

full moon  
carefully making  
the 'oo' s

now you see it  
now you don't  
Children's Moon

won't you stay  
just one more night  
Harvest Moon?

# *Anna Maria Domburg-Sancristoforo*

## FOR FRED

at the kitchen table  
holding your invisible hand  
autumn morning

managing the darkness  
without your smile  
autumn afternoon

waiting to feel  
your breath through my body  
autumn evening

closing my eyes  
with you within  
autumn night

## *Reka Nyitrai*

wrapping my body  
in my father's coat—  
non-binary snow

Taxidermy;  
to a robin's trill  
I add the longest night.

a blue tricycle  
led into a puddle...  
the boy I never was

# *Kelly Sauvage Angel*

autumn morning

sand and sea

touch

and again

the shoreline

blurring

at last surrenders

the space

to its season

between your heart

and my own

# *Adjei Agyei-Baah*

aquarium  
the cat pats  
motionless fish

*Carl Mayfield*

## HORIZONTAL TIME WEARS A BODY OUT

Measuring love against the horizon, always out of reach. I would rather fall down for 4 days and 17 miles than be confined to only me, to peel potatoes until the potatoes fight back.

welcoming earth  
accepts  
everyone's autumn

## THE PHONE DOESN'T RING, IT CROAKS

I've lived long enough to stop fighting with time. When something pulls me back into a chair I no longer turn and look to see who it is. What I wanted has been transformed into a purple robe locust tree outside the south window. What I do doesn't require pants, inspiration, belief, or regrets.

transparency  
fills  
the mirror



taking a selfie  
with 3 apricots  
after the storm

tightness in the chest  
day after  
his funeral

aster needles--  
lavender  
stitching the sky

in the cafe  
widow leaving  
no ear unturned

*Robert Hanevold*

arms growing heavy  
the lake surface bobs  
indifferently

## *Debbie Strange*

interrupted by snowy owls this winter darkness

frozen puddle the open eye at its centre

the barn that used to be red dust devil

*Jeffrey Ferrara*

prints in stone  
the evidence  
of stampede

clams in a pool  
the arrangement  
of planets

graffitied freight cars rolling through wheat

*Louise Hopewell*

the end  
of a friendship  
blood moon

just a routine operation crushed autumn leaf

stratus clouds  
all the bird scat  
on mum's headstone

the raindrop  
vanishes in a puddle  
funeral day

black clouds  
over the hinterland  
mud crabs

the sign says warning  
red-bellied blacksnake  
laughing kookaburra

old windmill  
the swishing  
of ravens' wings

black estuary  
a tea tree flower bobs  
on wind ripples

*Johannes S. H. Bjerg*

SUNDAY OCTOBER 20TH 2019

after  
bread  
and  
wine

after  
body  
and  
blood

after  
leaf  
and  
grass

after  
body  
and  
blood

after  
sky  
and  
crow

after  
bread  
and  
wine

after

~ 71 ~

lake  
and  
ripple

after  
word  
and  
song

after  
one  
and  
one

after  
one  
in  
one

after  
one  
to  
many

after  
one  
to  
ones

one  
is  
one

one

after  
bead  
and  
wind

wing  
and  
foot

moth  
and  
flame



after  
body  
and  
blood

after  
bread  
and  
wine

be  
a  
wave

be  
rooted

o

be  
a  
wave

rooted

in  
light

be  
a  
wave

rooted

in  
fullness

be  
a  
wave

rooted

in  
bread  
and

wine

rooted

in  
the  
wave

in  
the  
ocean

and  
the  
ocean's  
ocean

in  
the  
ocean's  
ocean's  
ocean

in  
the  
ocean's  
ocean's  
ocean's  
ocean's  
ocean's  
ocean's  
ocean's

ocean

and  
get  
up  
from  
your  
chair

and  
sit  
down  
again

be

a  
wave

be  
rooted

o

you're  
a wave

you're  
rooted

you have  
a chair

you're  
rooted

you have  
a chair

you're  
a wave

you have  
a chair

you're  
a wave

you're  
rooted

o

no  
wave

without  
a wing

where  
I  
sit

rooted

o

a  
wing

in  
your  
wave

an

ocean

in  
your  
roots

a  
wave

in  
your  
wing

a  
chair

by  
your  
ocean

a  
wing

on  
your  
chair

an  
ocean

in  
the  
tree

a  
tree

I  
don't  
know

a  
wing

in  
your  
wave

.  
bread  
and wine

we sing  
autumn

down to one leaf

body  
and blood

o

blank  
ocean

because  
history

pauses

blank  
ocean

because  
the wind  
rests

blank  
ocean

because  
I don't

say  
anything

because  
you say

everything

blank  
ocean

glittering  
dragonfly

blank  
ocean

under  
the clouds

*Ingrid Bruck*

southern hemisphere  
cherry blossoms hail  
northern apples

# *Costanza Trento*

## *DANZA IN UNA GRIGIA OSCURITÀ — PRIMAVERA*

*Imparò presto a ballare con loro  
Tra i suoi neri mostri una luce bianca  
Si avvicinò  
Un sussurro condiviso  
“Non hai paura di me?”  
“E tu?”  
Si toccarono e le loro mani divennero grigie  
I suoi demoni alle loro spalle.*

## *DANCING IN A GREY DARKNESS — SPRING*

*She soon learned to dance with them  
White light among her black monsters  
She walked closer, a shared whisper  
“Aren't you afraid of me?”  
“Are you?”  
They touched and their hands became grey  
Her demons behind them.*



*LUNA PIENA — ESTATE*

*Guardi in alto la luna, I fantasmi finalmente alle tue spalle  
In basso le tue dita nella sabbia,  
ricordi questo luogo.  
Una goccia d'acqua ti sfiora la guancia  
Ma non stai piangendo.  
Puoi respirare.  
Respira.*

*FULL MOON — SUMMER*

Look up at the moon, ghosts finally behind you  
Below, your fingers in the sand,  
you remember this place.  
A drop of water touches your cheek  
But you're not crying.  
You can breathe.  
Breathe.

## *John McManus*

the same way  
she used to look at me  
designer handbags

with twigs in its beak  
a bluebird hops past  
the unmanned bulldozer

she explains  
what her father did —  
forced rhubarb

black-tie event  
a few cherry blossoms  
follow me in

the throbbing vein  
above my wife's temple . . .  
fertility clinic

a friend's wake  
his favourite cat  
purrs away

*John Hawkhead*

spring bonfire  
my father in a haze  
of heat and ash

*Joanna Ashwell*

autumn rain  
our plans change  
with the cloud cover

the steps taken  
to avoid  
all trace of you

late apples  
we gather time  
with candlelight



# *Stephen Toft*

summer river  
both of us heading  
to the sea

stranded whale fills an afternoon

mountain retreat -  
my face reflected in  
a nameless pool

spring morning:  
the postman's  
elastic bands landing  
like hearts

autumn woods awoken by its own colours

cirrus clouds  
a fine spray from a split  
in the garden hose



## *Kim Dorman*

Walking back from the barber, I bypass  
a small temple. Thunder rolls in the distance.  
Smell of cut wood from the sawmill.

Walking along a narrow backroad this morning, on my way to the  
chemist, I pass a one-room government schoolhouse and can hear  
the voices of small children inside. They are chanting numbers in  
Malayalam. A tethered cow quietly grazes nearby.

Crossing a bridge at sundown, a train's shadow on water

the cows  
are quiet  
at night

one light  
on by  
the shed

(after Issa)

in autumn air a beggar's look sizing me up

on a branch carried downriver, insects sing

just as petals fall simply trust

visit to family graves, old dog takes the lead

the world is dew, yes, but

the moon's light  
each leaf a page  
of the notebook

immaculate  
as the lotus  
this waterlily  
rises from  
the mud

bending

sweeping  
up

dust  
as

the  
day

fades

the singing  
of birds  
is part of  
the silence

Rain all afternoon, paths become streams

the heart / can hear

The window looks north as crows cross the sky

small drongos  
perch on electric  
wires strung  
like cobwebs in  
the trees --

under a gray sky  
I drift  
toward sleep

pond heron  
flies away  
once  
you see it

first light in  
the high branches  
of a pipal tree

small birds  
singing

among the leaves

(among the wonders)

death after  
death the  
whole world  
dies

yet no one  
knows  
how to die

— after *The Bijak* of Kabir

the day  
with small  
birds

sleeping  
by the window  
near the well

the day

(among the wonders)

The axe will strike  
today  
or tomorrow  
you die

— after *The Bijak* of Kabir

dark  
humid  
rain  
on  
the tin  
roof

(among the wonders)

The headless thief  
gets away  
unrecognized

— after *The Bijak* of Kabir

his tools  
laid

on the side-  
walk,

he squats  
under

a faded  
umbrella:

old man  
who

fixes  
umbrellas

(kathakali)

rain, clear  
moon

gods & heroes

dance  
in the night



jewel  
on the  
path

iridescent  
blue  
&  
green

beetle

the wind  
dies  
at dusk

(sunlit)

a thread  
of

silk

spans

the  
garden

moon

nimbus  
of  
pearl

# *Alegria Imperial*

## GLOOM

do foxes exist like we do  
    thirst for what's good  
    like silence

sound fractures people's heads  
under cover of light  
there's iniquity dancing in the leaves

would fox howl  
    if I whisper  
    "I thirst for wind-drips"?

he draws his being up as if  
there's dawn in the guise  
of stalled words

digs the gloom  
    and cries leaving  
    purpled patches in my head

## FROM A LOSER'S NOTES

frog pond  
how far away my feet  
seems

a child's sandal  
surrendered to a wave

all my years  
rogue clouds  
gobbled up

no matter how you paint mine  
they're black, my eyes

on impulse  
shadows dither  
between posts

skinned birch  
I once owned this house, says he

## *Robert Christian*

### BOY

Run though you are not  
On an Attic vase  
For you are kept for now  
Alive through running  
In the park so tell me how  
Whoever you are  
Why you climbed up  
On the top of the pillar  
To survey or be simply young  
Above the spikes  
Unambiguously yourself  
And subject and centre  
Of the blue October

# *Angela Giordano*

*le prime luci, all'orizzonte, anatre in volo*

first lights, the horizon, ducks in flight

*vento serale, profuma di mosto, l'aria frizzante*

evening wind scent of must crisp air

*sui rifiuti, una bambola, osserva il cielo da un occhio*

a doll in the trash, look, the sky in one eye

*tiepido sole*  
*si seccano le foglie sui ricci di castagne*

hot sun  
drying the chestnut leaves curl up

*chemioterapia —*  
*in una stella cadente*  
*l'ultimo desiderio*

chemotherapy —  
the last wish  
on a shooting star

*densa foschia —*  
*gli aironi cenerini*  
*s'alzano in volo*

thick haze —  
gray herons  
rise in flight

*Guliz Mutlu*

ME & BOBBIE MCGEE

**BLUEBELLS**

Our foreignness, this bourgeoisie,  
Some bilberry pills, our blitheness,  
Your blue blood, your blurriness,  
I'm blustering. You're blusterous:  
Look! Bluebonnets're blossoming!

**SPACE DUST**

There's a horsefly on the milestone.

**REMEMBER**

If you want to go back, come with me!



**NOTE**

After the market, I will go to haircut,  
Beautifying and bewitching,  
Heartbreaking and mouthwatering.  
P.S.  
There before, under the apple tree.

**KITCHENETTE**

Narcissus and headhunters,  
Littleness, lordliness,  
Lunchtime!

**LATER**

Those thunderheads will brainwash soon.  
Remember to find me under the rainbow!

**HARELIKE MOON**

Rewriting on wrinkled paper,  
L'erreur que j'ai faite,  
Rewriting on wrinklier paper,  
Errare humanum est.

**STAND UP**

Hereinbelow  
White heliotropes,  
On the newsletter  
At your seat.

**PAISLEYS**

Ballasts... The barriers on the road.  
Her raspberry stained prayer book,  
Her cattiest look, one left oatcake.

**FREEBIES**

A bowl for pears and freesia for her, irrepressible. Maybe not!  
Passionflower for me or elderberries for her, we're inseparable.  
Dewberries, falsehoods!  
Bolero, bonsai... not enough!  
Frisbee!

**RITUAL**

Scintillate! Everlong, everliving evening!  
I'm the same, but all swallows far away.

**ONCE UPON A TIME**

Where the fig leaves are secrets of living...

**DIMINUENDO**

Crickets... More to say, he repeats,  
In a casket irksome we will be!  
The moon, meteoric and rockiest...

**ONESELF**

On the mulberry leaf,  
Antiheroically brittle  
Caterpillars, my love,  
Sincerest apologies,  
I'm putting one back  
To the mulberry leaf.

**PLEASE**

When tomorrow comes,  
A bowl of cherries,  
For grandma,  
I promise.

**MOMENTS AND MONSTERS AGO**

Sermonizing, memorising, theorising  
Mightiest, mightier, mightily "maybe",  
I'm herewith the hermit at the heights,  
Twosome.

**SOLO BASS**

Sing lento for my swollen ego!  
Play legato on lonesome, longwise love!

**HAND IN MINE**

Woolies and novels,  
Violets on towels...  
Becoming townees,  
Me& Bonnie McGee!

**STRAITJACKET**

Her skintight jeans,  
Catwalk skyward...  
I'm wittily thinking,  
Knightly twinkling!

**AUF DEM WEG**

Draw me a dewy daisy for you!

# *Matilde Cherchi*

*Foglie al vento  
Tante storie diverse  
da raccontare*

Leave in the wind  
so many different  
stories to tell

*Notte d'autunno  
Mentre guardo la luna  
parlo da sola*

Autumn night  
watching the moon  
I talk to myself

*Le rose bianche  
Questa luna nascosta  
mi assomiglia*

White roses  
the hidden moon  
resembles me

## *Agus Maulana Sunjaya*

distant  
sound  
of an  
ice-cream  
truck's bell  
my grandfather  
somersaults  
in  
the  
grass

# *Peter Newton*

inside  
another chapter  
rain pelts the glass

when I need you  
to sing to me  
one saved message

a monarch  
at the window box  
stragglers file past



the swing's thick chain  
jerks back to Earth  
my youth

so  
many  
little  
things  
I  
have  
learned  
late  
in  
life  
whale  
fall

## *Corrado Aiello*

*sirene...  
da dove provengono  
tutte le oche?*

sirens...  
where did all the geese  
come from?

*sole dormiente...  
un poeta evoca  
il proprio dèmon*

sleeping sun...  
a poet raises up  
his own daemon

# *Patrick Sweeney*

rainy dawn  
the polished jade  
of the dragonfly's eye

nobody wants to talk about the evolving symmetry of fractals, buster

washing mud off potatoes  
since World War II...  
the bones of his wrist

the man she means to change  
home with another  
ammonite paperweight

stepping on a dragonfly  
the girl who calls out  
in class

she points to the stag beetle:  
'that's what individualism  
gets you'

the interrogator paused  
to let the autumn rain  
spill her guts

Mount Fuji again,  
honey, is it too late to blame it  
on my DRD4 gene

## *Lorraine Padden*

Alzheimer's unfolding  
his  
origami crane

a bouquet of roses  
her hands  
inside the coffin

## *Goran Gatalica*

*jesenji vjetar —  
eticitet  
divljih cvjetova*

autumn wind —  
an ethnicity  
of wildflowers

*zimski samoća ...  
sporo strujanje  
iz bakinog dimnjaka*

winter solitude...  
a slow stream  
from grandma's chimney

*umiranje bora —  
zimski zvijezda moga oca  
tone duboko*

dying pine —  
my father's winter star  
sinks deep

*kasna jesen —  
krivulja pastrve  
guta mamac*

late fall —  
the curve of trout  
swallows a lure

*miris bora ...  
nešto mekano  
poput mahovine*

the scent of pine...  
something soft  
like moss

# *Lisa Espenmiller*

and everything gets done  
ocean comes ashore  
fog rolls out to sea

steadfast silence  
the stones  
wait for us to learn