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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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Alexandra Sashe

Song of Autumn

We sow in the Land the cries
of the birds we don't follow –

we were chosen by Autumn to stay
and till with your eyes the sky.

We gather in barns
the sun and the shade
and leave in the dump air

imprints of our breath,
of our slow step,
as we wind the clocks of the field
with our faithful unflaying hands.

The trees kneel and embrace the fog
and bury the roots deeper in sleep,
they were chosen by Autumn to give :
fruits for a fall, leaves for a wing.

We remain immobile among the days,
among the space of withered grass,
we learn from the trees to bury and yield,
to fly in sleep,
to kneel and embrace.

And this bee and this grass fulfil their instant.

And I thirst and deny and travel

and make up for it
with a sign of the cross.

Instantwards, our hands
are dying premises. And the day is growing alive
as the hours are tolled.
Eyes winged with the weaving of nests upon the belfries
count our steps by quantities.

And the bells are full of air
and validation,
and

we breathe and deny and thirst.

Benjamin Balint

from Jerusalem Libraries

Library of the Custody of the Holy Land (Monastery of St. Savior)

An essay on pilgrimage and its benefits (*Del viaggio di Terra Santa*):
Jerusalem is a filigree work, with zoomorphic motifs, grotesques in
black and light brown.

Jerusalem is a collection of medical recipes in Judeo-Arabic,
bearing an *ex libris* with the Virgin Mary,
belonging to one Mourkos (unidentified), whose family sold the
volume after his death to the Library of the Custody for three
Palestinian pounds.

Jerusalem is an antiphonary,
copied on vellum by different hands with pen-flourished decoration,
imperfect at the beginning and at the end,
and its colophon reads: “The copy was transcribed to perfection by...”

Jerusalem is a collection of interlinear comments about some
important sentences of Christ, spoken before his crucifixion,
some titles and horizontal catchwords rubricated,
candle wax spotting the unbound leaves,
framed with floral festoon,
glossed in Latin on free endpapers from an earlier codex,
its edges mottled, the raised bands on the spine now loose.

Jerusalem delivered, in a precarious state of conservation owing to
intensive use.

Lucy Hamilton

Meeting with the Elders

After Aw Tee Hong's sculpture: 'The River Merchants'

Singapore & Borneo are steeped in childhood mystery
the myth of my mother & the bishop we called Father

his stories of canoes & longhouse | tales of voodoo
and the pulsing beauty of rainforest | river & delta

I sensed my father's resentment | his fear I'd be bewitched
and work for the bishop entranced by fables & magic

But other schools drew me to the music of the East End
& Brixton with their vibrant rhythm of languages

& patois | dialects & slang | Today printing photographs
I took last May of Singapore street art & sculpture

as J explored his old work haunts & office buildings
now dwarfed by skyscrapers | I place the pavement art

of multinational faces as a backdrop for the bronze
Scottish merchant | Chinese trader | Malay chief

who could be a group of scholars or philosophers
exchanging myths with the Indian & Chinese migrants

loading goods into a bullock cart | and import an early
work photo of J to this meeting with the Elders

Gerrie Fellows

An Inventory of Natural Dyes

Weld A herb
 brittle now
 a spike of buds
 the dyers' weed

the only metals
mordants to set the colour
tin unripens to lemon
 sharp on the taste buds
 at the back of the tongue

melded to the felt of wool
sweet mulled yellow
of mignonette

my mother's hand keeping this
bright coin.

Marigold with *alum*
 verges from lemon to grey
 might be a new colour
 in the corner of her eye

an alchemist
panning for the pure gold
substance of the world.

Alkanet summer's net of blue
makes red, they say
grows like a weed
gives up its root
woody fibres pale core

Is this our blue familiar
makes strange
dark foreboding
purples?

Brazilwood a dazzling stranger
deep red at evening

in the small light of day
vanishes

a puzzled shade
not fast to sunlight.

Logwood samples from chips
soaked 4 hrs
boiled until almost black

By what name
shall we call colour
that cannot be without light?

Kate Schmitt

Stahlhelm

Mesniac, August 29, 1917

In memory of my grandfather, Mario Perera

Like Autochthon, I inherited
Hermes' ability to steal without being caught.
No one's to blame for whatever
it was – a wrong turn, over the top
alliances – the *mise-en-scène* is co-created.
A mountain regimenteer is outmoded,
wearing a helmet that can't shield him.

I was charging the machine-gun nest,
my bayonet points pointing toward the hill
when Apollo, in an updraft, caught
my oak-bark hat into his capacious till,
making of me a bare-headed little light
brigade. *Here's a fair exchange*
for the soothsayer's art, he said,
and I'm keen on Italian workmanship.

Without a glance back to a dead German,
who made a kind of gift,
I made a kind of graft.
I made a pledge to often glance back
to the double graft with bullet-deflecting

shrapnel, to a scaly pinecone-stamped
doubloon that shifted
into my skull, postponing
knowledge of what they say
is always the same message.

Rachael Clyne

Plague Times

At Passover, a finger is dipped into our cup of wine and a drop splashed, as each plague is named. We do not rejoice.

I **Blood** דם

On hands, in every breath in belly of whale, in gullet and gizzard,
from every littered shore, we turn the seas incarnadine.

II **Frogs** צפרדע

After ice-melt, I pull three frogs, bloated and stinking, from the pond.
Can we afford to lose them? Slugs will flourish in this unlikely spring.

III **Flies** כנים

Feast on our flesh, wriggle their fatted way, before winging off to
island havens, offshore nests, to leave a humanless world.

IV **Wild Beasts** ערוב

In Chernobyl, wolf-law rules empty dachas, factories. Bears refill
forests. Here, Adonis Blue butter-flies will thrive on Salisbury Plain.
Rats and dogs will shelter in car shells.

V **Cattle plague** דבר

Play-barns that have swings and muzak, are no place for chickens.
Carousel feed-troughs rotate past cattle. Pigs gaze through gratings
at a crack of sky.

VI **Boils** שחין

This winter virus has no end. The people cough their way into
summer. Vaccinations, rumoured to be toxic, do not help. An
unreliable source blames chem-trails.

VII

Hail

קָרַד

First, snow, so deep. That night, rain. By morning the window – solid ice. On the ground, black ice, invisible. We could not step outside. Next day, hail thuds onto the roof. Hail, snow and the sound like corpses falling – these are surely plague times.

VIII

Locusts

אַרְבֵּה

Gobbling hoards turn Friday black, as they swarm through shopping malls, stampede for their white gods. Trample one other for plasma screens.

IX

Darkness

חֹשֶׁךְ

A firmament of LED glare and twinkle of red and white lights thread highways through the undarkened night. The only visible stars are on the ground.

X

Death of Firstborn

בְּכוֹרוֹת מִכָּת

Floods destroy the power station. Fish without scales, tumour-ridden. Cover the ocean to its farthest coast. There will be no offspring.

XI

Parting of Waves

Red the ocean, gone the ice, gone coastline. No more trips to the sea-side. No sandcastles. No bargains to buy. No people to eat up everything No trees. No creatures to catch. No insects to bite. No birds to shoot

| | | | | | | | |
|----|-----|-----|-----|------|----|--|----------|
| No | | | | | | | property |
| to | buy | | | | No | | planes |
| | to | fly | | | No | | fish |
| | | to | fry | | No | | God |
| | | | to | part | | | the |

waves

just

burning

bushes

Chris Emery

Dear Delys

Good morning, Delys, this life again
explains its density in roof slates.
No one pervades the middle distance.
Your days are peppered with children.
Do not adhere to gloom.
Delys, meanwhile, parades infesting
ungovernable republics, modern ceremonies
fail to invest that ginger magic
necessary for the General to exhibit
guitar practice.
Somewhere, Delys, fabrics sit in a welter
of colour on an earth floor with
severed legs seeping. No one should know
how memories end. Let's end and
listen to Byrd's *Nunc Dimittis*
and recall this local perfection, Delys,
so soon after our return,
everyone happy with the right measure
of blame and someone to blame
for permanent twilight.
Delys, no one's arms have yet been torn.
In the middle distance, long lines
toot and moan, toot and moan
past grey tired buildings in the rain.
The slates tip our fears into years.

James Turner

Onset

It comes
and grows and stays. It's awful.
General Practitioner. Crisis Team. Hospital.
Nurses. Psychiatrist. Medication. Side-effects.
Panic. Shouting. Crawling on the floor.
Delusional fears more real than truth. You find
you have to relearn, one by one, every routine
of living, how to walk normally, talk normally,
hold a cup, and later, how to go shopping.
Nothing comes naturally any more. Your smile
is like a simile. Don't expect instant recovery,
they keep on telling you. Instant recovery!
What the *hell* is it about you that makes them
think you might expect *that*? Minimalism,
in life as in music, isn't brevity,
it's repetition. "You cannot step into
the same river twice." Not so, Heraclitus!
It never used to be, but now it's always
the same bloody river. "One day is like another."
That's more like it, Heraclitus! And yet
there is a flow, as imperceptibly slow
as creeping glass, a centuries-old window-pane
found to be thicker at the bottom. You call it
recovery to keep friends happy but you still need
strong coffee to counter the depressing effect
of antidepressant pills. Evenings are best.
Knowing each dosed-up day will be rounded
with dosed-up sleep, you can feel safe,
as if in a comfortable cul-de-sac
protected from the future by a wall
as soft as death itself.
As if.

Annemarie Austin

Razzle-Dazzle

Yip Harburg: ‘Stars in the night
Blazing their light
Can’t hold a candle -
To your razzle-dazzle.’

It was Mary Zekiel explained
how an angel had parked its wings
there on the coat-and-hat stand
just inside the front door in the dim.
She was presumed to know about such things.

But I always thought of you not-quite-dressed, anyway,
taking out the pins.

(Queen Elizabeth’s costumes
were built of independent segments from
separate chests - undersleeves, oversleeves,
three-part skirts and bodice fronts - anchored
for the moment by bright pins that clicked
and pinged to the floors as she went away.)

...when they stood, they let down their wings.

If any of us tried to fly by sewing
pillows to armholes and making
makeshift wings, they’d be in trouble,
Mary Zekiel reminded. Such things
were always professional undertakings.

But I thought of you sloughing off your sleeves, anyway,
undoing fastenings.

(On Queen Elizabeth's dresses jewels were transferred from bodice to bodice as required, knots of pearls unknotted to star in those portraits sent to the ends of the kingdom in her stead, to embody her self - so suffer embedding in poison or stabbing with hog bristles, burning. Men died for such acts.)

And he put forth the form of an hand, and took me by a lock of mine head.

Oh look at you without your wings. What a pretty thing.

What a smooth and luminous figure at the end of the passage going away.

Today

Mary Zekiel didn't need to make me aware of your arrival.

For you flared and dazzled where the shadows should have been deepest.

There are dark shapes of you left behind in my eyes.

Alison Brackenbury

Census Returns

Lower Snowden 1851
Reservoir Cottage 1881
Cramp Pool Lane 1891

for my family

No. They leave nothing I can find,
stout baskets, mud-drenched petticoats,
although their sorrows shaped my mind,
those housemaids, master wheelwrights,
tan oak leaves, tough on Shropshire wind,
tunes trapped in throats.

Homes for the poor were swept away.
Wild south wind rushes Cramp Pool Lane
where my grandfather blinked to day.
Where their gates swung, new hedge shines thin.
Oaks, then slender, rule my sky.
Hard acorns rain.

My young great-grandmother made homes
with John, her restless gamekeeper,
one, a brick cottage pines clasp close
by sunlit miles of reservoir.
To their plain gate a gun dog strolls,
black Labrador.

Why do we move? Here he shaped all,
oak, ash and elm, her father George,
in one wheel for the heedless Hall.
Let sons ride rails to London's roar.
Hannah and he made ten grow tall
beside this forge.

How my small grandfather loved birds!
Buzzards his father's levelled gun
tumbled from sky, can now scale cloud.
On the long hillside, high past pain
while tractors plough, how they cry, loud
down Cramp Pool Lane.

The river in the city: the Witham

Then as I bumped my suitcase back
along the Brayford wall
I saw the slender crested grebe
land on her morning pool.
Quick as a lover's blink, she dived
three times. Clear as a call,
wide, rippled rings, white watchful sky,
and nothing caught at all.

Come in

The house is tall. The house is warm.
And through a door, past books and flowers,
I glimpse the old man, tiny now
in his deep chair, sunk in deep hours.
And through it all a woman flits,
bright, anxious still, as when we kept
houses where babies cried, then slept.

Adam Flint

Banish & Protect

"It's hedgerows."—Jhonn Balance

Gentle commands play golden and balanced
light along modest children's arms

where down

 spun or
 in full sun flickers

and hastens the fasting shadows observe

★

 cult-sick
now as when heanling
laid by forced ferment
at the leaper-gapped
hedgerows lank and drear
in forb of balsam
bristly cleaver
severing the venerated
 head
for safety

★

 a ritual impulse
 repetitive effect

to come to to the understory
traipse again the mayweed waysides
for all their ragged worth

in the way hedges and thickets
speak to the need for secrets

in the way the darkness
babbles under the earth

to seep light flower

to see plight flower

dark birdsong dawn

★

winged calls that seed the day

the internal mell of welcomes outstayed
assembles itself and sings

as light behind a lenten moon
warms the cones to open

green leaves brighter than blood
red dew point petals

★

the parched lurch
for the dew leaves

a film on the cell-petalled visage

colonising
lorn ditch-sides

little white-lair morning life

Andrew Duncan

SCALE OF CHAINS

Proposal for a Monument to the Empire

Lord Justice Nuremberg
Under the sign of the picked skull
Holding out the findings on the dissenters and injured, contends
this.
It was all worthwhile.
A star led us at the pace of a cannon-shot.
Entire landscapes were devastated,
Labour shackled to the timbers, below deck, was made mobile
And brought to where the work is.
A hundred battles with paths cleared through the ranks,
A score of famines, tightness in the market -
All this was part of the wide straight track.
A kinetic global future ordered our paces.
He has chicken eyes and goes on crow's claws.

The keelless Monitor class with gun platform
Moves up-river to stand-in close to villages.
Throw of shot, flaring thatches.
Flexible power to delete what hears it
Opening up the back country. Unsealing the trade.
So many states overthrown that would set constraints,
So much territory made as passable as the air.
Free trade zone. Clear land title. Pacified tribes.

Before we open the record of costs
Or even give the file a name
We could state what was putatively abridged, the rights.
What was the title of a person,
Being Irish or Senegambian, to their life?
How what has not yet had reprisal
Could be found as a good,

Whose utter loss has a price?
Was this department of State quite reckless?
We thought settling ownership was the whole song.
What do the numbers say?
Who ever collected them,
Who kept an account of the lost?
What testimony is offered by those who are not living?

The assembly of property owners will have their commodity,
Endure together and enjoy in severalty.
Ratio dicendi written on human parchment,
Stipulations cut on soft blemishing flesh.
The justice of the slaughterhouse finds
No mistakes were made,
Clinching his conclusion
Before joining hands in a hymn.

Geography

Eyes. Scales. Feathers.
Oak hull, pine barrels for the catch,
Lying on the banks, one day out from Yarmouth.
As the herring leave the sea in their vessels of twine
The gulls leave the sky in their net of feathers.
As the one flock expels a scream
The other is learning to breathe.

On the deck, shuffling in herring eyes
The poet stoops at the knee, who said
He throned her in the gateways of the world.
The LORD set Britain to spearhead the out-thrust of Europe
Land regiments and cannon on every separate shore
Vacate the authority of a hundred kings
And chain the shores together as empire.
Thus the LORD
Working His geological CAD software
Moves Britain up from some bank near Canada

To set it down hard by Flanders.
The North Sea – was in the right place.
The mouth of the Baltic had to be constricted, near-blockade.
He was pleading for his baronetcy. *It must be here somewhere.*
Damn your theology. Execrations on your doctrine and its doctors.
Scour from the sky this deity.

By the dock, the gulls abound on the feasts of fish-guts
Careless on excess perceived as wealth.
A pipe adjusted to discharge into their mouths.
Natural peak values and natural decline.

Rushika Wick

Through the Eyes of the Plastic Madonna

Driver:

Got to slam the brakes hard now, coast left,
give him a safe berth – how far depends on
how far gone the eyes read, and
you can't say exactly... it's not a science.

Those who feel invisible,
spirits as sensitive as trembling air above sea,
will recoil in a millisecond if the temperature
shifts slightly,

but beware the New Emperors,
heart-in-throat dangerous,
dressed with ice-precision they
spike spleens on holiday – don't give a shit.

Road Walker:

Nothing to lose by wading out,
hopes will swim around me as they always do,
don't take much notice of me.
My birth sign is Cancer, children
recoil when they hear that,
I'm amongst the bulrushes
blowing in the wind,
waiting for a hot breeze to lift
so I can flower,
become a feather for a season.

Jeri Onitskansky

Spring Fever

...and last night my bed
was surprised!
My bed had never seen

anything like it!
Marital bed
of the snore and the fart

upon which me
and my lover
swam each other's blissfully

flooded *palazzi* –
Ex-husband's pyjamas
thankfully dead in a drawer

like a flattened opossum.
Beyond the skylights,
cumulus tongued the delicate tips

of each still-naked
tree as if to cause giggling
all round as when

Dr E asked a patient
what he found funny. He said,
well, my situation

is pretty funny.
She said, what's so
funny about your situation?

He said,
well, being out of control
is kind of funny.

Praying While Marilyn Sleeps

...*Co-star Marilyn Monroe was absent from the festivities...*
Brownsville Herald, November 11, 1958

Dearest God

who are possibly as helpless as suds
swept out of church doorways

or in arrogance maybe you strut
across these roofs like a peacock –

topping and tailing, I lie staring
at Marilyn's toes painted the colour

of her kisses. As you can hear,
her snores are the snores of a man.

Marilyn dreamt of buckets
laden with stars. We found

starlight in the dregs and you
made it come up ravenous.

We love you for this, O Song
in the fan we sweat to each long night.

(from *Time Travel*)

Clark Allison

Commonality

the topicality of inadvertence
leaving few traces
in the transit from
Mercury to the underworld
not unlike purgatory
there might be no getting out
reasoning or intuition
excitability quelled by ill feeling
there may have been a common denominator
but it pared
far too much away
every bag you bring back
is just mostly flotsam and dross
material gathers
seen a many good things
though not recently
until the rain when it came
turned everything to mud
to nitrogen cycle fodder
frenetic change
followed by a protracted and baffling middle
don't know if it's got or needs
five years or fifty

Paul Rossiter

Islanded

dark blue, whitecapped
waves fill the lower half of the window

heathery hills the upper half, and then

as the boat rolls, the window
frames only sky

★

approaching the island

a hundred yards offshore
the smell of cow shit on the wind

★

a curve of beach
a jetty
a low rounded hill
leaning gravestones and a roofless chapel

await the thick deft BB pencil
of Wilhelmina Barns-Graham

★

horizontal bands of colour
reach to a low horizon:

a drystone wall spotted with yellow lichen
a brilliant strip of grass

a fire-red straggle of wind-blown montbretia
slick black rain-wet tarmac
 richly smirched by the recent passage
 of a trotting herd of beeves
ribbons of yellow and brown seaweed
ruffled water tinged turquoise by the sandy seabed
 darkening further out to deeper then deeper blues

on the opposite shore
banks of mottled brown seaweed slope up to
red-roofed houses and a gently curved horizon
where two wind-turbines stand tall against grey sky

 small boats heave at their anchors
 in an insistent westerly wind
 seabirds bob among whitecaps

 cloud shadows and sunshine
 constant changes of light

low grey clouds head rapidly eastwards
high white alto-cumuli proceed steadily west

★

connoisseurs by now
of squall, downpour and drench

(you'll be all right atween the showers
 the boatman said as we disembarked)

weather sweeps in from the west
wind so strong it blows the pelting rain
horizontally over our heads as we hunker
 in the lee of the half-height walls
of the oldest house in northwest Europe

dry and snugly sheltered, squatting on our heels
on a Neolithic farmer's living room floor

Andrew Taylor

Analogue

weekend reading
ink stains
load a
memory bottle

by treading steps
annually
quiet wisdom

of the wild
and general
pace

of walking
through streets
with cast iron
street signs

rusted moulded
letters

birdsong dust
in cobblestone tracks
layered history

Maria Stadnicka

Poetics

I

I had a disagreement with a poetry master
about wolves. And talking made me think
that I, too, had the same great fear
of words living forever, but said nothing.

I watched birds flying at low altitude,
tongue knotted twisting commas
and stops came out of my mouth.

The poet walked away, locked himself
in a room with many doors but no handles.
Outside, his wolf sat on command guarding exits.

Mine wanted to jump from a cloud
straight into the blank page.
A child passed by and said
wolves don't exist on paper. Only in flesh.

II

The soldier, like a poet, awaits
the start of her fight, waving
at people she does not know.
They remind her of home.
Once they all go to sleep,
she measures and trims
the infinite distance between
rooms concealed in her heart.

The poet, like a soldier, does
not have rooms. Her heart bears

its own weight, her story
is smithereens and smoke.
The poet would sleep anywhere
just to be in the same town
with you. She does not have
her own place in the world yet.

Survival Skills

They ask me to eat earth
and kneel on the grass. I bite my tongue
as the soil talks back in our language.

I show them how the tar makes
the best chewing-gum when picked
off the pavement after a heatwave.

Our mirror reflects the sun into the windows
of speeding cars; the drivers' faces light up
like overexposed photographs.

The first to snap a bird's neck
gets a lollipop from Father Michael.
My hands flutter, the wings
knot around my wrist.

I hold my breath. We give it a burial
behind the Laundry Block. One of us
swings Father's censer over the grave.

My fist up to my face whistles
all things bright. Across the garden, a robin
watches the myrrh burning to ashes.

John Phillips

Here

Language you
live in

this silence
because I

need you to
say to

whoever is
listening

nothing
which is said

will be
enough to

make sense
of what will

or will not
happen yet

your failure
is mine

unless
neither of

us end
being treacherous

which is
unlikely.

Shade

If we resemble
meaning,

it's only

the shadow
a light

casts

we are blind
to see.

Refusal

The secret of words is
they don't want to

say anything. Given the
chance each

insists on
silence.

Rimas Uzgiris

I, Myself, am Hell

The spacecraft drifts to its destination.
The illusion of floating on a vast black sea,
rocking, rolling, rock-a-my baby, on... But
reality is swift, and the captain speeds to his target,
watching the screen, like an arrow shot by Zeno –
faster, faster, never to arrive. The cargo in the hold
mews from time to... whenever it ceases to be.
Hell is other people, he thinks, ergo family.
He learned that at school: Sartre, Huis Clos.
He closed the doors on them aeons ago.
The red planet now looms like a dream, grows –
faster, faster, approaching light, the seconds slow,
then die. One red eye, a wide grin, bleeding gums,
sin: the mirror, this morning, looks quite grim.

Burnt Mancusian

The mouse is forced into the maze
As the ball falls into the machine,
Like my eyes as they stray on the streets
And my love as it spills on the sheets.

Some claim we should not speak of beauty.
(Let's see.) It tapers: an old chimney
From the factory floor up to the cloud
That lies over Manchester like a shroud.

Red bricks run down to brown: a Siena
Without a name – Burnt Mancusian
Dilapidation turning lion to dove, former grace
Entombed in forms that are more than a face,

Like your façade as you say good night –
The grace, swiftness, and skylark delight.
While I clatter over figures red and black,
Dazed, a dove in light, before my silent flight.

Early Renaissance

We walked into the store where
The anime had started to storm.
Carlo Crivelli, I said. He's dead,
Replied Thom, try the deli next door.

What door? We wandered the streets
Until Hesperus sank into the sun.
You spied a babe lying on useless tracks
Among nettles, thistles, and bentgrass.

I could hardly hear the speakers announce
That an annunciation had come about,
For a wicked lark was warbling in a larch,
While cars and trucks lurched on and out.

Whose maculate body was fit to outfit whom?
Phosphorus was enough to illuminate our room.

John Seed

Poussin Hegel Eclogue

one knee
on the ground
a shepherd

points at the
letter R
his shadow

seems to point
at his shadow's
head

the origin the
hopeless origins
of art

another
shepherd staring
at the beautiful

woman
points at
too

*love was
not in
their eyes*

too many
photons
pattering

dry
leaves scrape
on stone

et in arcadia
ego paradise
a park or

garden shade
reading a tomb's
inscription

moment forms
the moments
form

all our hopes
divided
into rivers

figured
streams in
waves of

silver
currents tide
its fall

Miranda Lynn Barnes

Becoming Peregrine

The eyes. Indignant, unblinking. Gold rings
infinitely brighter than November sun.

A still, feathered
weight.

Dipping down, floating above the grass,
the mottled angel of silence comes, quieter

than God.
Today's sky is a clear piercing cry.

A feroxism. What pulls on the leash
as the clouds become magnets.

The sky is grass. What I'm hungry for
is cast through air, then falls,

and as I follow it, wings circling,
unfurling, a fan of brown blades

hurls the world upside down.

Tamar Yoseloff

Jade

Fine and smooth and cold
but against the flesh it fires,

old stone, healer for what fails,
death can't pale its lustre,

dredged from the river to make
objects of desire: a likeness

of the Buddha, belly polished
to a shine with many wishes;

or a tomb suit stitched with gold,
sized to fit its wearer, passed away –

until his past returns, dredged up
with grave goods: dagger and idol,

his city idyll, built to skim clouds,
gone to ground, gone for good.

★

In this whorl of green a world,
mineral galaxy, nephrite bright –

her beads, passed down to me,
I warm them against my neck,

my breathing body yanked back
from death – I've never prayed

but in these spheres they say
is heaven, unfathomable ocean;

if nothing more they bind me
to her, flesh of her flesh,

perhaps even in disease, a slow
release in her body, passed down,

down – now she is ash and bone
I take what I must take.

★

The circle serves to fascinate –
we move in and out of world

linked by love, the steady clock
of our hearts. She and I stood

before the emperor's new suit,
his last, guessing its weight, heavy

enough to keep his body under,
while his soul flew to wherever

souls escape. She is no place now,
but her things occupy my space:

this jade, colour of what you see
when you look deep in water,

like reaching through the sky
to hold a little piece of earth.

Mark Goodwin

Snow Thick on Beinn Sgritheall Down to Around 600m, Very Early Spring, 2018

Beinn Sgritheall's abrupt snow-g

host (a season's spook soon

up-ground riding to melt)

above

brown/green mot
tle-slopes & birch
-t

will

above

hamlet arn Is dale's
hist orical intricacies its wisps of

lived

appearing to

day as day's
solid de-tailed

house-shapes strung a

long loch

shore while

Sleat's Sound and
Loch Hourn's

h a r d f l o w l a p s

•

all

as all

ways

from sky

to snow's s c r o l l

down

to

ground

sounded

Note: Beinn Sgritheall (pronounced *ben skree-huhl*) rises above the hamlet of Arnisdale & the north shore of Loch Hourn. *Sgritheall* is Gaelic for *a scroll*.

Robert Sheppard

from Bad Idea: overdubs of Michael Drayton's Idea

To the Reader of these Sonnets

I hear one shriek, 'He's no formal poet!
He can't write, rolling his pastry-prose through
white space into shapelets... Just look at it!'
You are too quick to judge, my english rose.
I hang out inside these sonnets, punching
echoes into new shape, because I take
poetry as the investigation
of complexity through the means of form.
You shallow censor, you'll hate these ones too.
From the depths of national despair, I roar,
gallows humour. I uncouple each 'I-
dea', bash my brains until opinion bleeds,
interrupt the passionate civilities
of Drayton's lines, until dying laughs.

(Overdub of Sonnet XXIV)

XI

You're not alone when you take out a loan
or when you transpose my self into your being:
you a Brexit monad, me a digital nomad
whose algorithm predicts a rupture in common-
sense that threatens to translate subjectivation.
For the worse, maybe. But in this swap-shop love
we'll be absent to ourselves, lost in furtive spurts,
subject to visa checks at the Chequers border:
the uniform blue passport, the fixed biometrics.
What was mine alone sings in you as I bristle

with the collective: level applause for Corbyn's pitch.
You say: I rather like that Jacob Rees-Mogg.
Disenchantment! I want my bits back.
I'll loan out my own lyric intersubjectivity.

27th September 2018

XIII

In these lines your words are scribbled over
but we can still see your Idea through the rust.
That scratched diamond is still worth pawning,
and your stained slips still Calvin Klein declare!
I'm drawing dirty pictures of your letters,
every bodily fluid ink, every body a script.
Under-read but written over,
every sign is your unfinished sigh.
Every body casts its shadow: spectral optics
slips one under every step she takes
dancing to the podium on conference speech day,
gluing her to every bad promise.
 May's Shadow wrong-foots her once more:
 some think it's Corbyn, but we know worse.

11th October 2018

Alasdair Paterson

My life *au contraire*

To trudge head down onwards ever onwards or sink down on the memorial bench with the celebrated view just as darkness falls.

To be observably balding or detectably bewigged. To be mutton dressed as lamb or mutton dressed as *mouton*. To bridle at the term ‘curmudgeon’ or bite its hand off.

To be innocuous to the blurry point of invisibility or sashay out as a ready-made pin-sharp figure of fun. To buy cartons of the soups you actually prefer or those you can actually open. To take the bait or bite the lip.

To obsess about the Queen’s English going to the dogs or smile to think how many years it is since one was favoured with a glimpse of, like, yer actual royal corgi, ken whit ahm sayin pal. To cosy up in bed imagining wage slave ex-colleagues trudging workwards through the rain or get up anyway because standards must be maintained. To refuse the can of worms or rejoice that it does exactly what it says on the tin.

To respect the right to remain silent or show it the instruments of torture. To pimp the engine of slow draggy days or stamp stamp stamp fruitlessly on the brakes. To grieve over your shrinking stock of bosom buddies or rejoice that your imaginary friend is back after all these years.

To take pleasure in family photo albums or be grateful that, for your most vivid memories, no negatives exist. To tell a lie and disappoint an angel or tell the truth and spoil the joke. To make up your mind not to die wondering or sort of feel it’s wondering gets you through the day.

To ply charity shops with all the seminal works you’ll have no time to read again or find comfort in calculating how many decades it should

take to get through all the unread books from the same shops now piled high on the stairs. To get into e-books because therein lies the future or remain convinced that the contours of your personality are best mapped by the titles and editions and colours and inscriptions and marginalia and stains and gaps and general wear and tear on your shelves. To favour the future tense because it works or because it will only work for a while.

To drop everything and just go – or check all the switches first and wonder about making sandwiches. To pride yourself on the crispness of your memories or on the clarity of your conviction that whatever you remember isn't likely to have been that way at all. To remain a fan of the words “happily ever after” or concede that they are comprehensively undermined by the words “funeral plan”.

To maintain as an article of faith that the stairs must have a top and a bottom or voice your suspicion that the prison might be infinite. To be moved by the spiritual import of the central panel of the triptych or more impressed by the colour harmonies and the rendering of the drapery. To feel a glow at how awfully nice it's going to be among the saved souls in the left-hand panel or allow the thought to cross your mind that after-life in the right-hand panel looks, by comparison, pretty damn lively.

To encounter in the mirror the furrowed lineaments of accumulated wisdom or the air coming out of an old balloon. To be satisfied that all those regrettable compromises were necessarily part of the strategy to change the system from within, or just a little guilty that the smokescreen of system change allowed you to enjoy all the fruits of these compromises. To buy into the notion that human evolution is driving us into a world of new possibilities or, on empirical evidence, beyond the viability of our teeth.

To be borne away on the currents of Renaissance polyphony or feel increasingly unembarrassed that the soundtrack of your life was, is and ever shall be cheap music. To dismay the family with ill-considered proposals for the comeback tour or inappropriate quips about guid tunes played on auld fiddles. To tease the children with

Greta Ambrazaitė

translated by Rimas Uzgiris

liturgical

I.

I remember how I fell
on the kitchen floor
and cried like a child
as if in the middle of the store
twenty years ago
while you were warming your wine,
dripping tears, I slaughtered
half a flock
of God's lambs,
I really missed the silence

II.

the butcher shop girl
was far too pretty,
let me know if you need any help,
as she cleaned the clots of red wine

III.

in truth, I am a little wolf
in white, outgrown clothing

IV.

the sun was shining too brightly that day:
don't be angry, but most days
are beyond my recall

V.

we stop by in the evening
at five o'clock, after mass
because wine
was thirty percent off:
I'm a child who remembers
a drunk father and the cutting
midwinter sun

VI.

I've been warming the same wine
for twenty years now,
I think
I've earned
this longing

Notes on Contributors

CLARK ALLISON was born in Glasgow in 1961, although he spent nine years in the 1980s living in Los Angeles. Author of *Temporal Shift/Daub*s (Trombone Press, 1998) and of several poems and reviews appearing in *Notus* and *Stride*.

GRETA AMBRAZAITĖ is a Lithuanian poet. Her first book, published in 2018, won the Young Yotvingian Prize, and was named poetry book of the year at the Vilnius Book Fair.

ANNEMARIE AUSTIN lives in Somerset. Her first collection, *The Weather Coming* appeared in 1987. *Very: New & Selected Poems* (Bloodaxe Books, 2008) included work from all of her previous collections, including *On the Border* (1993), *The Flaying of Marsyas* (1995), *Door upon Door* (1999) and *Back from the Moon* (2003). She has since published another collection, *Track* (2014).

BENJAMIN BALINT is a writer and translator living in Jerusalem. His translation of Hagit Grossman's poetry was published by Shearsman Books (*Trembling in the City*, 2016) and other translations have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Poetry International* and *Crazyhorse*. He is most recently the author of *Kafka's Last Trial* (Picador, 2019). The content of the poems in this issue was occasioned by research for his book *Jerusalem: City of the Book* (co-authored with Merav Mack, Yale University Press, 2019).

MIRANDA LYNN BARNES is a poet from the US, now resident in the Bristol. Her poems appear or are forthcoming in *New Welsh Reader*, *Tears in the Fence*, *Under the Radar*, *The Compass*, *The Interpreter's House* and *Lighthouse Journal*. She taught Poetry and other genres for five years at Bath Spa University, where she completed her PhD in Creative Writing in 2017, and where she now serves as Research Publications Librarian.

ALISON BRACKENBURY has a number of collections from Carcanet, most recently a Selected Poems titled *Gallop* (2019). She lives in Cheltenham.

RACHAEL CLYNE is a psychotherapist based in Glastonbury. Her chapbook, *Girl Golem*, was published by 4word in 2018.

ANDREW DUNCAN is a British poet, translator and critic, the majority of whose work is now published by Shearsman Books. Most recent volumes: *On the Margins of Great Empires: Selected Poems* and *Fulfilling the Silent Rules — Inside & Outside in Modern British Poetry 1960-1997* (both 2018). His translation of the poetry of Thomas Kling, *zerodrifter*, is scheduled to appear from Shearsman at about the same time as this issue is released.

CHRIS EMERY was until recently a director of Salt Publishing. He has published three collections of poetry: *Dr. Mephisto*, *Radio Nostalgia* and *The*

Departure. He lives in Cromer, Norfolk, with his wife and children.

GERRIE FELLOWS published her most recent collection, *Uncommon Places*, with Shearsman in 2019. A New Zealander by origin, she lives in Glasgow.

ADAM FLINT lives in Berlin. His poetry has been published previously by *Critical Documents*, *Stand*, and *Blackbox Manifold*, among others.

MARK GOODWIN has several collections from Shearsman, most recently the book *House at Out*, and the chapbook *All Space Away*. Also recently published is *Rock as Gloss* from Longbarrow Press, Sheffield.

LUCY HAMILTON is co-editor of *Long Poem Magazine* and has two collections from Shearsman: *Stalker* (2012, shortlisted for the Forward Prize for best first collection) and *Of Heads & Hearts* (2018).

JERI ONITSKANSKY is an American-born Jungian analyst and poet, based in London for the last 22 years. Her poems have appeared in a number of publications including *Ambit*, *Magma*, *PN Review*, *The Rialto* and *Poetry Review*. Her pamphlet *Call them Juneberries* was an IOTA shot winner and was published by Templar Poetry in 2015.

ALASDAIR PATERSON lives in Exeter. He has two collections from Shearsman: *On the Governing of Empires* and *Elsewhere or Thereabouts*.

JOHN PHILLIPS' most recent book, *Shape of Faith* (2017), is from Shearsman and he has several others, from both British and American publishers. He now lives in Slovenia.

PAUL ROSSITER was born in Cornwall in 1947, and moved permanently to Japan in 1981. He retired from teaching English and applied linguistics at the University of Tokyo in 2012 and in the following year founded Isobar Press. In addition to his four Isobar books, three earlier volumes of his poetry have been published in Japan: *In Daylight* (Printed Matter, 1995), *Monumenta Nipponica* (Saru, 1995), and *The Painting Stick* (Pine Wave, 2005).

ALEXANDRA SASHE has two collections with Shearsman, most recently *Convalescence Dance* (2018). Russian by origin, she lives in Vienna.

KATE SCHMITT's poems have appeared in the *Annual of Urdu Studies*, *Solstice MFA Anthology*, and *Shearsman*. She lives and works in Central Vermont.

JOHN SEED has published several volumes with Shearsman, including a *New and Collected Poems* (2005), *Smoke Rising* (2015) and *melancholy occurrences* (2018). He lives in London.

ROBERT SHEPPARD has a number of books from Shearsman including *History or Sleep – Selected Poems* (2015) and the curated volume, *Twitters for a Lark: Poetry of the European Union of Imaginary Authors* (2017). 2019 has also seen the publication by Shearsman of a large volume of essays devoted to his work, *The Robert Sheppard Companion*, edited by James Byrne & Christopher Madden.

MARIA STADNICKA is a writer and journalist based in Gloucestershire. Her publications include *Short Story about War* (Yew Tree Press, 2014), *Imperfect* (Yew Tree Press, 2017), *Somnia* (The Knives, Forks and Spoons Press, 2019), *Uranium Bullets* (Červená Barva Press, 2019).

ANDREW TAYLOR's two collections of poetry, *Radio Mast Horizon* (2013) and *March* (2017) are published by Shearsman Books. Recent pamphlets include *Aire* (Red Ceilings Press), *The 140s* (Leafe Press) and *Air Vault* (Oystercatcher Press). He lives and works in Nottingham.

TOON TELLEGEN (b. 1941) is a Dutch poet, children's author, and physician. The poems here come from a selected edition of Tellegen's work being published this year by Shoestring Press. Previous publications include *Raptors* (Carcenet Press, 2011) and *A Man and an Angel* (Shoestring, 2013).

JAMES TURNER lives in Exeter. The poems in this issue are part of a series detailing the author's breakdown in 2015, and his battle with depression. He is now feeling better than ever before. He has published two collections: *Forgeries* (Original Plus, 2002) and *A Chance of Love: Sonnets of Two Decades* (Oversteps Books, 2015). He is a regular reader and performer and was Exeter Slam Champion in 2015.

RIMAS UZGIRIS is a poet, translator, editor and critic. His first collection of poems, *North of Paradise*, has recently appeared from Kelsay Books, Utah. He is translator of books by Ilzė Butkutė, Gintaras Grajauskas, Marius Burokas, Aušra Kaziliūnaitė, and Judita Vaičiūnaitė (the last from Shearsman). Uzgiris has contributed significantly as editor and translator to two anthologies: *How the Earth Carries Us: New Lithuanian Poets* and *New Baltic Poets* (Parthian). Recipient of a Fulbright Scholar Grant, an NEA Literature Translation Fellowship, and the Poetry Spring 2016 Award for translations of Lithuanian poetry into other languages, he teaches translation at Vilnius University.

RUSHIKA WICK is a physician and poet with an interest in the human embodiment of social contracts and relationships. She is a student at the Poetry School London and has had work published in various anthologies and magazines including *Ambit* and *Litro* and forthcoming in the *Mechanics' Institute Review* 16, *Flock* and *3:AM* amongst others. She performs poetry regularly including with the *Cold Lips* magazine collective in London and Rough Night Press in Amsterdam.

JUDITH WILKINSON lives in the Netherlands and is both a poet and a translator from Dutch. Shearsman will soon publish her translations of Menno Wigman. She has won many awards, including the Popescu Prize for European Poetry in Translation in 2011, and the Brockway Prize in 2013.

TAMAR YOSELOFF has published five collections, most recently *A Formula for Night: New and Selected Poems* (Seren, 2015). A new collection, *The Black Place*, is due shortly from the same publisher.