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Submissions

Shearsman operates a submissions-window system, whereby submissions may only be made during the months of March and September, when selections are made for the October and April issues, respectively. Submissions may be sent by mail or email, but email attachments are only accepted in PDF form. We aim to respond within 3 months of the window's closure, i.e. all who submit *should* hear by the end of June or December, although for recent issues we have sometimes taken a little longer.

This issue has been set in Bembo with titling in Argumentum.

The flyleaf is set in Trend Sans.

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Lance Nizami

Observance

A mountain town: in-deep the valley in-between the hazy Sawtooth
peaks

An inn; the far-north-side of town

A room that faces north, too, with a balcony

And there we sit and eat, late sunbathed autumn afternoon

The Chinese food is good here, unexpected in this mountain town

The hillsides golden-grassed between the pines are dry and dusty

So, too, the air; each moisture-molecule is bound to dust

Below us, close nearby, the one exception: grass that's green and wet
and trimmed

The cemetery; stretching northwards, linear, road-side; cemetery

Inside, a lone black road, well-paved, loops in, then out of graveyard

And as we watch, a ritual unfolds:

A car rolls in; it stops along the right-hand-side of tarmac, though no
markings are apparent

The doors will open; grown-ups exit, kids are left behind to wait

Grown-ups walk short-ways, in silence; disappear, in conifers

And then: no motion

Grown-ups then trace their steps back to their vehicle

They step inside, the doors close, and they leave –

A minute passes, sometimes two; and then a different car appears, or
sometimes two

Then debarkation, walk, and pause; then embarkation, drive away

The minutes pass; the ritual repeats

As dusk approaches, cars decline in frequency

We sit and watch, few words between us, waiting –

And finally, our greed for food is sated and our greed to know
breaks free –

We walk downstairs; across the moist green grass; along the tarmac
We estimate the spot where others stopped their vehicles
We turn, and walk across wet grass in lessening autumn light
And there's the grove of trees, the conifers

A gap between the pines leaves room for two flat slabs of greying
granite
Side-by-side; a man, and final wife
And on the husband's slab, we see an unexpected scattering:
Coins and plastic pens, and one lone paper note: it's "Thank You"

A name's carved deep upon the greying slab:
ERNEST MILLER HEMINGWAY
And suddenly, we comprehend the ritual
And suddenly, we're cast into a silence

And now we know why cars will stop here, next day and the next
And now we sense that we, like others, realize the place's meaning
Pausing, remembering –

Hemingway; his novels, read in high-school class; we had no choice
And later, when we wrote, we understood that obligation
And here, in this dark grove, we now recall:
An aging Cuban fights for hours against the vicious sharks, to keep
a massive tuna-fish, and fails

He fails; his tears add salt to salty water
And here, beneath the conifers, our unexpected tears add salt to soil
In a mountain town, so far from sandy shores of far-off Cuba
A mountain town: in-deep the valley in-between the hazy Sawtooth
peaks.

Cathy Dreyer

Sappho's Creature and Whizz Hair Remover

After Porky's Hare Hunt — Leon Schlesinger Studios, 1938

She does it to Herself before the war, She
drinks the chemical depilatory while the pixelated hunter holds
his unpixelated chin gun forgotten
pointing at the undrawn sky (these are such early days
childhood still a wrinkle
in the indices of notyetwritten books
Bugs Bunny undetermined *Porky's* work in progress
and, we happy rabbits without a memory
of genocide to forget)
the hunter is perplexed as She depilates herself
as though She were a blemish a cautionary tale
Our Uncomely Lady of the Untamed Pits
or a homonym. Call Her what you like

Look! Look! She's going ... going ...

*We like to drink with Her
Cos She is wild and free
When we drink with Her
She downs the lot in three! two! one! gone!*

The hunter flailing
in space the bottle hovers
on gray air on cartoon
His brain whirling clutching at
Her not seeing him a handful of air
like a baby tries and fails to catch the tit
bewildered by dimension. Where *IS* She?

Here I am *Hey! Fatboy!*

She says, pulling Herself out of Her hat
just out of shot by those old boots and tyres
and broken drainpipes the hut's dilapidated

though this is unexplained but 'Of course,'
Marxists know, (you know)
'that this means war!' and Gable, languid, pronounces
though carrots 'It's simple:
nothing but carrots sounds quite like carrots
no matter how high you hitch your skirt.

(Form devised by Ira Lightman)

Our Subsidiary Arrival (without M.E.N)

After W.B. Yeats

Twist twofold caught by our full spiral
Our hawk without hawk-coach;
Stuff falls apart; hubs fail;
Paltry chaos struts about our world,
Our blood-dull drift flows, plus ubiquitously
Our ritual of purity is sub-thalassic;
Our first class lack all ardour, as our worst
Hold avid sway.

Without doubt a shock is local;
Without doubt our Subsidiary Arrival is local.
Our Subsidiary Arrival! Hardly do such words fall out
But a vast copy of our Spirit of this World
Disturbs our sight: a spoil of arid grit
A spook with big cat body plus skull of a lad,
A look void plus callous as our vital star,
Drags its slow thighs, as all about it
Roll shadows of our furious dust-bowl birds.
Our apophasis drops, but today I grasp
That colossal shifts of oblivious sprawl
Brought us to toxic stupor cast by a shaky cot,
What rough virus, its hour brought high at last,
Sags towards this holy parish for its birth?

This poem appeared on queenmobs.com under a slightly different title

Hilda Sheehan

“Dandelions are the kinds of the sunshine you walk past, Weed.”

You are so wicked. Did your mother lock you in a dark room? Did she bash your brains with the family brush?

Write as if your pen is trying to kill you.

When did you last kill a poet? I froze one to death with my boredom: eyes made frost-lasers I couldn't control. *Sometimes anger can help you survive.*

The electric meter of my heart is empty of fifties. Use a Rizla to stop the beats – smoke the rest.

You are an invincible child – too big for a boy. We all desire our boyhood. My girlhood got me out of home in the comfort of a man's jacket. It's the gas fire effect. We gather about it from the cold of our beds. The cold of a boy is not equal to the cold of a girl.

Lunch was served with a silk daffodil. I wrote 'SIK' daffodil – dyslexia turns paper yellow – sugar in a 1970s glass-silver fountain.

Can you taste sugar when you write? If not, sit in the sugar a while. Then tip out, tip out.

You have broken my teeth on the goodness of a vinegar bottle est(1794)since. You taste of junk. I am the smell you wish you was.

She who kills laughing is a potted angel. Don't laugh at angels in pots. Angels need freedom to be –

poem = magic life

Addict of cool. Stupid fools. I'll give out dandelions at your funerools.

A man walks into a bar

carrying a baby. A baby, in a bar? Yes. A man walks into a bar wearing nothing but a baby. A baby? Yes. A man walks into a bar singing a baby and the baby tries to sing with him but no one can hear the baby. A man walks into a bar like a baby and the bar man refuses to serve him a drink until he walks properly. Act normal if you want a drink. A man walks into a bar as small as a baby and no one notices him. It's depressing how small he is, it's a sad episode. A baby walks into a bar as big as a man but we all know he's a baby. We put him in a pushchair. The pushchair is placed outside the bar until the man finishes his drink. However, when we go to retrieve the baby the baby is empty and the pushchair is loaded up with sixteen men. Sixteen men in one pushchair? Yes, all the size of babies.

Jill Jones

this makebelieve this driftwood

this abundance this consumptive force begging the future
this driftwood breaking apart arguments harmonies limbo
this window this plastic viscera amps in the shadows

composing this makebelieve in paragraphs memorising privilege
sand the car sales yard this homecoming orchestra staggering in
cupboards this record jacket dirty open-weave curtains

this background signal phantom washes a broken cup
black with insects knowing this nakedness this chameleon self
spray painting manifestoes 'all doors lead to busy rooms'

gathering happy blues hyperventilating eternal focus restructuring
open-ness bottles of Johnny Walker towers of toilet paper
this cardboard the dog next-door looking through salvage

this flavouring grottoes of biscuits the sound of breaking glass
this earthen darkness anticipating rituals the back room
ask for French 'it's getting too hard' 'no' and 'yes' this mask

brown haze sweeping backwards weather memorising dust
wine and smorgasbord piano accordion classics this stuff
into thousands of pillows pulling apart in shapes of animals

The Scatter Singing

River you step in a road
Direction litters
in different ways outside my head

Thank you air, why
I'm here
Thanks dust all you burials, roads
rocks, the sea recumbent obstacles

Relax!
Lasting moments are only moments
 in gardens, on nature strips
I never learned to ride a bike

The colours of things always change
universal like the galaxy
You can see some of it
from here on a clear night

Or birds resting in wetlands
How long have they been here?
I don't know hiding so much

You little dinosaurs of flight
You ancient soundings
And you rightly scatter from me

 Yet, singing

Transcendental Etude

I could never kick the ball hard enough.
The smell of winter is miles off blue.
The world is the handbag, the case, the shit storm.
It's easy to lose sight of the packaging.

I split the celery like an entertainment machine.
The evening moves everything apart.
I dissent again but no-one hears.
I divide time into useful components.

I've been taking the sky literally.
It reminds me of something.
Up there on the wire, in the green clouds.
Although there's nothing transcendental in reach.

Outside there's a pile of yellow petals.
The gates are humming, birds cracking seeds.
I'm cuter than cactus now.
It's better than being slavish.

Everything today is inside itself.
There are too many symbols.
And hell has no high-minded future.
It's not a philosophical argument.

Sun is better this morning.
There should be more butterflies.
From that high up everything shines.
Even the coins we lost.

You walk better than me.
My heartache's softer.
You can hear it dripping.
It's not all fair sailing.

Was it this hot when we were children?
Even angels aren't the same.
They make us restless up there, in the green clouds.
The feathers are moving apart.

Drew Milne

In The Forest of Symbols. On the reserve, both formally and informally, any behaviour not given over to technical production was under pressure to owe something to mystical beings or symbols. The legal institution of the forest spoke of Norman deer farms and protein management for aristocrats. This legal fiction secured the domain of stray deer, who could range far beyond wooded lands at the heart of the forest without becoming free game. Although a forest is mostly pasture rather than woods, the physical forest became synonymous with woodland. Deer parks were exported to the highlands, where the symbol became an allegory of human clearances and mere sport. Closer to cities, the sign was given shelter in forests of the night where tigers might dart and fox. The rain forest beckons and the acids sing of tanks. Around the forest of Chernobyl, the ruins of Soviet nuclear power range far beyond the carved up regions that emerged around the agony and the ecstasy of the sarcophagus. Radioactive dust killed off so many pine trees in the red forest, once among the world's most radioactive scraps of land, now bulldozed and buried. Imagine a forest. A real forest. Then flatten it under a cloud of fallout and mulch into a compost under foot. The soil still emits. The lost forest has become synonymous with the physical zone of alienation. Humans are not free to roam around this fiction. Formal and informal relocation conventions pass for polite society, even to the extent of attracting tourists. At the centre of the ancient woods and marshes stood the Partisan's Tree, now marked by a memorial. The borders are based on soil deposits of radioactive materials. At least one church inside the zone claims miraculously low radiation levels. The perimeter is patrolled by horses. Allegories of sustainable growth have nevertheless been glimpsed flitting across pillars of the community. Odours, distress calls and albino mutations form correspondences and are chased down by eco-tourists. The chirrup of geiger counters disturbs the natural rhythms of poachers. But the groves of Chernobyl live in description still, radiating song, harmoniously diffused and well beyond mere legal bounds. The power there laid low sits gloomily over the groves and dispeopled airs. Intimations of cancer trace radiation's fiery scars. The bitter

landskip of absent trees grumbles more than it trembles for sylvan strains. Rivers and lakes threaten to spill their silt once the security of the dikes is neglected or overcome by darker weather. Wildfires raise the roof on toxic clouds, while wildlife, loosely framed but externally policed, is left to its own devices. It has been called a nature reserve, but it is also home from home for hundreds of abandoned vehicles, helicopters, ships and barges. The state of the underground military complex is set to become a leading light in the global unconscious.

Khaled Hakim

Ben Hur

Dear B

Do you remember wen I ran to Stockwel or Brixton tube to catch y/ bifore yoo disapeared to say I do love yoo.

Perhaps yr superier brittelnes & my superier horsshit wil always get in th way. Evrything is fin if we tawk abot the England cricket teme.

I dont kno if im riting this 2000 yers ago – I wish y/ cd forget.

But I did catch yu up & y/ understood

our diferent tradicions hypostasized as Poesy: the rize of the middle-classes & hysteria.

Did I tell yu th storie I told Reds & owr cuzins. Y/ kno how they wd mythologize my brekfast – no actuelly I wud mythologiz it for em.

I, Judah Ben Hur colecting comunity memory as isolated bed sors.

This WPC tekkin my statement wile the paramedicks ar sticking him on a stretcher & shes worried im spasd out. Id probably shoplifed something.

I was in this Camden charity shop & theze 2 goyim are having a set-to on th steeming Hiy St, & the sqwat ponytail goy daring this shwartz, lyk – *Make yer moove – Com on then...* I thawt th Nubian bloke was interfering with his car.

The ponytail coms in, all chuffd & ses *Hes a pervert*. I says Wot. He seys – *hes using a mirrer to look up wimens dresses*. Ten minits later th schwarz coms in & hes saying *So ya think yer hard yeah*, & hez holding this brown paper bag handle thing wich I think is th ladys miror, the

empiricist metaphors alibi. & i gos behind him to I dunno, get in if it starts.

Al hell braks loose the glass lamps & ornaments, its raining shards the Nubians thrusting *thuk thup* & ponytails throwing punches & they get in this clinch. I jump on his back & hawl him off & i dont kno he must hav sqwirm out; the goy whos stabd lungez over me & falls over all th shattered bric a brak theyr chucking pots & vazes at eche other.

Im folowing th Mamluk on Camden Hiyh St, i seys to th Ponytail whos coming back, *Yoo stabbd*, & i see him holding th plase. I folow the Mamluk thinking Im Famus Five. Anyway he givs th slip on Greenland St Schmeenland St. Ive bin heer befor, the yuneeq event wich maks meening thru history, thru, becus.

Is that my lot – som banal urban awthenitissity? Im not mekin another racist rationale soothsay.

A poem crys denial. O displasd comunitarians. O jihadless jobless. From lyf without Royal Colege of Art to the life of twilyht press within. Waz, is ther, shal it. Egh?

(But our cuzins loved th story. Did I tell yu how I tole peple in Bangladesh a slihte scar on my cheek was from a nife fite. I think it was a bad shaving insident. But I beleved it myself. Fufoo was saying I shud sort owt prayr duties as the prospectiv child brides a strickly pius family)

I, Judah Ben-Hur went strait to th denotativ wich sed *I am pleazd* or *I am sorry*. & thers a feeling I slipt down a pasage of posible dimensions; ther wus the other spasetyme i opend th letter & clench a fist. Ther was a posibility the letters alter as aberacion of mind. The racionalist cognitiv senterd explanasions dont hold water when yore th Hero

mihty passions at boiling point & loud theatrickal tunes; think we missd th bote.

Broadcast engineers track narativs scope, rewrite the descriptiv moovment disclosing the Word

Barbara Tomash

from Her Scant State

Trouble was the condition she fully measured at the window leaning far out. (To say something really human, I discovered ugliness.) An anticlimax. She was trying to see child, childbirth, little girl, home from nurse, never a word, my dear_____. On her lips an echo. Exhausted. She had lost the conditions, the little girl, his wife, the question, the troubling pledge, the brief happiness. That had cost her. The real mother had shed any abundance. Yes, sufficiently.

★

Her voice strange and her eyes widely open, daughter—very quiet, very convenient, most liberal—as if looking at the basket of flowers. Putting a thing into word pictures an essential need in families. This little sketch. Delicate organism of daughter. To mark the difference between careful finishing touches. A chill. A home. The old Protestant tradition. And so many pretty banishments.

Janet Sutherland

You hold in your head a notion of the land

You squatted, shat and wiped your bum
with dock leaves. You trotted in amongst
the giant cows. Off you went in shorts,

bare chested, or in woollen balaclava,
stirrup pants and anorak. You didn't care,
you were in woods, inventing houses

with your sister, out of baler-twine and twigs,
and though you were a few yards off the path,
you were in wilderness, alive and lost.

★

At twelve you learned to drive the little Fergie,
your father taught you how to start it up
and demonstrated how to stop. He let you

work out how to steer. You aimed between
the gateposts at the end of *Muddy Track*
and felt the steering wheel go racketing about,

the tyres run slantwise over stones.
You made it through the gateway into *Park*
and pushed the throttle lever up to full.

★

You walked in storms so violent the cows
could not be turned to bring them in.
They stood, backs to the wind, implacable.

You know the rain in horizontal rods,
the drifted snow that lingered for six weeks,
the layered fog they anchored in like boats.

You've felt the sun that dried up everything,
burning all summer till the fields were brown;
the fields that greened-up four days after rain.

★

You've found the afterbirths still lying
in the field like pallid liver strung with rags,
chased with the rainbow oil-slicks of decay

on blood-streaked grass and trampled underoil.
You've seen calves born, shut them in pens,
and heard their mothers' bellowing.

You set that grief aside. You taught
calves how to dip unwilling heads to drink,
to suck your milky fingers like a straw.

★

In June the sisal strings made welts across
your palms from hay bales packed too tight
or damper than they should have been.

You begged a trailer ride from *Stony Ground*,
five layers up on top of all the bales. You saw
two bales shake loose and burst on stubble.

You yelled for him to stop, he didn't hear.
You rode the earthquake, laughing like a lord,
clinging on but loosened from the world.

★

On summer evenings after school you stacked
the haybarn to its rafters. You stood above
your father while the escalator grabbed

each bale with metal tines and clanked it up.
You tied the rows in, just like bricks,
until you'd raised them to the rooftop furnace.

A cell made hotter and more cramped
by each new bale you pummelled into place.
His tallest ladder sprung you out of jail.

★

You hold in your head the seasons fruitful
and the seasons on a knife edge.
You'd hear the worried voices after school,

Why had Mabel died of bloat? Then watch
him phone the knacker for next morning.
The knacker's van with flatbed, chains

and winch would haul her in and take
her off the field. Her body useless now,
no milk, meat, money, and no breath.

★

You've seen your mother fall and fall,
and fall and fall, never cry, though you've
heard her slur,

you've heard her sentences disintegrate
and you've interpreted. You'd like to hear
her voice again, its undertow has faded.

You'd like to milk the cows with her and wash
their filthy udders with a cloth. You'd like
to tell her what you should have said before.

Martin Corless-Smith

Samson Beleaguered (his blindness/death)

If I tried to recall
The specifics of a scene
One place, as the impulse
Of writing truthfully
What would that mean or matter
In this world?

The bars of the winter heater
throw their orange glow
onto our faces in the frigid gloom
With the bedroom window ice
outlooking the pale sky above
scrappy nests of neighbour fencing

A blue glass angel bear
Barely an inch high
From the chemist's door
Appears in my hand and

I will be lifted by love
And the cold gloved mother
Into a yellow flower
As if my eyes were water jugs
with a gentle breeze upon

A diet of feathers and
A diet of flies
As my bare parts
Hang through the wire grate

Always and often again recall
Her kindness towards

Me above all
And the pleasure I held
In forgetting that.

Taking his life
In an avenue of limes
with the cool water left
half-finished by the chair
as blossom and snow wheels through the air.
Enough of the building remained to appear
Once grand
With the do not enter
Sign on the door
Put down the shopping
Too heavy to bear

Wreck of the Sisterland

Boats boast across the skein
Skinny mast a cross masters
The wind sheets of rain
Skin the winding sheet remains

When in lust we drown
Downed a lashing—weather
The leather hide—wet inside
Her lengthening—lists to one side

She male replaces the dream
She'd made—a moon's face
Then the sun's reflection upon
Deemed too close to the room's embrace

I can't recall in darkness
The damp rat barks in the hall
Red-eyed cunt—the dank carpet
Car headlights—rolled up wet joint.

Sister on her haunches over the pit-
style shitter after bad peaches
Her hairy golden paunch and bear tattoo
I see her drain her spew & shit

Permanent loss—the beach recedes
Past the post of private property
Sperm enters the host—reaches
The ocean held for public use

Her pubis—the untying of a gown
After sickness and the tidying self groom
With warm flannel—rich green cotton
Turns brown—ready to reach again.

Stiff-pricked afternoon—a study
Shuttered from the day—barely a view
Sliver of thigh white against van dyke brown
Palming the rose tip stuttered into use.

★

The thrown-up raging blue
A cup of agency sky crack
Seated on a throne—aging child
Between trees—bright green leaves—ascend.

Tea thru tea—fuck you china
I go for Darjeeling—read the leaves—lucky
That I'm on a journey—then later
After tea the quick descent—the laughter.

Carrie Etter

Dirge

from *Grief's Alphabet*

Amen and behold, Bernadine,
cantankerous, capacious calls down
down echoing echoing fertile fields
growing garrulous here here here
into (justice) jeweled jams, jellies,
(justice) juices knocking, keeling....

Light makes new our project, our plea:
remember, revive. Soon the tillage,
the undulating vacancy, its xenial yield
zones a bounty. (*Bernadine....*)

This Kind

slow now the liquefaction of an August walk
naught but sun overhead, no trees' canopies broad enough to
& humid: ah Illinois, your give & take, give & take
every animal has found shade: cat on porch, dog under tree
only I take the cement line and sense steam rising
remember my father's story: a heat wave in Saint Louie,
eggs fried on the sidewalk

Robert Sheppard

from It's Nothing

(Variation on) Ode to Life

I share a fish's unblinking view of rain on a river surface
under Lime Street station roof glass in the storm. Half
empty mid-afternoon train slips out into weather,
my mind half made up, half blowing free as though

on the platform at Edge Hill. David Bowie's dead;
yet posing by The Wall he's defiantly alive.
Floods mirror watery sun fringed by pressing cloud.
Inside: warmth, coffee. Decision making as poesis...

The train slides under the latticed crystal of Crewe
for pause. In the rhythm of yes and no, between
work and poetry, inside and outside motion and stillness

Don Pullen coaxes, knuckle-slaps, hammers his *Ode to Life*
to life; all I want is to word its wordless asperities into
this poem that will never stop

Tamar Yoseloff

Anti-midas

Everything he touches turns to shit:

silver sucked of its glitter, bankrupt;
smooth skin shrivelled, breasts sapped.

He balls his fists in his pockets,
but his eyes spread manure in the flowers,

his stare sinks joy, his cesspit heart
seeks the charred core of the sun.

He tries to run, but his feet have slabbed
to stone, he is halted in the mire

of hatred. This is the world he's made,
although he's quick to pass the mantle

to the next man – his curse, his disease.
He breeds dirt from dirt,

his cry is a wheeze in the dark:
Help me. Dig me out.

Occupation Road

We had enough for a couple of weeks, tins of beans, tins of fruit.
We tried to pass the time although all the clocks had stopped. We
shuffled cards, their flat patterns and quaint queens soothing. We
built transistors from scratch but they picked up nothing but hiss.
Everything tasted of tin; I worried it was coming from inside me.
You were certain they'd erect cities on our garbage, write sagas in
a language we'd never live to speak. The train stammered over the
tracks at dusk, cargo scuttling to the far districts.

James Bell

nine sonnets

one stands close by on the edge of the sandbar
a counterpoint to the six who stand in straight arpeggio
much further over

a distant music unheard

notation though cormorants rarely make a sound

this visual can be made in words
there is the temptation to invent
in order to see everything in the round

it is your inclination

a parting of the way
that began with cuneiform and now exists
as transparent shadows in a lighted box

two cormorants turn somersaults in the water
each turn under with a set hiatus of thirty seconds

~

from underwater the surface is broken in a quick swallow
for air cormorants tumble like water acrobats
as a girl sashays past in a dress the wind ripples
against her legs and her mind somewhere else

two boats have shifted sideways on the opposite bank
inclined towards the water with
a perspective not too good to be true for art's sake

these are the leavenings the semblances
of core reckoning you find where there are senses
of different passages you breathe air at all times

the river speaks its own language with regular lapses
into a silence where you need to make up the words
place contempt in what would have been said otherwise

decide that silence can always be an opinion

~

language is an acquisition you gain
with practice and repetition

the constant sound

waves generated by the wind to a pattern
where there is no code to break and then complete—
silence is never an utterance

though nothing is a vacuum

river sounds are joined up a continuous sigh
of ripples that can build into the storms you dislike

today you sense an evenness though it's too late now

for the cormorant to fly downstream at midday punctuate the chatter
at least help to complete a sentence before going

cormorants could be a new beginning
where the interpretation of what you see is your own

is a spell to conjure in a penumbra
is a sequence that has to be arrived at in time

~

Martin Anderson

Road to the North

“Homeward you think we must be sailing
to our own land.”
Homer — *The Odyssey* [X: 538-539]

I

Suddenly at the end of day, spectral tree blown
against the window, my father appears before me
marching, leading a shabby contingent of ghosts.
They pause, and then, the sound of half empty
canteens slopping at their waists, approach. I watch them
as if through a stirred-up haze of dust, fragments
from a broken century, their laughter
and song drifting, as they march,
through time's porous and permeable borders
into our own, dissolving all horizons
and distances, shedding the dead weight
of months and years, to appear before
me, reinvigorated. Ghosts, feeding on my blood.

II

I ask him how they managed to arrive, unscathed
out of that gloom at the world's end. “Although
we summoned ourselves” he said “we were loath to
come back, knowing the way, that it would hold for us
only professed guilt. But for pity of you, and to see you
once again and warn you, before the clouds of darkness
block, finally, any hope of return ... On the way
by which we came, city after city, nothing but a heap
of smouldering stones, smoke, soot strewn mosques,

hospitals, bodies piled up on pavements, waiting.
As if entire countrysides and cities had been
offered up as burnt sacrifices to the god Mithra,
their odours pleasing to him. An ancient temple to him
preserved, parts of it, in the basement of the House
of Finance which, as we came closer to you,
we saw rising, all steel and glass, like a lance head
flashing under cloud, tilting at the very heavens
themselves. And all around us at night FIRE
the sleepers in untold doorways and hauling,
during day, bags stuffed with their possessions
from bench to low wall to under a bridge
out of the rain. Like those groups of vagabonds
listlessly adrift roaming the turnpikes after their
land was seized, their towns pulled down about
their ears, centuries ago. Home is always the model
for the export of devastation. In fading light we heard
the clank of uncoupled cars in the goods yards and,
from them, a low and muffled tune of despair. Its refrain
rings in our ears, still...”

Susie Campbell

Udder

What is ancestral in me knows as little as that skipping calf is oiled and clipped to bleed open the earth. Or is left wandering.

I was ready. But not for these, heads lowered and moving across my carpet at night, nostrils blowing with effort. Driven north across Europe: black as iron-gall, great vessels heavy with freight, stowaway calves hidden by their mothers' bulk. As a meteor leaves a glittering trail of horned gods, teats and cloven feet.

When you saw them on the hill, I blamed your failing sight. Floaters: residue close to the eye. Or the sun pooling in dips to distend the sides of shadows. But you insisted, *they're back*.

And so now they come. Always walking from left to right; a swollen matriarchy rolling hoof to implacable hoof, appearing and disappearing into the blank margin. Until it leaks its pale milk.

Natasha Sajé

on privacy

our neighbor again drives drunk
this time not over penstemon
crushing their bearded tongues

this time on the highway crash
landing in the ICU

toes lost to gangrene a gangly loping walk
and what part of his mind to
nothing to do nothing to do but drink

and then get into his big orange truck

his wife clipped on the phone
closes the conversation
I feel I am thrusting myself into

a thick arborvitae hedge
breathing its broken woody scent
peering through crinkled leaves

to the empty pint bottle of Popov glinting from the curb

privacy once meant *the lack of public significance*
an undesirable state
to no longer count or be counted

now from behind fences and walls
electronic and other

we choose to shield
embarrassment and pain

while in moist November soil
the penstemon seeds itself
around shards of glass

Lucy Sheerman

Dearest,

That memory, let's not mention it, so much misunderstanding, layer upon layer, enough to fill a lifetime. How each sheet rustles like tissue paper, so fine a breath might disturb them. They do press down so upon your chest. Is this how you get to Hurt? Cocooned in a silence that holds the world at bay. I am making a border all around me, but it is filled with gaps; light and sound seep through. The walls are paper thin after all. Will you tell me now you love me? Send me a letter? Perhaps though I will not hear you out. Forgive me, I only want to imagine a room full of windows, vistas which stretch out the limits of this place. You won't tell me again, I suppose. See if I care or stoop to find the little phrases that spin across the floor, kicked into corners, apparently irretrievable.

Yours,

Dearest,

Sleep now. The walk was short but it was long enough. It takes time to recover. Day by day you may claw back more minutes (all except those lost ones, all that time we waited). It will be as if nothing is missed. We can make it so. I trace my path along this coast with all its histories of loss and forgetting and find I disappear almost as soon as the walk is over, only the scent of pine or sea lingers for a few moments. The dream that woke me is just a reminder of difference in scale. The house shrunk and all its beds discarded, a mangle, a gramophone and my shrill ingratitude all that is left. The dream and the creaking of a strange house, my companion's breathing and the glow of the unfamiliar kept me awake. Conscious of my place in the darkness at last, I was getting ready to leave. How lost I was, between countries and times and a sense of belonging. All this story will be a dream soon, and you dear reader, a fellow sleeper. The old, real life

is the one that seems dreamlike, free of these new threats. Like these geese afloat on the freezing water, disturbed by the sudden sharp crack of gunfire, we see them flying into that bright sky, reflections skimming the water. Delicious irony, I might think, as we duck into the sanctuary of the house.

Yours,

Julie Mellor

Unwin Street

When I see our house in the photograph it's 1976.
The cousins from Canada have just arrived
and are squinting at our sun.
They chew gum endlessly and say *I guess*
instead of saying yes or no.
My mother has just finished cleaning the bay window.
Her hair's still in rollers.
In the street, the tarmac's melting
and Julie Fretwell's Afghan Hound is lying in the road.
We're posed with the cousins in height order.
They're all taller than us.
Dad is missing. He's up the drive, tinkering
with the engine of his hand-built speed boat
which he's painted orange and stencilled
with the name *Wild Oats*.

After tea, my mother says
no one's going anywhere without a life jacket,
but my brother doesn't want to go at all
because a packet of resistors has arrived
from Maplins so he can finish his hi-fi.
Due to the drought, the bath has to be emptied
with a washing up bowl. The water is carried
downstairs and tipped on the roses.
The roses aren't in the photograph.
Neither are the presents they brought us,
a key ring from the CN Tower in Toronto
and a fringed satin cushion that we slide off
every time we sit down.

Gillian Kidd Osborne

Sexual Dependency

Ever since my mother told me of the reproductive dependencies of ivies, I've looked for them, the naked men among them, green, green, only that deep shiny jagged green, licked with winter. And I've noticed, too, the separation gardeners sometimes impose, casting the male corner-wise, away from a row of showy red-flecked females, fruiting their display.

What's hidden and what's revealed?

When I ask you, What's invisible and what's revealed, that's meant to be a sort of stage direction for an unimaginable play you must imagine the players in the fray of an empty stage as in a room of others a gorgeous aging poet asked, and you must also imagine her gender, or her body otherwise so braceleted and rigorously black. In consequence,

examining the brute elegance of

dependencies I have been taught to call women, recognize as men. Torn acorns pocking the earth. Azaleas, evergreens tucking their buds. If only you knew, mother Nature, how little you have ever been a proper mother, over by the compost regularizing love and decay. When a girl, I made my body flower at the flower-market all purple with muddled hands

all those lovers, all those green

things, a man I might have loved, meanwhile my lover of then, as if an overly kept bouquet or only a magnolia in the way of things, shedding indecorous pink, how changeable he was, predictable his changes as once were seasons, as afterwards when I was alone again the night trees smelling of semen could I ever leave him I didn't think then that I would.

Ralph Hawkins

Toledo

the arrhythmic
breathing of
the snipe's
tiny heart
buttercups, poppies,
leading the way
up a beaten track
out of breath
coloured in pastels
& here is El Greco
a little box full
confined
of almond candies
breathe in Spanish
and sigh in Italian
passa 'l sospiro ch'esce del mio core
their painted hair and
fingernails dyed red

The Shape of Water

cycle of
in a field
rain drops
a drip
from a grey
tank
across an ocean
cuttlefish
the pink moons
of octopods

the th
ink of which
on the window
glass rain
hammers
pianoforte

pneuma

caged birds
possibly talking about the vet

discharge papers

fluffy synthetics with
a blow-up penis

it's pneumonia he said
not milk fever

those poor parakeets
colour coded

puffer jackets
detention centres

learning a new language

I hope she pecks off
his finger

Guy Birchard

Selections from ONLY SEEMLY

Thomas Burchard, labouring man, wife and six children, ex-Fairstead, Essex, aboard *Truelove*, Captain John Gibbs, master, bound for Massachusetts Bay, September, 1635. Zacharia Whitman, wife and junior.

Vivid, notwithstanding what never can have been lived. Sandhills adder, viviparous, brooding her clutch of eggs.

Lord appeared, black fedora, paunchy in gray suit, waddling along Dorchester, smoking a cigar, *Gazette*, could be *Star* (*Le Devoir*?) under left arm, lunchbag in right hand. Three layers of chin. Stately, seraphic. Montréal from just within the first portal into paradise.

Heading for the Sahara, there but to turn back. In idleness in Tagounit, full enough of the infamous White Cookie of Marrakech to foresee a quarter mile from town the silver dirham lost that long ago it lay not on but embedded in the hardpan.

Only later to kip vagrant in Cherbourg jail, whence ejected unbooked into dawn chill, sick.

Vancouver beerjerk on the hero-shift witnessed his VPD plainclothes regular stagger out pie-eyed

one midnight, then return haggard first thing
next morning, relieved nobody had dared pinch
his wallet conspicuously mislaid on the banquette.
Worst scenario averted: lost Badge found.

(for David Miller) Artless Canadian fails to stoop
to clear the lintel of Berkshire inn yclept *The Jack
Russell*, knocks his noggin. *So who was this J.R. feller?*
No person, sir, publican deigns, rather a fine breed of
terrier. Ahh! pardon my naiveté. I'm American, you
understand...

Be Madigan's back-bar clock's tick soever audible,
entertain such a pixilated notion as to learn to say
– Irish! To which end, meekly drop the knocker
on the Gaelic League's door. Only to have the oak
slammed on yez for a *fekin' brazen amadán yank
muppet*, all rendered in jackeen ire of mystifying
origin.

Red fox, dissembling like a celebrity in shades and
hat beset by autograph hounds, passing for a brindle
calf, transformed in dudgeon and fled.

(for Merrill Gilfillan) Step onto the rear gangway,
perigee moon caroming off Sunset Limited rails
maken tracks outta Nawlins west of Lake Charles,
east Texas way... Big Yellow Moonful. Immersion
course in Spiritual.

Peaceless. Celestial elder, downcañon in Arroyo Seco
seclusion, broke not his stride, only shifted his grip
on his staff when he saw himself seen. No ebb, no

Judita Vaičiūnaitė

translated by Rimas Uzgiris

Anapaestic

1.

Let me hear again the insomniac lark that sings
from the scent of lilacs blossoming blue, through foggy nights
when the balcony over the town becomes a stage
like the endless horizon of dawn – please don't take from me
this sleepless world where the pale and intricate stars
still fill the heart with light in a sacred hour of solitude
when the waking city enlarges the sky in a violet haze,
or when water murmurs under the bridges in ice-free streams.

2.

Ancient calendars with layouts of Vilnius's historic streets,
ancient calendars with brazen clocks of the dead marking time,
the ivies a century old, the courtyard's arch wound in thin
spiderweb speech, blocking you off from home,
where on my table a pile of faded notes grows,
all used and forgotten beside the telephones that no longer hear,
and the empty address books – I'm afraid of your murmur,
for the bloody past is turned into strophes under skies
bound up with fog, their memory fills – until one bitter day
amber leaves will fall on caryatids dozing away.

3.

Let the seasons change like chrysanthemums in a vase,
now turning brown, as their soft undulations appear in a barber shop
mirror,
and the face which you left in the dark as the trolley bus groaned
its meandering tread through the starless and soulless night of
November's sterility –
with your hair in the barber shop mirror again, let your sadness fall
with it too,
forget once more how a hopeless anxiety hounds us day after day,

and embrace the chrysanthemum's charming weave, why wait?
The pedestrians, streets, and cities still swarm –
these are the visions of the mirror of twilight's barber shop.

4.

It's the thaw's living water – just celesta, celesta, celesta I hear,
with the light that drips into my brain from the snowy window,
it's forbidden to be silent here like a marble mask on the wall,
we're allowed to sing naturally, in a joy without struggle, pure –
I can see the unfolding blossoms of begonias on fire in a vase
on a sill, made of clay, with the scent of the earth, in the middle of
the day –
but the sun of the thaw still sparkles cold and pale over the city,
in the balcony doors, the rays of the sun are like ivy winding around.

Giedrė Kazlauskaitė

translated by Rimas Uzgiris

Silentium

Nothing dramatic happened – you didn't change your status, didn't reply to the current discussion, didn't carry a banner through the streets, and you didn't become a hero on glossy magazines (though the effects aren't hard to achieve, inhumanly vulgar as they are). You just lived, slowly, what others do not understand, from the perspective, it seems, of an insufferable life when you wake up from a nightmare screaming in the dark: they have released the guard dog – symbolizing what is always hidden, the ability to bite so many in the throat.

There was a revolution in Ukraine, social webs were buzzing and all the personal video uploads looked like misery. People got married with barricades in the background and walked with mirrors against Berkut; our child was late to speak so we dragged her off to the doctors who could tell us nothing but that one must have hope.

Instead, she recognized the letters of her name on the TV screen, and then, on the washing machine: joyfully pronouncing each one, she enunciated them as if in Japanese, having learned, most probably, from free cartoons on YouTube. We began to understand – she remains silent to avoid saying what doesn't need to be said, keeping our lives safe.

A cold winter. Elementary students were not allowed in school, but we took her to kindergarten so that I could go to the seminars from which I recall the view along roofs to the Bernardines' cross: it looked like I could reach it with my hand and tie myself to the steed of dreams. But a lethargy settled down on me, as if I had gone nowhere for a decade, as if I hadn't even seen the city; people looked different now, marked by progress,

but still dissonant under asymmetric
classical vaults. I was behind on my dissertation,
even my mother lost her faith, saying:
“What do you need those studies for?” And I would dream
of her discovering our life together – condemning it, demanding
divorce (separation), mourning, terror, and then our aggressive,
white guard dog would get free: he could really attack people,
and we needed to hide to avoid the butchery.

Even though we lived in a cave (the catacomb figure is too high),
we would see the true letters of our names
in the shadow theatre of Maidan, but we remained silent
because of the dog.

Indrė Valantinaitė

translated by Rimas Uzgiris

All the Rooms

All the rooms that have heard my laughter –
the backs of chairs, the closets whose darkness
sheltered my clothes when I was left white-bodied,
shining on my way to the bath,

wherein my weak little voice
would chase the latest tunes.

All the hotel soaps and towels
that washed and dried my tingling skin,

all the mattresses and springs that felt the weight of our love,

all the pillows in whose down my dreams were hid,

every mirror that has drunk my image above the sink –
in those mornings when I rose with rheumy eyes
in those rooms where I opened them –

remind me: how young and graceless I was,
and how strangely lacking in gypsy blood.

I would like to visit those places again before the end,
to gather me/us together once more, piece by piece.

I would glue together that puzzle – scattered, now,
over the seas and deserts of a fractured world.

In the Park

Lift up your toes
In my mouth
And we can make love
And we can go.

—Cocteau Twins

In the park, whose pond drowned bastard children,
whose branches broke under over-ripe lovers,
whose gates were wrought with unicorns making love,
our meandering shadow wrote the letter M.

Outsmarting the drunken guard, we waited for the gate's creak,
and the key that would waltz around the lock.

We had a mission to save ourselves –
in one night, to overcome the park's fright,
the owl's cry, the full moon's eye.

Fresh lovers, we knew our power,
sculptures in the nave of sighing boughs.

We kissed the greenhouse flowers out of thirst,
and as the fountain's water mirrored a dense
curtain of evening clouds, and the sun's face
dove behind the trees and church towers,

we became one like the booty in the belly of a whale.

Notes on Contributors

MARTIN ANDERSON has several collections with Shearsman, most recently the chapbook, *In the Empire of Chimeras* (2018).

JAMES BELL is Scottish and now lives in Brittany where he contributes photography and non-fiction to an English language journal. He has two previous poetry collections: *the just vanish space* and *fishing for beginners*, both from Tall-Lighthouse. He is currently at work on a first short-story collection.

GUY BIRCHARD – loafer at the sedentary trade: lay poet. Latterly of Victoria, British Columbia. Scholar of nothing. No degrees. No prizes. Neither profession, trade nor career. Anglo-Canadian. *Only Seemly* is in production at Pedlar Press (St. John's, Newfoundland) for autumn publication, 2018. Shearsman Books published *Aggregate: retrospective* in the Spring of 2018.

SUSIE CAMPBELL's poetry has been published in two chapbooks, *The Bitters* (Dancing Girl Press, 2014) and *The Frock Enquiry* (Annexe, 2015) as well as in a number of UK and international journals including *Shearsman*, *Long Poem Magazine*, *3AM*, *Zarf* and *Cordite: The Mathematics Issue*. Her work has been included in Avant-Garde Visual Poetry Exhibitions 2017 and 2018 (Museum of Futures), and she created new work for the 2018 Poem Brut series, curated by S.J. Fowler. She is currently poet-in-residence for the 2017-2018 Mellon-Sawyer Post-War Commemoration series, jointly hosted by University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University.

MARTIN CORLESS-SMITH was born in Worcestershire, and studied painting before moving to the USA, where he attended the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop and gained a Ph.D at the University of Utah. He teaches on the programme at Boise State University and edits the *Free Poetry* imprint. His next collection, *The Fool & The Bee*, will be published by Shearsman Books in early 2019.

CATHY DREYER Cathy Dreyer is a poet and critic who lives near Wantage in Oxfordshire. Her examination of Carrie Etter's *Imagined Sons* and Ted Hughes's *Birthday Letters* is shortly to appear in a special edition of Intellect's *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice*.

CARRIE ETTER is a frequent presence in these pages. Her fourth collection, *The Weather in Normal* is due from Seren in the UK and Station Hill Press in the USA. Her most recent Shearsman publication is the chapbook, *Scar* (2016), the text of which appears in the new book.

KHALED HAKIM lives in London. He has been absent from the poetry world for many years and is now making a return, with a book, *Letters from the Takeaway*, in development at Shearsman.

RALPH HAWKINS has three books from Shearsman and many more prior to that. The most recent is *It Looks Like an Island But Sails Away* (Shearsman Books, 2015).

JILL JONES was born in Sydney and has lived in Adelaide since 2008. She has published ten full-length poetry books and a number of chapbooks, including *The Beautiful Anxiety*, which won the Victorian Premier's Literary Award for Poetry in 2015, and *Breaking the Days*, which won the Whitmore Press Manuscript Prize in 2014 and was shortlisted for the Kenneth Slessor Poetry Prize in 2017. She has also won the Kenneth Slessor Poetry Prize and the Mary Gilmore Award. She has worked as a film reviewer, journalist, book editor and arts administrator. In 2014 she was poet-in-residence at Stockholm University. She currently teaches at the University of Adelaide where she is also a member of the J.M. Coetzee Centre for Creative Practice. Her most recent collections are *Brink* (Five Islands Press, 2017), and *Viva the Real* (University of Queensland Press, 2018).

GIEDRĖ KAZLAUSKAITĖ (b. 1980) studied Lithuanian literature at Vilnius University. Her first book, *Bye-Bye School!* (2001) was prose, her second *Hetaera Songs* (2008) was poetry. For the latter she was awarded the Young Jotvingian Prize. Her third book, *Postils* (2009), written together with Father Julius Sasnauskas, presents a commentary on the gospels. Her fourth collection, *Las Meninas*, appeared in 2014 and won the Jurga Ivanauskaitė Prize. In 2016, her fifth collection, *Singerstraum*, won the Writer's Union Prize and the Most Creative Book of the Year Award. Since 2010, she has served as the editor of the weekly cultural periodical *Šiaurės Atėnai*.

JULIE MELLOR holds a Ph.D from Sheffield Hallam University. Her poems have appeared in various magazines including *Ambit*, *Magma*, *The North*, *The Rialto* and *Stand*. Her pamphlets, *Breathing Through Our Bones* (2012) and *Out of the Weather* (2017) are published by Smith|Doorstop. She blogs at <http://juliemellorpoetsite.wordpress.com>

DREW MILNE's collected poems, *In Darkest Capital* came out from Carcanet Press, UK in 2017. *Earthworks* is forthcoming from Equipage in 2018 and *Third Nature* is forthcoming from Dostoevsky Wannabe in 2019.

DR. LANCE NIZAMI, BSc MSc PhD (all U.Toronto) originated in Lancashire. He now lives in Palo Alto, California. He is an independent research scholar who has published in the fields of Hearing Research and, more recently, Cybernetics. For the past seven years, he has occupied his few moments of spare time with writing poetry. His 250 accepted poems are spread over more than 100 print journals. PDFs of some of his scientific papers and letters can be accessed on ResearchGate and on Academia.edu.

GILLIAN KIDD OSBORNE's poems have appeared in journals such as *The Threepenny Review*, *Vólt*, and *Zyzzzyva*, and she has written essays and reviews

for *The Boston Review*, *The Critical Flame*, *The New Inquiry*, *Nautilus* and other publications. With Angela Hume, she is co-editor of a collection of critical essays, *Ecopoetics: Essays in the Field*, and she is currently course manager and head teaching instructor for the Poetry in America course series at Harvard.

NATASHA SAJÉ is the author of three books of poems, most recently *Vivarium* (Tupelo, 2014); a book of poetry criticism (*Windows and Doors: A Poet Reads Literary Theory*, Michigan, 2014), and many essays. She teaches at Westminster College in Salt Lake City and in the Vermont College MFA in Writing program. www.natashasaje.com

HILDA SHEEHAN is Director of the Swindon Poetry Festival and has published a collection of poems, *The Night My Sister Went to Hollywood* (Cultured Llama, 2013), and two chapbooks from Dancing Girl Press, Chicago: *Frances and Martine* and *The God Baby* (with illustrations by Jill Carter).

LUCY SHEERMAN is currently working on a series of fan fiction treatments of iconic novels including *Rebecca* (Dancing Girl Press) and *Jane Eyre*. She was an artist in residence at Metal Peterborough where she co-created a new Evensong for Peterborough Cathedral which explored whether long term couples could take an extended journey to the moon together. Her sequence about the effect of the moon landings on the Apollo astronauts and their wives was published by Oystercatcher. Two plays, including a collaboration with the astronaut and poet Al Worden have been commissioned by Menagerie for the Hot Bed New Writing Festival.

ROBERT SHEPPARD's most recent book is *Twitters for a Lark* from Shearsman, a collaborative fictional poetry project to accompany his earlier *A Translated Man*. 'It's Nothing' is part of a long project of sonnets, part of which has appeared as pamphlets: *Petrarch 3* from Crater and *Hap* from Knives Forks and Spoons. He lives in Liverpool, and blogs at robertsheppard.blogspot.com.

JANET SUTHERLAND has three collections from Shearsman, the most recent of which is *Bone Monkey* (Shearsman, 2014). *Home Farm*, her fourth collection, will appear in early 2019.

BARBARA TOMASH is the author of four books of poetry: *PRE-* (Black Radish Books, 2018), *Arboreal* (Apogee, 2014), *Flying in Water* – which won the 2005 Winnow First Poetry Award – and *The Secret of White* (Spuyten Duyvil, 2009). Her poems have appeared in *Colorado Review*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Web Conjunctions*, *New American Writing*, *VOLT*, *Verse*, *OmniVerse*, *Witness*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Inter/rupture*, *Blaze/VOX*, *Bombay Gin* and numerous other journals. She lives in Berkeley, California, and teaches in the Creative Writing Department at San Francisco State University.

RIMAS UZGIRIS' poems and translations have been published in *Quiddity*, *Atlanta Review*, *Barrow Street*, *Hudson Review*, *AGNI*, *The Drunken Boat*, *The*

Massachusetts Review, *Modern Poetry in Translation*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *Lituanus*, *Prime Number Magazine*, *inter|rupture*, *Presa Magazine*, *The Literary Bohemian*, *Literary Laundry*, *Brooklynier*, *Umbrella*, *Per Contra*, and other journals. His book reviews have been published in *HTML Giant*, *Post Road*, *Words Without Borders* and *Rumpus*. His fiction appeared in *Writer's Abroad: Foreign Encounters Anthology*. He holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and received an MFA in creative writing from Rutgers–Newark University. Recipient of a 2013 Fulbright Scholar Grant and a 2014 National Endowment for the Arts Literature Translation Fellowship, he teaches literature and creative writing at Vilnius University.

JUDITA VAIČIŪNAITĖ (1937–2001) – one of the most famous 20th century Lithuanian poets. Her first poetry book *Spring Watercolours* was published in 1960. She is the author of 20 poetry collections. Vaičiūnaitė also wrote poetry and fairy tales for children. “Vaičiūnaitė made Vilnius the locus of both Lithuanian poetic obsessions: nature and history. The city is not just any city. It is northern, yet Baroque. It is an occupied city, under Soviet rule, yet steeped in its own history and mythology of independence. And with this new emphasis on the urban came an unsentimental look at the life of a modern woman in the city: single, educated, working, struggling to be free”, explains her translator Rimas Užgiris. *Vagabond Sun*, her selected poems in Užgiris' English translation, is being published by Shearsman Books around the same time as the publication date of this issue.

INDRĖ VALANTINAITĖ (b. 1984), after graduating from a Jesuit high school, studied arts management at Vilnius University and at the Vilnius Academy of Arts. Her first book came out in 2006: *With Fish and Lilies*. It earned her first prize in the poetry category of the 2006 First Book Contest of the Lithuanian Writers' Union. Her second book, *On Love and Other Animals*, won the Young Jotvingian Prize in 2012. Her third collection, *Short Films*, appeared in 2017. In addition to writing poems, Indrė is a singer, winner of several singing festivals, and works as a TV journalist and producer.

TAMAR YOSELOFF is based in London; her most recent collection is *A Formula for Night: New and Selected Poems* (Seren, 2015). She is also the co-founder of Hercules Editions with designer and art editor Vici MacDonald.