CONTENTS

RENE CHAR (TR. DAWN-MICHELLE BAUDE)
THE ORIOLE 8
THE SORQUE 9
ARGUMENT 10
EVANDE 11
REFUSAL SONG 12
HOMAGE AND FAMINE 13
WATCHERS AND DREAMERS 14
THRESHOLD 15
THE WINDOWPANE 16
LONG MAY HE LIVE! 17
THE BLACK STAGS 18
CAVE-IN 19

EUGENIO DE ANDRADE (TR. ALEXIS LEVITIN)
HOMAGE TO MARK ROTHKO 21
WINTER FLAME 22
ABOUT YEATS’ WILD SWANS 23
BRIEF REPORT 24
PERPENDICULAR LIGHT 25

VALERIE MEJER CASO (TR. MICHELLE GIL-MONTERO)
THIRD 27
IN WHITE 30
FROM THE MOUNTAIN 31
THIRD MOVEMENT (THE SURVIVOR) 32
FOURTH MOVEMENT (THE LULLABY) 34
FIFTH MOVEMENT (THE SERMON) 34
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/Translator</th>
<th>Title/Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FRANK LIMA</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyric</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sea of Cold</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apollo e Dafne by Bernini c. 08.01.99</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fried Catfish at Captain Jack’s</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An Ancient Poem</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someday with Venus</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Stockbridge, MA, U.S.A</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Dante and Beatrice Are 57 Today”</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.09.99</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labios Chocolate</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GASPAR OROZCO (TR. MARK WEISS)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Autocinema</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AIMÉ CÉSAIRE (TR. A. JAMES ARNOLD &amp; CLAYTON ESHLEMAN)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Like a Misunderstanding of Salvation</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>YOKO TAWADA (TR. SUSAN BERNOFSKY)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Memoirs of a Polar Bear</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUSAN M. SCHULTZ</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Memory Cards: Simone Weil Series</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VIRGILIO PIÑERA (TR. MARK WEISS)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From The Whole Island</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NATHANIEL MACKEY</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song of the Andoumboulou: 156</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CLAYTON ESHLEMAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lavender Fathers</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pareidolia</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Don Mee Choi</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANTONIO GAMONEA (TR. DONALD WELLMAN)
   LOSSES BURN 129

GARRETT CAPLES
   THE ANTIQUITIES 138
   MY OLD CAR 140

ANDRÉ BRETON, RENÉ CHAR, PAUL ÉLUARD (TR. KEITH WALDROP)
   RALENTIR TRAVAUX 142

RITO RAMÓN AROCHE (TR. KRISTIN DYKSTRA)
   “STILL IN GRAZ?” 178
   SANATARIUM 179

MATT TURNER
   LATE STYLE IN AMERICAN POETRY 181

ANDREI MOLOTIU
   13 DRAWINGS 187

REINA MARÍA RODRÍGUEZ (TR. KRISTIN DYKSTRA)
   GREEN AND BLUE 201
   OBSERVING PELICANS 202

MICHELLE GIL-MONTERO
   LIGHT SCATTER 204
   APOLOGY 205
   NIMBUS 207
   STAGED HOUSE 208
   PARK 210

GOZO YOSHIMASU (TR. SAWAKO NAKAYASU)
   BORROWING A MELODY FROM THE HEARTS OF THE THREE GRACES 212
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sesshu Foster</td>
<td>The Famous TV Show (The Stuntman’s Tale)</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Celan &amp; Petre Solomon (tr. Pierre Joris)</td>
<td>Paul Celan’s Little Evening Book</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Weiss</td>
<td>Pastoral</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosalía de Castro (tr. Erín Moure)</td>
<td>From New Leaves</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galo Ghigliotto (tr. Daniel Borzutzky)</td>
<td>From Valdivia</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aloysius Bertrand (tr. Andrei Molotiu)</td>
<td>From Gaspard de la Nuit</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Kawala (tr. Kit Schluter)</td>
<td>From Screwball (The Indispensible Deficit)</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clayton Eshleman</td>
<td>Cave Art Theory</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributors</td>
<td></td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RENÉ CHAR

THE ORIOLE
THE SORGUE
ARGUMENT
EVANDE
REFUSAL SONG
HOMAGE AND FAMINE
WATCHERS AND DREAMERS
THRESHOLD
THE WINDOWPANE
LONG MAY HE LIVE!
THE BLACK STAGS
CAVE-IN

TRANSLATED BY DAWN-MICHELLE BAUDE
The oriole entered the capital of sunrise.
The blade of his song silenced the sad bed.
Everything reached forever its end.
THE SORGUE

Song for Yvonne

River leaving too early, darting away, alone,
Present the face of your passion to the children of this land.

River where lightning ends and where my house begins,
Who wheels the rock of my reason in the way of forgetfulness.

River, in you earth is quivering, the sun anxious.
Let each of the poor, in his night, make bread from your harvest.

River, often punished, river neglected.

River of apprentices covered with calluses,
Every wind bows to the ridge of your furrows.

River of empty soul, of rags and suspicions,
Of old woes reeling, of elms, of compassion.

River of crazies, of the feverish, the knackered,
Of the sun deserting its plough for the company of a liar.

River of those better than us, river of hatching mists,
Of the lamp quenching angst around its shade.

River considerate of dream, river that rusts iron,
Where stars have a shadow they withhold from the sea.

River of relinquished powers and waters pierced with cries,
Of the storm gnawing the vine, announcing new vintage.

River with unyielding heart in a world craving confinement,
Keep us violent, but friends of the horizon’s bees.
ARGUMENT

How to live without beholding the unknown?

Today's men want the poem to be in the image of their life, made with such little consideration, with such little space and burning with intolerance.

Because they're no longer able to act supremely, in this fatal preoccupation to destroy themselves via their fellows, because their inert wealth slows them down and enslaves them, the men of today, their instinct weakened, lose. They keep themselves alive while their names turn to dust.

Born of the call of becoming and of the anguish of custody, the poem, rising from its wells of mud and stars, will testify almost silently that there was nothing in it that truly did not exist elsewhere in this rebellious and solitary world of contradictions.
The summer and our life were of a piece
The countryside ate the color of your fragrant skirt
Avidity and constraint were reconciled
The chateau of Maubec was sinking in clay
The spin of its lyre would soon collapse
The vegetal violence made us falter
A somber, rowing crow drifted from the fleet
On the mute flint of the torn noon
It accompanied our accord with tender movements
Everywhere the sickle needed to rest
Our rarity was beginning its reign
(The insomniac wind wrinkling our eyelids
While turning each night the yielding page
Wants that each part of you I remember
Extend to a land of famished age and giant eaves)

It was the beginning of adorable years
The earth loved us a little I remember.
Refusal Song

Beginning of the Partisan

The poet returned for many long years into the void of the father. Don't call to him, all ye who love him. If it seems that the swallow's wing no longer mirrors the earth, forget this happiness. He who was kneading the bread of suffering is invisible in his shining lethargy.

Ah! May beauty and truth ensure that you come in throngs at the salvos of deliverance!
HOMAGE AND FAMINE

Woman who vibrates with the tongue of a poet, this torrent of peaceful alluvium, who taught him while he was still only a captive seed of anxious wolf, the tenderness of tall walls polished by your name (acres of Paris, entrails of beauty, my passion rises under your runaway robes). Woman sleeping in pollen of flowers, place upon his pride your frost of limitless medium, so that he remains until the hour of ossified heather the man who, to adore you even more, forever reverses in you the goddess of his birth, the fist of his sorrow, the horizon of his victory.

(It was night. We were cuddling beneath the majestic oak of tears. The cricket sang. How did it know, all by itself, that the land would not die, that we, children deprived of clarity, soon would speak?)
WATCHERS AND DREAMERS

for Maurice Blanchard

Before rejoining the nomads
The seducers, igniting columns of crude,
Dramatize the crop

The poetic work begins tomorrow
The cycle of voluntary death paves the way
The reign of obscurity sunk reason, the diamond in the mine

Mothers infatuated by the masters of final sigh
Mothers excessive
Always digging into the massive heart
Forever the shivering ferns of embalmed thighs will pass you by
We will beat you
You will go to bed

Alone at the windows of rivers
Faces grand and shining
Dreaming that nothing is perishable
In their carnivorous landscape.
When the dam of man was rocked, caught in the colossal crack of the abandoned divine, words in the remote distance, words that wished not to be lost, attempted to resist the exorbitant thrust. Just there, the dynasty of their meaning was decided.

I ran to the outcome of this diluvian night. Rooted in the wavering morning, my belt full of seasons, I wait for you, o my friends who are on their way. Already I sense you behind the horizon’s shadow. My hearth never wearies of wishing your homes well. And my cypress scepter laughs heartily for you.
The Windowpane

Pure rains, awaited ladies,
The face that you bathe,
Is the face of the rebel,
Glass destined for suffering.
The other, the happy windowpane,
Thrills before the wood fire.

I love you, twin mysteries.
I touch each of you:
I’m in pain and very light.
LONG MAY HE LIVE!

This country is only a spirit's wish, an anti-tomb

In my country, the tender tokens of spring and poorly dressed birds are preferable to far-off goals.

Truth awaits the sunrise beside a candle. The windowpane is neglected. The vigilant one does not mind.

In my country, no one questions an emotional man.

There is no cancerous shadow on the capsized boat.

A begrudging hello is unknown in my country.

We only borrow what is paid back with a plus.

There are leaves, a lot of leaves on the trees in my country. The branches are free to forgo fruit.

We don’t believe in the good faith of the victor.

In my country, we thank you.
The waters were speaking in the ear of the sky.
Stags, you have broached millennial space,
From your rocky darkness to the caressing air.

The hunter who spurs you, the genius who spots you,
How I adore, from my ample shore, their passion!
And what if I had their eyes whenever I want?
CAVE-IN

Grapes have for a heartland
Fingers of the girl who harvests.
But she—who does she have,
After the narrow path of cruel vines?

The rosary of the cluster;
Nightfall. The highest fruit, as it sets,
Bleeds a final sparkle.
EUGÉNIO DE ANDRADE

HOMAGE TO MARK ROTHKO
WINTER FLAME
ABOUT YEATS’ WILD SWANS
BRIEF REPORT
PERPENDICULAR LIGHT
Yellow, orange, lemon,
then carmine: everything burns
in the sands
between the palm trees and the sea-- it was summer.
But in the place of your name
the earth has the color of a pensive
green, that only night
lightly puts to pasture.
The flame. The lowly flame. And still
the flame. It comes from so far. From the simple
house upon the threshing floor,
the house where something little
pulsed: a heart,
the water in the big jug,
the wheat as it grew.
I was so small I didn’t even know
how to ask for an orange,
a bit of bread.
Even less, a kiss.
It seemed I only knew
how to reach out my hands toward that low-lying
sun and towards the gaze
that protected it
from the enchantments of the flame.
Night falls so early now-- I am afraid
of losing you in the dark.
I remember the wild swans
that rose up sovereign from the lake
lighting up the waters and the autumn
sky at close of day.
They too get lost
now as the shadow leans.
What country will be mine? This one,
where I live and am a stranger?
That of the light crossed
by the swans? Without you, how can I know?
You will leave the house unfinished.  
There will be windows in the walls unopened
 to the first,
 to the last dusk.
In the still sweet air, leaning
against the wall, the lemon tree
will blossom once again for no one’s gaze.
In the garden one or another flower hangs on.
Perhaps someone will pass by and say to himself:
How good the gillyflowers smell!
If hands were able (yours, mine) to tear away the fog, and enter perpendicular light.
If the voice were to come. Not any one: yours, and in the morning were to fly. And sing in jubilation.
With your hands, and mine, if it could penetrate the blue, any blue: that of the sea, of the sky, of the humble little song of flowing water. And rise with them. (The bird, the hands, the voice.) And turn to flame. Or almost.
VALERIE MEJER CASO

THIRD IN WHITE
FROM THE MOUNTAIN
THIRD MOVEMENT (THE SURVIVOR)
FOURTH MOVEMENT (THE LULLABY)
fIFTH MOVEMENT (THE SERMON)

TRANSLATED BY MICHELLE GIL-MONTERO
THIRD

There is spurious mourning, night of the night. There is a tree flayed by a giant. There is a cracked vessel on an avenue of laurels. Someone taller than this house writhes in a cry that disjoins the neighborhood. There are crepuscular faces that break the day then suffer their race. They twist at the waist like a wave, they shriek like birds in heat. I hear your voice saying its say. I hear your will barging into my body. Voice that, flapping its arms, hacks through the crowd. It’s a falcon of words. It is lost in Brooklyn. It had better snow and soon, or else the giant will rain so hard that the day will drop from the night like a lopped-off arm.

I love you: you feed me from an impossible host.
I love you: I hear your wings tearing apart
in frenzied flight through the deep trench of my chest.
Hurry, hurry, holy little bird!
Noche

volvió
The turtle looked dead. Overturned on the road, cradled by its shell. The turtle looked stricken. Inside its oval, a sepia heart pulled the pulley of duration. I’ve thought of it. Of its memory. Its prehistoric eyes. The water is gray in Kobayashi Kiyochika’s painting, and a woman, Japanese, mounts the waves. She, brave, shockingly white. The sea is nearing that shore where the turtle seems to beat weakly. Memory with all its drownings culled in that ellipse. No one should think of the moon now, but it’s too late to warn anyone. The poem occurs on the night of the brave, and her face is almost a page. I have forgotten everything. Out of death, sorrow.
Its pages tear
    or are torn
    or they are not pages but wings.
The landscape is a woman dying. I read it.
    Because I suffer, I understand.
I have come to the point on the mountain
where there is no way back
but to fly.
I can’t fly. I tear this book
that I understand because I suffer.
It would be better if there were no landslides,
and the way back remained intact.
In another story are birds,
the ones that eat the crumbs, the trail home.
Here the birds are the book,
    that book I understand
    where it says you don’t exist.
I can’t fly either.
    Those who have ceased to exist are said to float.
    Ah, float. Lost children,
    it says here
you don’t know how to float, but you have ceased to exist.
Returning
would mean that no time has passed,
that nothing happened.
    And yes, it happened.
THIRD MOVEMENT (THE SURVIVOR)

For Raúl Zurita

They have brought their bodies to the bottoms of the boats, rested their ribs on the sides. Now rowers, later they will be survivors. In the upper left, there is writing, maybe a poem. Penned in the sky, a sky of skin or parchment. The sky, in any case. You can see a snow-capped mountain in the distance, though the prisoners could never see it. They are clutching bamboo boats, grinding their teeth and tendons, squeezing life in their fists, clinging to it. The snow is bone-color, because it’s made of bone. The snow is human; human, the ocean. Whatever a survivor has crossed is human. The penned sky, human. You, dear friend, are human. In the ocean, hours of despair and imprisonment wash clean. Green and blue hours, cruelties contrived by moonlight. The mountain is a witness: to fractured limbs, collapse. Mute night and moon. Your country, mute: its coins, its soul of stone. The painting is branded with the color of firelight, bird’s beak. Will I live? you must have asked yourself. How come the mercenary waves let you go, to return, with your face in flames, to the hour of my life? Poems that surface when the tide recedes, they live off your cow’s blood. Butchered in the sky, the tide spurts their words. Right now, below, you dissolve the coins in your hands, incinerate bills marked with the word God. Five thousand Chilean dead in the vignetting. I can’t conceive of a day when the mountain and waves will witness a world in which you don’t exist. I see you in the picture, rowing. I see how you dazzled the grass, set the cows loose. I see you holding your girlfriend’s hand. Over-sugaring your coffee. If I think of a time when you’re not alive, I see nothing. Not even when the poem says I will live and cocks its head back, shakes its fists. It was a brazen gesture you made with your blood and sugar, your breastbone, the tremor in your left wing. There will come an imaginary point, a poem or woman or star the color of firelight, that is wholly illegible. It will occur in a Kurosawa
movie, because that is the nature of your dreams. Right now the lightning has skinned it bare, and I'm the one who covers my face, refuses to read such a thing.
FOURTH MOVEMENT (THE LULLABY)

What was that world that had an oak at its center
and teeth scattered around it?
Pieces of bark gather one by one in the word
tree, but by themselves they are solitudes.

Autumn Song

I had thought that surviving the storm secured you a spot in this world. Yes, I know I was wrong, I told you in a poem – remember? – that fragment from a now anchorless place. We had talked about how a broken body can only be imagined in chiaroscuro. But the time for us to see those bodies came anyway. That mystery of fixed shadows sopped up by the blood, where the fickle thing was light. We listened as a ruminant chewed grass on the other side of the wall. Night must have been approaching when we heard a fire, the creaking of felled timber, and the pitter-patter of flames that, in the end, sound like the roar of a whale. That was the poem, and that was the room where, as we were getting to know each other naked, we saw the dead up close. It was like a hallucination: it was our family. We didn’t leave at the same time. When I opened the door, the green of sown seeds framed the world as a mouth frames the egress of the voice. Before that field of emerald-green grass, the whole poem fled on a bird knocked down by a bullet. That’s what I thought, and maybe you thought the same: a word outside its paradise, outside its natural habitat, a word in exile can’t be sung. You tore up the letter and left. On that sown field, I knew that I had no cow that might resemble a bird, no songs to lick my wounds, and that if I only closed my eyes, I’d hear a chirp. Holy, holy, holy. And the third is a bird that has pierced the sky with its beak. I had get out of there, in a hurry, I had to board the train. At the threshold of the stairs, like at the opening of a fleshy mouth, lay a vagrant, half-naked, maybe
dead. The clouds huddled into orange cells. My daughter cried, **Look! Look up!** And I saw it, and maybe you saw it, too, and the next day we saw it in the papers, with the word *phenomenon* in the headline. Descending the stairs, we turned into the dream of a blind man. Ancestrally broken, he sleeps because he misses seeing... **Look over there! A lamb in the road, bleating, the sound trailing from its throat to the throat where the train is coming, to the throat where the train is coming.** Bleating bleeds, though it is a voice; a voice that is a drink, though it is made of words. **Look over there! The flock, the flock locked together in the snowy luster of wool, the light of a train like an underground moon.** We found you on the platform, and although tragedy was imminent, I saw your face, the face of a deer, doe eyes. Outside it finally rained and soothed the long thirst in the sown fields, but a journey awaited us. We wanted to save the flock, and I told you about the poet. As I spoke, we saw him stroll through the fields around his house, and we saw how the lamb was battered, unavoidably, by some gray hogs. The same lamb that had moments ago brushed past his legs. The force of hungry hogs is tremendous, I told you I’d read that, and you, powerless but with definitive tenderness, offered me your hand and, in that way, we awaited the train. I know that in a country of knives, it would have amounted to no more than a chorus of squeals, the stridulation of teeth, an ordinary story, the news of a few deaths on a badly tuned radio. But for us, my love, it was a song, and at the same time, the intimate secret of the song, its body of snow about to melt, its body of a little girl. Soon, on the road, blood spilled from the lambs, from the terrified flock that was bleating, bleating...even so, it was a song to us, and at the same time, the cause of our interlaced hands. A ballad and bleating that won’t be split by bullet, because they’re being dreamed at that wounded minute.
The knot broken, phosphorescence expands. It happened years ago. We had already crossed the avenues and their sweltering silver burned our feet. By the time I said *tell me if you are naked, tell me if you've been born yet, tell me if the navel that bound you is now under the earth*, the blue canary of my daughter fell at our feet, weighing the same as an apple, and it wasn’t possible for us to revive the bird. You mutter in my ear, and though you are close, your voice is an echo. *To give life is to ignite torment*, that’s what you tell me. I follow you to the woods, the cars pick up speed, by now no more than satellites in orbit. Emergent trees surround us like the walls of a house. You are in the deer that shows itself and retreats. The lake wanes in brilliance under a huge cloud that is you. You get desperate, you explode, and finally you stand there and speak, there where you exist. You come from close by, from your own throat, and your breath is a warm waft. The deer climb a small mound. You toss a stone into the lake, and the swans scatter like prude women before a naked body. Your heartbeats in widening circles. Around the woods, in the neighboring houses and at the edge of the waves, in the fancy hotels, the mirrors have slight fissures, maybe imperceptible, but they must advance like cracks. *And because you are alive*, this brilliance widens in your mortal eyes, the brilliance of getting to know that sorrow.
LYRIC
THE SEA OF COLD
APOLLO E DAFNE BY BERNINI C. 08.01.99
FRIED CATFISH AT CAPTAIN JACK’S
AN ANCIENT POEM
SOMEDAY WITH VENUS
WEST STOCKBRIDGE, MA, U.S.A
“DANTE AND BEATRICE ARE 57 TODAY”
08.09.99
LABIOS CHOCOLATE
LYRIC

“for the boys”

Life is being unalone.
And can be measured
When beloved.
Poetry will stop at
The speed of light,
Without warning, and
The inhabitant will
Simply cease to be a
Slice of life, as in
A wish without a word
Being written. As for me,
A pair of Tiepolo buttocks
Shaped and as white as two
Eggs are the tropical visions
Of March. Like thoughts in
Space hanging out to dry,
The words are clouds melting
The sky. You have enchanted
Me as you did Frank and Joe
And all the others before
There was love and colors.
Are you the mist that played
The drum for Ted and Brodey?
Are you the
Last tulip that fell in
Love with Jimmy?
They inhaled
Your yellow burst
Of words clutching the
Risible dreams you left
Behind.
Each year I attend a ceremony. We charter someone’s heart who is no longer a poet. It is usually a very clear day. No poems are written on this Day as a tribute to their memory and great poems left to us to emulate.

Our morning coffee. It gives us the feeling of being in love for the first time. Yesterday it was easy to fall in love with a stranger, since we were only interested in activity, after the winter fantasies and dreams of hot chocolate by a TV that lulled us to sleep with old movies that no one thinks of any more. Now it is the inexorable eloquence of a greater future that we seek without our friends, because we are alone, which is synonymous with a splendor and grace that is very old by the standards of America. Our friends have become conversant familiars when we write. They are impatient with our poems that are testaments to their nerve and departure from the grand European seduction although the salt air from their poems still revives us when there is nothing to say. We are the wings of the horizon now, and our faults will be noted as the new poetry of the English-speaking world. I know this now, but did not believe them when they were with us on the porch of the Cedar Bar buying us a drink or two, so we could write this morning.
Apollo e Dafne by Bernini c. 08.01.99

For Wally & Vicky

It's those brightly painted toenails that
Remind me of tiny B. Altman Christmas windows.
And hair with its lingering streaks of old men.
And ruby red shrimp lips.
And erotic epigrams after dinner.

But this is not a poem,
Wondering freely in la Galleria Borghese supermarket.
Or the dial tone of a dangerous affair.
Or the hiss of silence after coming.
(I can fly after that.)

I love the thought of squirrels pretending
Everything is knowledge and love.
These odds and ends have an inclination to move us,
As enlarged pleasures do.
Like passion, they have their own history,

And hunt by sensing body heat.
Here, meaning is breath and destiny.
This is such a strange occupation,
Being a marble statue, searching for life

In the strabismal milky gaze of the onlooker.
Imagine how glorious life would be if we wished
And became beds in anyone's life,
In any period in history?
Another recent invention is nakedness and human touch.
FRIED CATFISH AT CAPTAIN JACK’S

The summer is almost over although the heatwave will not acquiesce
To such a notion, or the idea of something coming to an impotent end
Until next season when nature grows impatient with bland weather
Prediction against a caliginous blue black round.

I wonder where winter will take you to become heated and brown.
Will you vanish into the sea like a dolphin of mercury to alight on the bottle
With my note that has traveled so far into consciousness to read to you?
Will we ever say let’s call it a night and let the tectons that move us

Slowly and deliberately across the great earthly distance bring us closer to our
Destination? Let’s fall asleep under a basket of bows for our dreams to
Mend. How will all this affect me?
Make me a better lover to you, will you sleep better and feel refreshed

And willing to face another day of me radiating on the phone?
Don’t you realize we are merrily on our way to meet our allotted end?
So why compromise reality with some advance idea of purity?
It has never worked, only in holy books that are always in reprint for the

Doubters of joy. Nevertheless, in that thin crack in the milky sky there is
Enough room for both of us and your clients, whether they speak English
Or not, since they are paying for your efforts and compliance with
Their misery. Today I found a rose that looked like you on the beach,

Wearing a jalapeno thong. I took that rose to the opera
To free it from earthly sentience.
My operatic rose will never frighten birds away with her glass voice.
Will I be anything more than a pebble on one of your works along the
Seashore? Remember I was the note in the bottle for which you wished.
An Ancient Poem

for Jackie Sheeler

Holy is this moment in the subway.
Holy is the moment I awake clear but not rested with second-rate sleep
And historical mistakes that recall when they were my proud cavalcades
On display. I am not alone, sleep with names and sheets of paper and

Photos of my friends of the mountains. They have memories of me as a
Sinless child to the acts of mothers and fathers.
I am the last hitman left in the stars,
The encore of a marble migraine, the daily cologne of the lie

As celibate as a seashell that did not hang around to be picked for the
Easter soup. What will become of me without a plural in this fatherless
Sleep that feeds some duplicating machine at the gate of a flower that
Once lived in heaven? We were created in the name of art when it was

The color of a newborn child, when the rain was clear and knew where it
Was going into a hole in the heart of a god that recognized the smallest
Efforts. To live on olive oil, espresso and sonnets as thin as wafers
Because that was all that was needed instead of death or thanks for

Publishing my work or showing my rotten heart at the gallery.
Nevertheless, I see the pages of the city blow away into the memory of a
Plague. The angels have new skin and are updating pain for me with the
Long hair left in the bed of errors in some antique transcription of

A young woman enjoying the last few seconds of a Sapphic kiss,
Saying “join me so we can fold each other into the spring,
Into those things poets like to write about, like new poems in the forest,
Small, shiny, twisted with shame.”
Eventually we will all be punished for longing while on a leash. Dying young, addicted to airports and businessmen who think they are Inmates, and want to assume their place in the sun with common Madness in the controlling act of catching your breath, in order not to

Breathe again, is the ultimate terror of love. On that day of success, the Great clocks of the world will lie to each other: So we can be adopted by The hedonist who looks like a curious, pregnant straightjacket looking for A child to be born into this world, both gorgeous and gloomy when we

Become as dry as history is to memory. Here, on the eve of the first Accident, on the day of portent design all the nouns and verbs of creation Came into being, and spring became forbidden and green. I love you as much as I love all the stages of ancient unions that said we

Could never part with the technical language spilling over into shame Burning brightly into the morning. I will learn to speak the grammar of Forgiveness as a hearse crosses my heart like bucket of slander Accumulating something much more loathsome than carnivorous regret.
Stay on the Taconic Parkway
Until it spreads like a tall hat
When you come to route 102
You'll reach route 41
And hang a right on B3
Where the sky bends slightly
To the left
You'll see the flaky clouds
Leading to Old Stockbridge
With its Lenox China moon

When we get there
We read the historic bricks
Laid by Italian hands
Hands that were made by
Michael Gizzi
And his trusting ancestors
Searching for order in the
Granite cantatas and maple syrup
Of the Berkshires

We will be there to meet
Jon and Ann
And exchange real estate
On flying napkins
That blow country air into our
Damp poetic rooms

My left ear is still ringing
With Chad Odefey's new poem
I’ll bet Neruda is whispering his name
Chad told me that before he left his native Colorado
He prayed for an Irish meteor shower
Instead he found Kate Naples
Who is made of pink salmon flesh
Mustard and honey

Susan finally materializes
Wearing a loose black apparition
Studded with morning stars
That gently cover wonderful things
She cannot hide
She's holding a shivering Peruvian Barbie Doll
(her daughter Lily)
Susan is really a Buddhist
Who writes poetry and fairy tales to live by
Norman Bluhm arrives at 90 mph
With his imaginary Gauloise hanging on his lower lip (it's
the last Olympic cigarette of the Cedar Bar; there
Is no one left to pass it onto)
With the ghost of Frank O'Hara
Under his arm in a dusty bottle
Of Haut-Medoc
Grand Vin De Chateau Cheval Blanc St.–Emilion
Premier Grand Cru Classe
Mis en bouteilles chateau rouge

Is this expensive wine?
Does the rouge at the end mean
It will taste like lipstick?

Jon leads us to the infirmary of
Lingo Magazine
And serves us Explorateur and Brie
On triple-crème Cds

Jon brings me up to date on
David Shapiro's last telephone message
Which lasted less than 60 minutes
Before the machine started foaming
At the mouth and coughing blood
David is the wizard of poetry
His poems contain no chemicals
Unlike the dog-eat-dog poets
Who imitate Kenneth Koch's
Early morning Stradivarius style
(I wrote this poem this morning
After swimming across my cup of coffee
And created my son Machu Picchu
In the image of David and Kenneth)
We meet a lemon curd
English composer
And his awkward
Queen Mary girlfriend
With British white teeth
Who wears a leash
With her 19th century music thesis
Attached to it and sure enough
Norman trips over it
And she becomes another deceased
In his art nouvelle repertorium
Of Paris in 1947
Before blintzes and white wine
Were fashionable

We have two kinds of pies—
Mosquito and plum
Berries and spiders
With a rare Pellegrino lemonade
That only Jon and Ann can import

I don't want to die on Jon's lap
And add another fugue
To his life of extra cheese

Among us flowing in her own black sea
Is the spirit of Africa
Concealed in the body of
Barbieo Gizzi
How lucky Michael is
To awake each morning
Being greeted by the warm flowing
Islands of Cape Verde against his face
She is the poem in Sedar Senghor’s dream
When he slept on the island of Brava

After a casual dinner of
Jicama basil and lasagna
Michael informs me that
Jimmy Schuyler
No longer spends his summer in
New England “Freely Espousing”
And has left a copy of his
“Hymn to Life” on the small night table in
The sculpture garden
And that John Ashbery has
Taken his “Double Dream of Spring”
Back to New York.
“DANTE AND BEATRICE ARE 57 TODAY”

after David Shapiro

I

“Dante and Beatrice are 57 today.”
They live in Paradise with the fallen
Angels, the demons that absconded with

Their biblical crimes from the inferno
On the outskirts of Virgil’s flesh.
Beatrice always wears black and white
Gowns of tenderness. Dante is
Terrifying, old and crumbles as he
Watches Beatrice twirl and trample

II

The clouds on their way to heaven.
This is paradise. Where every
Instant Dante writes an erotic

terza rima for the assembly of God.
God created the cymbal to keep Dante
Awake. Beatrice slaps on her

Stomach exhaling spring butterflies
From her white rolling shoulders,
As she breathes deeply the warm

III

Pursuing air. She weeps on stones and
They grow wings. She loves her crazy
Uncle: A nimble carpenter who uses
Tide boxes to construct large
Cathedrals. This is Paradise.
Everyone is old here and plays the Violin. Is David Shapiro related to Dante? Beatrice seems to think so Since her ancestors were Roman bee IV Keepers. She, like rice, goes to the Mountains to eat snow and white Truffles for the care of her ermine Skin. Dante watches her and his Leg catches fire. He is inspired To write a long poem about Paradise And Hell. About Ohm’s law. About Thermal energy. He names the poem, “Straight Out of You.” V The Pope objects to the title, saying, “This sounds too *comedia vulgari*. Not *divino*, at all.” Beatrice is the Last oncogene in Dante’s life that Traces her naked body in the sand, Like the stars swelling through pain. She falls into his receding arms, As light as a child’s kiss. He asks, “O bitter steel conscience, VI Is this the basement of hell?” “Am I the starless elevator to hell?”
“Am I the scarless stairs to heaven?”
“Am I your breed to live on breasts?”
But God is too busy preparing wars
For the living and wars for the dead:

“Humans are high octane: some have
To be saved, some have to burn in hell.”
The red lips of Beatrice,

VII
Leak out of Dante, like an old fountain
Pen wobbling across someone’s last well
And testament into the night.
A handsome stranger picks up a long distance dial tone.
It reminds him of beach sand when he was a kid.

It was history and he was just a syllable
In his father’s voice, and like an eraser of

Architecture death was an older son.
A beginner and a lender of life,
A road of faces and potholes waited
For the next event to arrive with you in hand.

And all the while the moment
Was covered with the present.
the poem

writing is a button
I wear with your name
on it

I remember the wind
carving your face
into a moment

the wind pouring
my heart into a
glass you had put down

dripping with
your chocolate lips
and touch
and shape

do you think of me
as a street that goes
on forever

a street that will
take all my friends
to heaven to see

their indifferent
poems become air
and art

we die a little
when you look at it
because it desires
to live for the process
and in the end all
it has is the end
GASPAR OROZCO

FROM AUTOCINEMA

TRANSLATED BY MARK WEISS
FILM SEEN ON A PIANO KEY

The glazed murmur of the archipelago. Remembering the names of lost cities. The red first letter of each name caught in the act of vanishing. Thus, the disappearance of bridge, column, cupola, almost transparent, like a snake’s eyelid. The temple quivers beneath a yellow leaf. Music in the depths of a submerged pavilion. The tooth of the moon has sunk. The orchestra pauses: the singer intones a secret to the stone. A crack in the bone’s splendor. The note will last forever if anyone dare awaken it.
FILM SEEN ON AN EARLOBE

A peninsula. Footprints will survive for a long time here. The sand is white. Fragments of pottery and glass on the beach. Bits of tiny machinery also. With the steel point of a broken compass I draw lines, paths. I stop in the midst of an unfinished sketch of a silent vowel. A mollusk hides in the gray grass. They say that this sand covers a vast landscape of bones, weapons and stones that sounds have protected for a long time. Further off, a hole marks a well. Blind. On the wall, the skeleton of a snail. I decide to go back. Empty wind. All of my footprints have been erased. I hear the irregular noise of a tugboat approaching the shore.
The collector’s cabinet as nocturnal city. The traveler will always arrive with flood tide and the south wind. A bird is watching you from every parapet. Architecture as somber proportion. A bottle of February’s rainwater rests in the hollow of the niche. A chunk of red coral glints on the temple staircase. Is it music that seeps from the edge of the obelisk? Is it time in another form? Beneath the reef’s diaphanous vertebrae the sleeping hand traces a circle within a circle: no constellation breaks the ebony night. But the gold key burns in the final door. Through a crack you discover a sea-snail striped like an Amoy tiger. The soft roar of the sea.
FILM SEEN WITHIN A GULL’S CRY

Ash on the statue’s fingertips. The hand points to the source of the sea’s power, dark now, sleeping. The dreamer listens. Against the wind, the flight of the gull suspended between two islands. But the salt falls on uncertain ground. Where is he who receives this message within his forehead? Among those who sail in impenetrably silent ships and touch with their gaze the frozen water? Among those who have just abandoned ships that arrive from shores of rusted metal? A gull and a wall. Mist on the statue’s fingertips.
Once I heard a horse run off. Today the east wind carried some grains of red sand. From here I saw the tower fall. I saw the bishop bow his head. Others say that the sea can be seen through a crack. Others say that it’s a still dream in the Queen’s head. In a dream Our Lord discovered an unknown tree in whose fronds were hidden nameless birds. That day we were victorious. Our kingdom is a petal on the finger of God. Yesterday the Queen moved northward. Her step was a drop of metal. Black wheat fields spread out beyond the bridge. The snow begins to fall. Silence.
FILM SEEN WITHIN AN AMBER BEAD

Words from then that retain the clarity of silence. Which is why speech was unnecessary. The depths of night remembered the oldest gold: hours of the lightest secret, of when you begin to enclose yourself in the world that lives within closed eyes. A music that drifts from far away. A smell that travels from the deepest heart of the peach. *Is autumn not memory’s most translucent fashion? Is autumn not the beginning of incurable forgetting?* One glance is poured into another and from that union comes forth a new water. A color visible to our eyes only. And there, suspended, a sliver of sun lives in the dark of night. From and by that light I write: *I held in my hand the fruit of the wind. And it was warm.*
FILM SEEN IN THE THREAD OF A SPIDER WEB

for Juan Luis Panero

If you breathe something will tremble on the far side of the city. If you remember a voice a motion will be lit, a sound. If you are quiet something elsewhere will become silence or ash. A city, a wind. For he who would have come to touch this city there will be no return. You know it, and in any case you will find yourself one day passing through these empty streets, searching for what can't be found, awaiting the arrival of the dirty colors of day.
FILM FORGOTTEN IN THE RAMPA THEATER IN HAVANA

for Mark Weiss

I was leaving a theater in Havana before the show was over when two old men in the lobby asked me the name of the film. I couldn't remember. Turning away, one said to the other: *so young and such a lousy memory!*
From ironwood the softest fruit. An empty wave left it before me on the shore. Now by yourself in a room you memorize the stone's lines, the salt's murmurs. On this island the border between autumn and winter is lavish with apparitions. If you touch the water's skin the stars of all nights come together. All my memories disperse if you touch my brow. From you come words in the language of iron and snow: in the beginning, the tree beneath which I was born whose shadow is my blood, whose murmur my silence, whose leaves my memory, whose roots my forgetting.

* 

In the scene in my head is a woman surrounded by broken sprays of wheat. She gathers those not harvested. There's no one in the theater. Gleaning done, her basket full, gratefully she gazes westward. The curtain falls. All the silences. At that moment, fragrant and violent, the fire begins. Calmly I leave the theater. The theater in flames is the only light on the island. Slowly the island is lost in the night. A smaller and smaller ever-sharper dot of flame pierces my head.

* 

These images will come to you from across the ocean. There the wind will be cut with swords. Like the bread of war. I hear you rehearse your lines in an empty room. In the depth of a mirror, the island, rain; which is to say: memory. From whence will come the much-awaited Grace? I will look to the east and abide. I suppose you sleeping, hidden among waves of rye in an oddly gentle winter. The star extinguished above me at this hour in your heavens is lit by a different power. I know that now you are possessed of Grace.

*
From the empty adjoining room I hear the tidal surge of white wheat. The secret prayer of winter on the desert island.

*

And paradise will be covered with sprays of wheat for as far as our dead eyes can see.
Film Seen Through a Keyhole

For you the garden of moments is opened.

AIMÉ CÉSAIRE

FROM LIKE A MISUNDERSTANDING OF SALVATION...

TRANSLATED BY A. JAMES ARNOLD & CLAYTON ESHLEMAN
In 1994 Aimé Césaire (1913-2008), with the assistance of Daniel Maximin, collected twenty-two poems under the title “Like a Misunderstanding of Salvation....” Since his death the collection has acquired the status of a poetic testament, marking out what the father of Caribbean negritude saw as his lasting accomplishment while noting how the desire to create a heroic diasporic persona had overreached itself. Already in *i, laminaria...* twelve years earlier Césaire had scaled back his view of the poet’s role. No longer the inspired vates of *Miraculous Weapons* (1946) and *Solar Throat Slashed* (1948), the modest laminarian alga clinging determinedly to its rock became the poet’s alter ego in 1982. We read these poems differently, no longer expecting grand flourishes or sweeping effects.

“Like a Misunderstanding of Salvation” states obliquely but clearly enough what was implied in *i, laminaria...* “Ridiculous” treats with bitter sarcasm the Promethean motif his earlier persona assumed in the tragic oratorio “And the Dogs Were Silent” (1946): “I am not nailed to the most absurd of rocks / No winged feat of valor ever visited me / From the abyss no chorus rises toward me / Unless it be the occasional hiccup of a cargo of castaways.” In “References” the “he” clearly references Césaire’s own career in Martinique: “He sought no alibi / on the contrary / he scanned the landscape to incrust himself / husbander of the place....” In “incrust” we recognize the same poetic turn Césaire had used in imagining himself as an alga. In this late verse the language of poetry is no longer a vehicle; it is the substance of the poem: “I challenge not / I greet the words (gathering the blood of sound) / I know their memory, what they have to offer me: / that is to say everything...” (“Rumination”). A clear echo of “And the Dogs Were Silent” is heard again in “Word Owing”: “on the way / without diverting the dogs / the wind through you living through yourself hounds them....”

The post-scriptum to “Ridiculous” offers conditional consolation: “But if all sap has been abolished / If the current flows not / If the trade wind is lacking / If even pollen and sand reach me not / native / If from myself to myself / the useless path gets scared and pursues itself / May my silence alone deliver to me / By a blow in the hollow of helpless repose / The ill-deciphered jubilation of a / solitary magma / Rider of time and spume.”

The poems selected for this issue were translated by A. James Arnold and Clayton Eshleman for the bilingual *Complete Poetry of Aimé Césaire*, which is scheduled for publication in 2017 by Wesleyan University Press.
He sought no alibi
on the contrary
he scanned the landscape to incrust himself
husbander of the place

that erosion should erode him
that the trade winds should slap him
(the all-morne, the all-volcano)

the coherence of the journey was not thereby affected
cross-country tracks being merely scree wounds
groping he sketched
the fragile chance turned toward the sun

mummy of mud
RUMINATION

Got to know how to interrogate their double
at the price of reading the time only by their church bell
which is not unrelated to the diving bell

got to appreciate their lack of restraint
their drunkenness being self-installation as mad gods

c conveniently savage in profile
ever unpredictable.
listen to them. Auscultate the labyrinth.

I listen along the imperious blood that ascends
through the debris the falun* the wreckage
faithful sap.

I challenge not
I greet the words (gathering the blood of sound)
I know their memory, what they have to offer me:
that is to say everything

it happens that I create islands
out of calderas showered with orange groves

* Falun: An ambivalent image; in geology an underlying limestone sediment, in Buddhism falun is the Dharma (truth) wheel, which represents the universe in its movement.
WORD OWING

How many rivers
mountains
seas

...disasters
...to think how many centuries
...the forests

word owing:

...stagnation encoiled
...the hard alone is arable

dance memory dance eligible
the invisible in its site

advance devance
let slumber on the horizon the caravane of mornes*
let the lion in the north belch forth its entrails
at the crossroad amidst lava too quickly cooled
you shall encounter the child

the wind is what is intended

accompany it far with a fervor of the lung

advance

...on the way
without diverting the dogs
the wind through you living through yourself hounds them
over everything mountain-like that has been built in you
construct each step disconcerting
the sleepy rubble
do not disfigure the pure face of the future
builder of a strange tomorrow
may your thread not be tangled
may your voice not be hoarse
may your ways not be limited

advance

* Morne(s): In *Two Years in the French West Indies* Lafcadio Hearn defined the term as “used throughout the French West Indian colonies to designate certain altitudes of volcanic origin....” The Creole French term was derived from Spanish *morro*, a hillock.
Thyrsus trunks
Drapings
Chitchat among sylvan deities
The outland chatter of tree ferns

Here and there a bloody baring of the chest
By impassive balisiers*
Rapacious figuration
(whether ferocious or sumptuous
the quest is thirst for being)

Soon it will be the play of light gold castanets
Then the burned-alive trunk of the simaroubas*

May they yet gesticulate as I would have it
Theater in the dust of female fire
They are the last wild wrestlers of the hill

Minister-of-the-pen of this strange court
It is too little to say that I wander
Day and night this domain
The domain itself requires and necessitates me
Guardian
To ensure that everything is there
Intact absurd
Fairy lamp
Cocoons from earthy need
And may it all suddenly burst into flame from an imperceptible sense
Whose decree in me I could never bend.
* Balisier(s): The flower of *Canna indica*, symbol of Césaire’s Parti Progressiste Martiniquais, founded in 1958 after his break with the French Communist Party two years earlier. The balisier is sometimes assimilated to a “red heart” for the color of its flower spikes.
* Simarouba: In Martinique, where the *Bursera simaruba* is used to construct border fences, it is known as the *gomnier rouge*. A red-barked variety is called *gomnier sang*, “blood gum tree.”
Getting under way isn’t done at bullet train speed
It remains stuck in the morning’s beginnings
And its ordinary foggy raiment
The collusion of silence has taken charge of the whole
Beneath an iron heel it’s a profusion of cries

Serpent cries
Rattlesnake cries
Lizard-waiting-for-the-sun cries
Dessicated stick-insect cries

Besides the everyday cries there are cries
Of forever
Those stand arrogantly
Posted in the vague disquiet of their testimony
And sheathed in the armor of their role

Locust cries of devouring solitudes.
I am not nailed to the most absurd of rocks
No winged feat of valor ever visited me
From the abyss no chorus rises toward me
Unless it be the occasional hiccup of a cargo of castaways
No need to specify
That I care nothing about the civil status established
evidently out of pure nostalgia
I have been slashed by no complacent beak
Threatened by no serious vengeance
as for the rest
Difficulties with hindsight
being very well compensated by the broadening of vision
I do not browse panic
I do not ruminate on remorse
Scarcely do I peck among the ordinary season
Awaiting the time of a brief spark
(the time called dead)
the wake of a lost assent
or if you prefer of an order

P.S.:
But if all sap has been abolished
If the current flows not
If the trade wind is lacking
If even pollen and sand reach me not
native
If from myself to myself
the useless path gets scared and pursues itself
May my silence alone deliver to me
By a blow in the hollow of helpless repose
The ill-deciphered jubilation of a
solitary magma
Rider of time and spume
CRATERS

The thought of a quick denouement is annulled for lack of lava, along rivers too stony to be unintelligible to the serpents' thirst.

Bloodthirsty Erinys loosed pitilessly beating the bushes until extinguishing itself when in the autumnal mist.

I am not duped.

Distress will not tire of playing leap-frog with the craters, even though it may be moved long enough for an illumination of some suicidal volcano outpouring.
For nibbling at a sunrise
for furling a sunset
The animals will have fled
carrying out of the city
its last key to warmth.
For now it is barely
a question
of unmasking a door
while groping through
the desolation of the intimate mould
up to the speed of hazardous tenderness
which makes my brother the resolute tree
My brother the wave-torn wind
My brother the nauseated volcano
And the ceaselessly choked-down sob
of the undertow
"I promised to write down your life story. But so far I've only been talking about my own. I'm terribly sorry."

"That's all right. First you should translate your own story into written characters. Then your soul will be tidy enough to make room for a bear."

"Are you planning to come inside me?"

"Yes."

"I'm scared."

We laughed with one voice.

I became a government employee and rode around on my bicycle all day long. After the first month, you could see the muscles on my thighs and calves. I could ride faster and thus saved time and no longer felt I had to rush, so now and then I would practice bicycle acrobatics in a park or even right there on the street.

Once I tried to do a headstand on the bicycle. "You need a special bicycle for that, a custom-built model," a passer-by said. I wanted to engage him in conversation, but he was already gone. I began to sense on my skin the presence of spectators. When I had an audience of even a single person, it was no longer a paranoid delusion, it was a proper rehearsal. And if a rehearsal was possible, there might also — some day — be a premiere.

I trained ever more diligently. One day I was observed by a relative of my boss as I clattered down some stone steps on my bicycle and I received a stern reprimand. Worried about the bicycle, the boss exclaimed: "You aren't working in a circus, do you understand?" It had been such a long time since I'd heard the word "circus." It was true enough, just as the boss said: The Telegraph Office was not a circus. The circus was where I wanted to work.

The war broke out before I could start my new life in the circus.

"I envy the inhabitants of the North Pole. There aren't any wars there."

"There aren't any wars. But people with weapons keep arriving all the same. They shoot at us."

"Why?"
“I don’t know. I’ve heard that humans hunt instinctually. But instincts are a mystery to me.”

“I think hunting used to be important for human survival. That’s no longer the case, but they can’t stop. A human being, perhaps, is made up of many nonsensical motions. But they’ve forgotten the motions necessary for life. These humans are manipulated by what remains of their memories.”

My father returned home once during the war. I saw a man walking back and forth in front of our house. I don’t know what gave me the idea that it could be my father. He looked at me in such a way as to signal that I should follow him. We walked for a while until we reached the bank of our small river, where we sat down on a bench. I looked at his yellowed fingers holding a cigarette stub. “I started torturing animals as a child, just the way many adults torture their children. I killed animals — a cat, for example. I plunged my knife into her heart and was able to watch calmly as she died. It was important to me not to lose my self-control. I required ever new victims, in the end I even killed an army horse. The military thought it was an act of anti-war resistance.”

I told my mother about my encounter with this man. She was furious because she thought I’d made up the story. “It isn’t possible that your father is still alive. You can’t go around telling people nonsense like that.”

The Telegraph Office soon closed, I lost my job, and began working in the armaments factory along with my mother. On Sundays I washed our clothes in a tub and cooked for us. I would walk into town carrying a large cloth bag to buy the week’s food. The people I would see on the way had roughly whittled faces. When two people who didn’t know each other crossed paths on a desolate street, they would exchange distrustful glances. Fate might at any moment turn anyone at all into a murderer or a victim. The sight of a soldier standing at an intersection was enough to make me start shaking, even though the soldiers were ours. But what did that mean: ours? Every soldier was prepared to kill. My wish was always that he would shoot somebody else instead of me. I was forced not only to suffer hunger but to be distrustful too. When winter came, it brought not greater hunger but a hunger more intense. My eyes were constantly mistaken, and I rarely raised them from the ground. In the mirror I saw cracks in my skin. It wasn’t just me — others I saw in the street had ruined skin too. Their eyes were inflamed, and they
couldn't stop coughing. My mother was afraid I might accidentally tell someone about my father. “If anyone asks, say that you were separated from him as a baby and can’t remember anything.”

The neighbors’ eyes sometimes spoke a language I couldn’t understand. I often turned around while walking, as if someone had pasted an invisible label on my back. I imagined being arrested and forced to stand against a wall to be shot. “Why do you keep bringing up these fantasies? There’s no reason for anyone to arrest you,” my mother’s voice said. My nose was strangely reprogrammed, and I smelled the dead bodies, a vague but persistent odor, and I didn’t know if I was imagining it or not. It was practically a miracle I was still alive. My mother once asked me if I was a member of a resistance movement. But for this I was too apolitical, alas — I didn’t know anything at all about the resistance.

After the big air raid, the city’s walls and roofs collapsed to form heaps of rubble. When I could think again, I’d been evacuated to a factory building, and the woman lying next to me was my mother. When the moonlight shone gently on the windowsills, the smell of sweat from all the people packed in together intensified, lethally cloying.

I found a scorched lump of iron and thought it had to be the corpse of a bicycle. I began to collect useful items and fragments of broken objects and machines and sold them to a workshop. But even when I managed to come by a little cash in this way, it wasn’t easy to exchange for decent bread. For this reason I was glad to have the opportunity to visit relatives who had a farm outside of town to help in the fields. I still remember the turnips and cabbage, and especially the rutabagas.

The Telegraph Office was reopened. Among the new management, there were only fresh faces to be seen, and none of them wanted to offer me a job. I helped acquaintances of my mother’s and was given food in return. I cleaned everything that was dirty, and tried to procure everything that was lacking. I also took part in the city’s rubble-clearing operations. “Why do I feel so lonely?” I asked Tosca.

“You aren’t alone. I’m here.”

“But no one except me believes I can speak with you. Sometime I wonder if it’s even true. Lots of people want to talk with me — but not about the war, they only want to talk about the circus. They always start their conversations with the same question: How did I end up joining the circus? I tell them that as a child I helped out at Circus Sarrasani,
and when I was twenty-four, I was accepted at Circus Busch as a cleaning woman. No one wants to hear about what happened in between. They say: We all know about the war. It's not that I want to talk about the war, it's just that it makes me nervous to have a hole in my circus biography. A hole that big might one day become my grave.”

“I’ll listen to you.”

“How can I be sure it’s you? How do I know I’m not dreaming?”

Somewhere a dog barked. “Rich people were resurrected after the war as rich people, even though their money had burned to ash. Don’t you find that strange?” This wasn’t Tosca’s voice, it was the voice of a vital young man. His dog was named Friedrich. Friedrich would always jump up on me when I came to the apartment and try to lick my face with his large, moist tongue. “Class society doesn’t vanish in a war. On the contrary: The difference between rich and poor is increased by a war and during the post-war period. For this reason we need a revolution as soon as possible.” The young man, Karl, had chatted me up on the street. I was quickly drawn into a conversation, it felt as if I’d known him a long time, so I followed him to his apartment, which was filled with vintage furniture. His sofa and bed didn’t look as if they’d been subjected to an air raid, in fact there was nothing in his apartment that appeared in urgent need of repair or replacement. The books on his shelves, unlike the furniture, were all recent. I pulled out a book with a red spine. Before I’d finished reading a paragraph I’d chosen at random, I found myself being embraced and engulfed from behind. I was all bones, and my breasts were only just starting to show signs of future roundness. His hands boldly crushed them. With all my strength I twisted my head around, he placed his hands a bit lower down, applying pressure to my abdomen while using his chin to hold my shoulder in place the way a paperclip holds a sheet of paper.

“It was like a lightning bolt from a clear sky. I didn’t have time to long for love, to fall in love, or even to notice the taste of my first kiss.”

“And if you had gotten pregnant, Nature would have quickly attained her goal.”

“Nature, for all her greatness, is small: All that interests her is dividing tiny cells into even smaller ones. I can certainly understand that my heart is of no particular concern to Nature. Cell division and more cell division, that’s all she cares about.”

“Did you go to see Karl every day?”

“We immediately started fighting.”
“Why?”
“I talked with his dog Friedrich too much. Karl didn’t like that. Maybe that was the bone of contention.”

One day I contracted a high fever, it went to my head and swept away my thoughts. I was sent to bed, my mother filled a bag with ice cubes, I heard the glassy clicking sound of the ice, and then coldness surprised my burning forehead. I heard my mother speaking with a doctor, their voices withdrew. My consciousness wanted to travel to far-off lands. I stood in a flat landscape, a snowscape, the snow blinding me. Staring into it, I saw a snow hare leaping across the snowfield, and a moment later he vanished from sight. With every step I took, the shaft of light changed its angle, negating what it had showed me just before.

A snowy wind boxed my ears but it didn’t feel cold. The frozen ground was milky as a pane of frosted glass. Through it, I saw the water and two seals swimming by, probably mother and child.

After a long journey I woke up and felt something wild, unripe, unpredictable inside me. I kicked off the wool blanket, quickly got dressed and slipped into my shoes. My mother tried to stop me — she wanted at least to know where I was going. I myself didn’t know. Walking made me dizzy and I lurched but didn’t fall because the wind was propping me up on both sides. Before me I saw an advertising pillar on which a poster bloomed like a bright tropical flower: Circus Busch! I studied the dates and saw that the final performance had taken place the day before. In front of the pillar stood a bicycle that wasn’t locked. I sat on the metal horse, pressing the pedals with all my strength. The city fell away, a field of rapeseed received me in its yellow arms, and far off in the distance, a circus caravan was crossing the horizon.

Left, right, left, right, I pushed down on the pedals as if possessed, terrified that the rickety old bicycle would collapse beneath the pressure I was putting on it. I panted, spinning the wheels of my dreams, trying to catch the images flashing past in my brain. Eventually I caught up with the procession of circus wagons and from atop my rolling bicycle asked a man sitting in the last trailer where they were going.

“To Berlin!” he replied.

“So you have performances in Berlin?”

“Yes. Berlin is the greatest city in the world. Have you ever been there?” At this
moment it became clear to me in a flash that I wanted to go there too. Could I manage it with this bicycle? The sky suddenly grew black.

“You’d better ride home as quick as you can. It’s going to start pouring in a minute.”

I looked up, and a fat raindrop fell right in my eye. “Please take me with you to Berlin!”

“Not possible. Maybe the next time we’re in town. We’ll pick you up.”

“When?”

“Just be patient and wait for us.”

I woke up and saw that I was lying in my familiar bed. My mother said I’d been asleep for two days. I still had a high fever.

“You’d better go to the doctor. Your illness is coming back. You seem off somehow.” It wasn’t my mother saying this to me, it was my husband.

“Huh? What do you mean by off?”

“You don’t answer when I ask you a question, and your eyes have a strange gleam.”

There was something off about my husband. That’s probably why he was telling me I was off.

Was my fever dream the place where I caught up to the circus troupe on that old bicycle? One week later I happened to see a poster for Circus Busch plastered on an advertising pillar in town. Their engagement had ended just one day before I’d had the dream. I kept this discovery from my mother. You can’t reproach a child for never telling her parents what occupies and troubles her heart. It’s just a childish attempt to become an adult. Parents, on the other hand, would much rather lie to their children than reveal their weaknesses. If my mother had suddenly lost her nose, she would have covered her face with a handkerchief and told me she had a cold. What was great Nature thinking when she gave us these characteristics?

“You say I shouldn’t have conversations with your dog. It’s not an insect I’m talking to. A dog is as much a member of the class of mammals as we are. Why shouldn’t I exchange words with my fellow mammal?” This was the argument I used to defy Karl’s prohibition. When he started shouting, I could feel his body temperature rise: “A human being is fundamentally different from a dog. But what’s a dog, really? Just a metaphor.” Karl loved the
word “metaphor” and used it to intimidate me. After I told him about my lifelong dream of working in a circus, he replied: “The circus is nothing more than a metaphor. Since you never read actual books, you believe that everything you see is real.” Lovelessly, he threw a volume of Isaac Babel in front of me. I haven’t seen Karl since then. For a long time, the book stood in a corner of my bookshelf, observing me resentfully. I didn’t expect Karl to ever come back to me, but I wanted the circus to come back.

“You can wait for him as long as you like, he’s never coming back.” I returned to my senses. Before me stood my husband. He grinned and went on: “I locked him in the bathroom.” Since I thought my husband perfectly capable of imprisoning Honigberg, I turned my attention to the bathroom door. But it was Pankov, not Honigberg, who now emerged with a self-satisfied expression and asked: “Something wrong? What’s the matter?”

“Where’s Honigberg?”

“Right over there!” Pankov’s finger indicated two people standing behind me immersed in conversation. The one with his back to me was unmistakably Honigberg.

I knew that my husband’s nerves were worn thin and vulnerable. If one more shred of nerve ripped, he might attack Honigberg, fatally even. This thought left me no peace. As a child, I repeatedly dreamed of a dog and cat trying to kill each other and would try to the best of my abilities to prevent this mutual murder. But the desire to kill danced about wildly in the air, provoking both of them and seducing them into this struggle to the death. It was my task to end their battle as quickly as possible. I was still an infant, and already my head was filled with worries. The one thing I don’t know is what my worries looked like without language.

I didn’t want my child to witness my husband causing harm to a human life. Perhaps it would be me he attacked, not Honigberg. Perhaps in the end he would be his own victim. Best for my child to go on living with my mother.

If I’d ever given serious thought to how my husband would die, it would have been clear to me what his end would look like. But from where I stood in the middle of life, I was incapable of seeing anything in sharp focus. Otherwise I’d have been able to predict the fall of the Berlin Wall and its effect on my life. The GDR perished, and so did my husband.
When I raised my head, Pankov placed a notebook with white paper on the table and said: “This is a gift for you. I don’t want you using our important documents for your manuscripts.” Ever since the Soviet Union had given us the polar bears, Pankov had avoided the word “gift.” So it was all the more remarkable that he used this word now, giving me permission to write. I thanked him but went on writing on gray recycled paper.
SUSAN M. SCHULTZ

FROM MEMORY CARDS: SIMONE WEIL SERIES
20.

The object of our search should be . . . the world. A crow nips at the tail of a small dog and, because it's a Vine, he never stops. Vines are wanna be trees, but they lack spines. Trump says Ferguson is as dangerous as Iraq; my Cards cap carries a terrible history. Don’t touch Cambodians on the tops of their heads, I remembered as I touched a child’s soft hair. Her friend kept his cut hair in the hole of a tree beside a reservoir; they visited at least once a week. I went to see purple flowers in the woods near our house because I wanted them to be mine. Someone said they were weeds. Sometimes an aesthetics is not about beauty, but about being. The earthworm's wisdom is involved in soil. Saijo spent his last years simply noting the weather's passing. If we're lucky, what's sacred shifts from metaphor to fact.

--18 May 2016
One does not play a scale for the sake of the scale. One cat bats at a band of light on the tiles; another sleeps on the red chair, eyes tucked under her left front leg. Doves murmur in back, birds of a higher register in front; the wind participates in it all. My sentences lay down track without presuming to know direction. The hardest assignment of all was to do nothing each day. Guilt, like a thin layer of plastic, adheres to your self-license. You have no right to sit and stare when there are teas and perfumes to sell at the mall. Condos for the rich rise like toadstools from the Ala Moana parking lot. The park between mall and the sea has filled with a tide of tents and tarps. Toadstool is to fungus as penis is to man. The beauty of function so outstripped by this wall of unblinking glass. What you see from it cannot possibly be yourself.

--19 May 2016
Beauty: a fruit we look at without trying to seize it. It's my argument against a certain kind of poem, one that charts conflict, then steps outside as if to say “I quit.” A man was beating his son in the bathroom of a pancake house in Williamsburg. As they walked out, my friend stared at the father. “You didn't like what you heard?” the man yelled. No, and no, and no. What counter-balance can memory make, a man listening back to hear my friend say no. No doesn't leave the restaurant, stays still-in-movement like snapchat. Kindness, like trauma, repeats itself. But it needs first to pierce the skin.

--20 May 2016
To see each human being (an image of oneself) as a prison in which a prisoner dwells, surrounded by the whole universe. A Republican senator claims we are an “under-incarcerated society,” by which he means there aren’t enough private prisons. My student is a private person who wears a mask. I was astonished when others finally saw the distress in me. The prison-house of language is no place for such conversation; it’s what we can’t know that’s true. But in its absence, sit down on your cot and bask in the glow of sunlight as it strays across a bare sink. Eyes are the locks of the soul. A crow bar would blind you, so pour honey on them. No guard can open that slick sweet lock; he meets your helpless gaze with his own.

--21 May 2016
It is better to say 'I am suffering' than 'this landscape is ugly.'” The Chinese poet said he suffered and I envied him, not for his suffering but for the word. The gap between suffering and our words for it is like a trough in the Ko'olau; even rain can't fill it with enough light. Early morning wind and birds conspire an ambient sound. Brssss, Sangha would say. Was he ever sick, his aunt asked, and I said no more than most kids. The cousin who shared his rounded face carried a cell phone. I caught a ride on her motorcycle, zig-zagging down a thin road between densely packed thatched houses. The village stood on a point of land; up the rutted road people kept thousands of ducks in pens. What’s ugly is not land but what it hosts: genocide, HIV, a brother missing in Thailand, another whose face closed against our gaze. We nursed our clouded glasses of tea; in front, Sangha held a framed photo of his dead birth-mother; his grandmother quietly placed her hand on his leg then pulled it back. We know there's been a wedding and a funeral since. When asked if he'll return, Sangha says he got to leave.

--22 May 2016
25.

The temporal was only a bridge. Radhika asks what apostrophe means and I say “O bridge!”: that doesn't refer to hours the governor closed a bridge out of spite. Power is a means, yes, but it's also mean--the way a lack of commitment masks itself as indecision. She fears the cruelty of breaking a non-commitment, asks the newspaper ethicist what she needs to say. A world-renowned professor sexually harasses his foreign students. The question we pose is so obvious we hardly need ask it. She wonders what is more cruel, the saying or the not-saying. If the bridge had an end, we could never get off it, gulls arcing beneath us as we worried over concrete spalling, angled for repairs. The man whose shrill shirt balloons never lands, hangs in the air between roadway and the river. We have stopped him cold with a single syllable, calling into being what never ceases to die. The lyric is a lie.

--23 May 2016
26.

*Every separation is a link.* A tall unshaven white man in ankle wading pants carries a metal pail from Times to the crack seed store and down toward Subway. I'm buying banana bread outside the plate lunch place from a shy skinny kid who plays lineman on his football team. His mother doesn't know if that's offense or defense, but she knows he has six cousins and a brother who also play. Before she comes out of Pakela’s Plate Lunch place with change, the man with the pail walks by and asks how much. $5 I say, and he says, “not this time, not this time.” It crosses my mind to buy him a loaf, but I don’t. I watch him walk past with his pail. As I open my car door I remember the bag of toiletries in the back seat. I gather together shampoo, toothbrush, moisturizing cream, and set out to find him. I circle the parking lot three times. He’s gone.

--24 May 2016
We have to try to cure our faults by attention, and not by will. I looked down at the First Folio's open page and read, “to sleep perchance to dream.” When a dyslexic businessman looks at street signs, he sees letters but not where they belong. His only order, memorized. My student's sentences flit from hurt to hurt like hummingbirds. I ask him to look at what he's leaving, but that's for a later age, after the slowing down of synapses (and their attendant asps). The dream included snakes, but they were shedding skin rather than flashing it. Earth is covered with our molting: shell casings, bird shit, flat tires, a pile of wood where a single-wall house fell in on itself. To attend to this is not to reverse animation, turn tragedy into farce. It's to rest in the particular moment of our dying. The envelope arrived from Thailand with hardly any address on it: my name and place of work. Ithi's memory book; flip it either way and he smiles. Dead “by his own hand” at 33 on this Good Friday. I fucking hate symbolism.

--i.m Ithi S.

--27 May 2016
From the past alone, if we love it. A pretend eternity, like the Saigon theme park full of giant concrete Buddhas, where the rides were mostly broken. If movement is fun, then this was monotony. The tea was sweet, though, and we ran into each other on the wooden bridges. If this was a theme park, then our theme was dysfunction in the shadows of a curiously permanent impermanence. A tall ferris wheel jerked slowly over the abandoned roller-coaster, like admin over a humanities department, or athletics over pure science. The Galapagos has a thriving tourist industry; if you wait long enough, you evolve into the person of your dreams. But that’s too long to wait, so stop time, before you speed it up. Your flower will bloom as quickly as one Rothko gifs into another. Crystal meth metonomy. He saw young men with the hearts of 80 year olds. Our kids squealed their joy from inside the tunnels of Cu Chi.

--28 May 2016
Just back from Vietnam in 1971, he drove down the narrow road to Miloli‘i. The sea’s deep there, so they fish in the old Hawaiian way. From one hut he heard the most beautiful music. Points toward the stage: that guy, Led Kaapana. Saved his life. He remembers this song—must be getting old. Scots-Irish-Chinese-Hawaiian. Hawaiians used to welcome everyone in, he says, his arms stretched out in a circle. His family sold his land. Money, he says, rubbing his fingers together. Money. Bought land in Waiahole and grew papaya. But then the Agent Orange; he points to his chest, up and down. Sounds so good, eh? A-GENT O-RANGE. The jungle was a comfort to him, but then they walked out into the bright light. We killed three million of them, and they killed 58 thousand of us. The Chinese fed their hungry. (He’s Chinese you know.) His great-grandfather was Scottish but spoke Hawaiian, fished the windward coast. That small church at the Marine Corps; he founded it. They all died of disease, no matter who they were. His unit came after the B-52s laid down their carpets. They killed the ones who were terribly wounded, had to. One guy tried to enlist for a fourth time, but they didn’t let him. He remembers this song—must be getting old. He forgets things now. Puts down his coffee cup and walks out the golf course side of Honey’s Bar and Grill. It’s owned by the Presbyterian Church.

--29 May 2016
Belief in the existence of other human beings as such is love. The sentence is tyrannical, though its content isn’t. Once upon a time, we moved eagerly toward the goodness of the full stop, trusting in its fiction, content to rest there like a family on vacation. It’s our happy place, he writes; the photos of sand and beach umbrellas testify to his confidence. “She’s in her happy place,” a caregiver said of my mother, long past clauses nested between commas. The sentence stays with us, like a mother at the side of her sick child in a bathtub, bringing her a pail. But what happens when we leave is mystery. We must love what is not there, Weil tells us. The voiceless person flickers between here and not-here like a sentence whose tenses suddenly shift. Alzheimer’s grammatical form. It’s ok if you let go, I said once on leaving her, as if she or we had volition. Five years ago her body had begun to close down. When I got there, the caregivers said talk to her, but there was nothing left to say.

--30 May 2016
The violent wave invades the wide hall of genuflections.
No one thinks to beg, thank, be grateful, testify.
Sanctity collapses in a gale of laughter.
Although love’s chaotic symbols are the first things touched,
we have the luck to be ignorant of voluptuousness or cunnilingus,
the perfect lover and the octopus woman,
the strategic mirrors,
we don’t know how to bear syphilis with a swan-like grace,
unaware that soon enough we’ll acquire these fatal refinements.

Bodies in the mysterious tropical drizzle,
in the daily drizzle, the nightly drizzle, always the drizzle,
bodies opening their millions of eyes,
bodies, ruled by light, retreat
before the slaying of skin,
bodies, devouring waves of light, return like sunflowers of flame
at the crest of ecstatic waters,
bodies, afloat, drift seawards like extinguished embers.

It’s confusion, terror, abundance,
The imminent loss of virginity.
Rotten mangoes in the riverbed dazzle thought,
and I scale the highest tree to fall like a piece of fruit.
There’s no restraining this body destined for the hooves of horses,
caught crazily between poetry and sun.

Bravely I escort the pierced heart,
stab the sharpest stiletto into the sleepers’necks.
The tropic erupts and its flow invades my head
pinned fast to the crust of night.
The original piety of gold-bearing sands
resoundingly drowns the Spanish mares,
the whirlwind disorders the best-kept manes.

I can’t see through these dilated eyes.
No one knows how to watch, to study, to strip a body.
It’s the dreadful confusion of a hand in the greenery,
stranglers traveling at the edge of sight.
We didn’t know how to fill the lonely course of love with glances.
I linger over a few old words:
downpour, siesta, cane field, tobacco,
with a simple gesture, scarcely if onomatopoetically,
majestically I step through the crest of their music,
extoning: water, noon, sugar, smoke.

And I combine them:
the downpour sticks to the backs of horses,
siesta binds a horse’s tail,
the cane field devouring horses
horses stray stealthily
into the shadowy emanation of tobacco,
final gesture of the Siboneys, smoke passing through the pitchfork’s tines
like the cart of death,
final gesture of the Siboneys,
and I dig in this earth for idols and make for myself a history.

Peoples and their histories in the mouths of all the people.

Suddenly, the gold-laden galleon enters the mouth
of one of the storytellers,
and Cadmus, toothless, begins to play the bongo.
The ancient sadness of Cadmus and his lost status:
on a tropical island the last red drops of a dragon’s blood
stain the cloak of decadence with imperial dignity.

Eternal histories or the history of a day beneath the sun,
eternal histories of these lands that bring forth buffoons and blowhards,
eternal histories of blacks who were
and whites who weren’t,
or the other way around or any way at all,
endless white, black, yellow, red, blue histories,
—the whole chromatic spectrum bursting into flames above me—
the endless history of the cynical smile of the European
who had come to squeeze my mother’s teats.

The horrific circular walk,
the shadowy play of feet on the circle of sand,
the poisonous movement of a heel avoiding the urchin's spine,
the sinister mangroves, like a cancerous belt,
force the island back,
mangroves and fetid sand
squeeze the kidneys of the island's people.

Only a flamingo rises aloft.

There's no way out! There's no way out!
Life in a funnel crusted with rage.
There's no way out:
the smallest shark would refuse to carry an intact body.
There's no way out:
a grape moored to the face of the creole
languidly fanning herself in a rocking-chair
and “there's no way out” comes to a terrifying end in the crash of the claves.

Each man eating pieces of the island,
each man devouring its fruit, stones, and nutritious excrement,
each man biting the space left by his shadow,
each man tearing with his teeth at the void where the sun expects to be,
each man, his mouth like a cistern, dams up the sea’s water
but pathetically, like Munchausen’s horse,
spews it from its hindquarters,
each man in the rancorous labor of trimming
the edges of the world’s most beautiful island,
each man trying to drive the beast that’s a cross
between beast and fireflies.

But the beast is as lazy as a beautiful stallion
and stubborn as a primitive mare.
Each day it passes through the four chaotic moments,
the four moments in which it can study itself
–its head between its paws–searching the horizon with a cruel eye,
the four moments when cancer opens: daybreak, noon, dusk, and night.

The first drops of a coarse rain strike its back
until the skin takes on the sharp resonance of maracas.
At this moment an agreeable mystery
could be unfurled, like a sheet or a flag of truce,
but the avalanche of luxuriant greens drowns out the wet sounds,
and boredom invades the enveloping tunnel of leaves.

The luminous face of a badly born dream,
a carnival that begins with the song of a rooster,
mist covering the scandal of the savannah with its icy disguise,
each palm proudly cascading in a green jet of water,
pierce, with an incandescent triangle, the breasts of the first water vendors,
and the column of water hurls its vapors at the sun’s face sewn by a rooster.
It's the terrible hour.
The devourers of mist evaporate
swampwards,
and an alligator gives them a sweet once-over.
It's the terrible hour.
The final gleam of Yara's light
forces the horses into the mud.

It's the terrible hour.
Like a meteor the horrific hen falls
and everyone drinks his coffee.

But what can the sun do in this benighted town?
The day's work coils around men's necks
while milk falls desperately.
What can the sun do in this benighted town?
With murderous determination the cane cutters clear swaths of brush,
the grieving iguana leaps baroquely in a spout of blood,
the cane cutters, bringing shiploads of light, will darken to the tint
of an Egyptian tunnel.
Who could hope for clemency at such an hour?

In confusion a people escape their skin
dozing off with the light,
the explosive drug that can bring a fatal dream
to the beautiful eyes of men and women,
their immense and shadowy eyes
through which skin enters into whatever strange rites.

Skin at this hour stretches out like a reef
and bites its own borders,
skin takes to screaming like a madwoman, like a fat sow,
skin tries to cover its light with palm leaves,
with fronds carried carelessly by the wind,
in a fury skin covers itself with parrots and pitahayas,
absurdly it covers itself with somber tobacco leaves
and the remains of shadowy legends,
and when skin has become but a dark ball,
the horrific hen brings forth a white egg.

Cover it! Cover it!
But the light advances, invades
perversely, obliquely, perpendicularly,
the light is an enormous vent that sucks the shadow,
and you slowly raise your hands to shield your eyes.

The least confessable secrets are spoken:
light moves tongues,
light moves arms,
light throws itself on the guava vendor,
light throws itself on blacks and whites,
light strikes itself,
rushes convulsively from side to side,
begin to explode, to burst, to split apart,
light begins the most horrific illumination,
light begins to give birth to light.
It’s noon.

The complete text of The Whole Island can be found at the Shearsman Books website: goo.gl/dL4lOD
—trans am visitation—

Heaven found in their faces they made
their bodies move to, aspect and errancy wed of late. I wanted to believe
the
psalm they floated, I wanted to be of
that disposition, two Andoumboulou I
dreamt I rode with for a moment, broken
moment, bodily abode they wanted back and
had gotten back... The overpass took
us high above Low Forest. Prospect and
expansie it appeared. We looked out to-
ward the rim of the world and it seemed we
rode it, long since out of sync with the
road
we sped along, we looked out over noth-
ing but green... It was a dream of the dead
in cars again I noticed, a dream come to life
it seemed, all the signs, all the semblances I
could-
't keep quiet, in tongues when they spoke
they'd speak. Momentary appeal to the lipless
dead, boon moment. I wanted their take on
what
if it added up it added up to. A figural endow-
ment I felt it was, maybe more... I sat between
them in the front seat as in the old days. They
felt
it was good to know breath and body again,
I could feel it. “Something seen in a face,” I mut-
tered, my words ratcheted upward, “some-
thing looking out untouched.” Green earth
slop-
ing away on all sides, none of us knew what
it meant, the overpass ratcheted up as well...
We were in my mother's '58 Pontiac, who
they
were I had no idea. The overpass went higher,
hoist-
ed by hydraulic
pumps

.

We were exiting 15-501 onto Martin Luther
King. Bright sun, blue sky, green earth a
binge of spirit, whisked away I'd have sworn
we'd
be. The radio was up loud as it would go but
it made no sound. All sonance accrued outside...
Not since light married heat had it been so
riven. All the leaves' exhalation welled up in
my
chest, an offhand gift. It cost us breath we
began to cry, such the way dreams had been it
was again, broke as we began to revive...
The
wide-awake look light gave us faded, our
faces warmer even so. Climb seconded clime,
chime followed, bells the out sound our
ra-
dio gave its tongue to, a church it might've
been
we drove
thru
We knew nothing but a soft hammering we heard, a climate of soul it seemed and such we called it, elegiac bodies we were born to
we swore by, the two dream travelers and I.
Steel string, padded mallet, felt-headed mallet.
A piano’s chime the bells might’ve been...

What was it I saw made it seem so at one I wanted to know, an afterthought I shooed away quick as I could, spirit’s expense it seemed.

Furtherance out of bodily bond what soul was, all that either that so what it was, ancillarity itself, arced as well as far the farther we looked. As were we, over it whatever the it was, arced as the pass we took’s tenuity, spirit’s expense’s high chime... Huff could be heard speaking from the backseat. He told me not to turn around. Rusty nails punctured the back of my head and protruded like locks, nailheads on the ends of them, themselves thus headed Huff said... Not since Anuncio and Anuncia walked arm-around-waist, he went on, had it so aligned, dreamt entablature the sky rested on. It was unlay’s day begun, land’s lay such as it was all the earthier, love’s licenssees we were... It was all we could’ve seen or said,
all we could've wanted, the accord zone it was
we were in. Whatever of majesty about it there
wasn't we had no use for, scoured, part sheen,part
scuff
So this was the way it was done these days
I was thinking. Picture-postcard sky, picture-postcard landscape, swing low sweet Pontiac...

*since* kept injecting itself. Not since Anuncio lay busted up had it been so clear. Crystalline scruff the way I thought to describe it, pastoral display discrepantly stretched out all around...

Steeped in St. Sufferhead’s remand even so, draped in St. Sufferhead’s raiment, clarity so tactile, clothlike, a see-thru silhouette clung to it all. The car took the curve of the overpass ever so smoothly, the Andoumboulou on both sides of me stolid, nonplussed, eyes on the road, no matter mine wandered. Their eyes feasted on what was in front of them, mere sockets were there nothing there. Straightahead was something they could taste, curved as well, altitude a light brew, lift an elixir, ravaging the thirst of the dead...

The Andoumboulou’s eyes devoured whatever the road presented. The curve was a rib cut they stuck tight to, tires lifting up as they began to notwithstanding, the air itself an off ramp we took. What a boon mobility was, motorability was, I could feel them feeling. Not since the song was first heard had the air so conducted itself. *Not since* took so’s place it seemed. It was a *Book of Not Since* we wrote our names in, bordering on a *Book of*
Not So... The pages turned my head. Was it out or farther in I wanted to be I couldn’t say, two books or the two Andoumboulou’s book. They sat on either side of me like bookends. Was I theirs or the not since book I couldn’t say. Can’t say tore a page from not so’s book, a book at all or not I couldn’t say... The car was caroling, not since’s prodigal, a book of blue, a book of white, a book of green, an aroused hymnal, the rim of the world chorusing it seemed. It upgraded to a Trans Am, rear spoiler, pure pony, a Firebird the stronger it sang.

Why the change I had no idea nor why a car to begin with. Snide epiphany I thought the more I thought, gasoline elysium, sweet dream’s antithetic wit. So it was I laughed it off, shrugged it off, enjoyed the ride, The Book of So back in good standing, The Book of Not So to the side... All the light, the white clouds, the clarity pounded my eyelids, eyes clamped shut so bright it was. Heaven’s haunt seen in a face I could feel them feeling, the two Andoumboulou I sat between. Knowing we were soon to return, I wanted to linger, look at all there was to see, eyes open, something seen in a face the earth and the sky grew linked and aglow with, abidance they were drawn to most
Everything grew precious, filled with portent, knowing we were soon to return. I had the scarecrow feeling I’d read about. My bones were sticks beneath my skin... I awoke not knowing who the two were, none the wiser what dress the world wore. I took Itamar aside and told him. He said beware of auto-elevation, no such easy out would be had. I told him I knew and he said maybe but not enough... I told him enough was only a word, next to nothing, he’d have to go more like how the green had gone, more the way blue went on, more the way the clouds bandied white about
Huff too I took aside and told. What was he doing there I asked. He laughed. Damn if he knew he said... Quag was in the backseat with him he said, Quag was the condition we set out from. Was he the wind we were lifted by I wondered, Quag an exigent clime he codedly alluded to, elegiac appeal we had no way not to hear... Nod would know he said, reading my mind it seemed, Nod would know. Requisite lift otherwise not to be known he surmised, he and I standing there, let loose
CLAYTON ESHLEMAN

THE LAVENDER FATHERS
PAREIDOLIA
FOR DON MEE CHOI
I am one of the lavender fathers.

We want to find that Stone of Division
set as a corner in the human wall.
Our shoulders placed against it would set in motion
the transformation of temporality into great time.

Who you may ask are the lavender fathers?

We are the why & pale of anti-know.
We move inside the word wards of an original wetness,
measure veils stretched over bones.

Each word, a riddle of corridors,
is a capstone capping sunyata.

We once lived in the glyph balloons inhabiting Maya imagination.
Now we play, as if it were a cello, the Grunewald Isenheim Altarpiece,
drawing out its mole tones, its Sadean larvae...

Alas, we fathers are a mess. We’ve lost, out of our penises,
so much blood. Our ladies, from doing the thorn-pull,
speak to us only in shred-tongue, & while we are under all that occurs
we are weakened by non-existence.
We have lost our cohesive zap as sidereal gremlins,
we now only act up in metaphor...

And what does it mean to be lavender and not,
to be something emanating from an ancient moose,
the tinework of a father, neck pouch as a bell,
an image of existence prior to being,
slicing lakes of light burgeoning into green hives, shadowed armatures,
ydromedusae sutra-stroking through world mind evolving.
Around 4 A.M. this winter I often get out of bed, pee, and then standing by our bathroom window look through the leafless branches of our front yard red maple which demethodize the two main door lights of The First United Methodist Church of Ypsilanti across the street, turning them into eyes watching me through the mass of twig-barbed spear-like branches pointing every which way...

The strangeness of this branch-constructed countenance evokes an *axis mundi* specter, or Yggdrasil after Odin hung from it for nine days...

As I continue to stare, Hart Crane’s suicide --suddenly now identified as a “sorghum suicide”--passes through... How close we are at all points to the sources that spellbind our psychic reality. Is this church-eyed branch mingle a face of night? Or night playing with my eyes as I filter God adoration through a maple tree’s pagan fate?

Each tree is a world tree whose roots engrail the barnacled scoria of the haul.

2015
FOR DON MEE CHEO

You belong to none except the gong.
On to on its copper undulations translate into meat—
the cheek of liberty, Ensoresque crowds.
Your self behind yourself concealed,
what Hadic invisibility is being revealed?
Is your forehead apotropaic from wandering in your face?
Or did you drop the felted soul hammer seconds before
the bong?

Cambodia with four million of our land mines.
Bankers glinting crystal angles.
You’re in Seattle. I’m outside Detroit.
We’re both facing the light show in Club Rapture.
The planet is an ongoing Rave. Afghan bands on LSD
while American drones chowder their family bunks

1962: I am bargaining with a Korean whore in discarded
GI fatigues by
the Seoul SAC Compound Gate.
The dispossessed & the poet
before the closed Western Gate:
we lack the power to realize what we see to be real.

It’s all absurd &
eerily mantic: the fabricator of our uterine
scaffolding keeps shadowing our present shade.

You belong to a longing to birth rapids & mares,
to a rampart on which a hagazussa is oiling her broom.
You look down a cerebral tunnel rotating with escapes:
all harrowing enough
to keep you focused on a phantomatic art.
Were you to insert a serpent, might “the lambent homage of his arrowy tongue” turn you into a pythoness capable of resetting a cosmogonic dial?

Ransacked by our finite infinity, we hover the anima gore stored in testicular vats.
ANTONIO GAMONEDA
LOSSES BURN
TRANSLATED BY DONALD WELLMAN
IN attics inhabited by pigeons whose wings 
tremble between darkness and glass

I see the purity of faces that form in the rain 
and

tears on yellow ulcers.

In the attics of childhood, I

traverse forgetfulness.
IN churches and clinics

I saw columns of light and fingernails of steel

and I fought, clutched by my mother's hands.

Now

I push aside black gauze and hypodermic cannulas:

I look for my mother's hands in wardrobes full of shadow.
I SAW my face in the depths of copper
burnished with vinegar and cold.

It was a childhood in front of blood-soaked
holes,

childhood burnt in its blossoming, lost

in the black sweetness of distant songs
I HEAR the rain of another time, it soaks
immobilized linens.

Far from my thought, widespread
in the past, torment
still grows.

So

I go mad with truth.
I SAW TREES clamoring, wounded animals
and quaking of silica.

I saw the maternal vagina that weeps and
grief in a gilded basin

and the suicides in the globe of light.

Now I see only

terrifying perspectives.
MEMORY is mortal. Some afternoons, Billy Holiday places her sick rose in my ears.

Some afternoons I am surprised

far away from myself, crying.
A COLD passion hardens my tears.

The stones press my eyes: someone

destroys me or loves me.
OVER my flesh, bruised with love, passes
the same tongue that whistles in my old age
and I awaken

wrapped in clumps of shadow

and a black flower moist with weeping

is detached from the night.
GARRETT CAPLES

THE ANTIQUITIES

MY OLD CAR
THE ANTIQUITIES

DEAR GEOFF

I’m not 100% sure I have an interpretation of the poem, but I can report what caused me to write it.

The poet André Breton was the leader of the Paris Surrealist Group from its inception in the early '20s until his death in 1966. He’d lived in the same apartment in Paris, 42 Rue Fontaine, since 1922. There are many photographs of this apartment over the years. It looks like a truly magical place, every inch of the walls covered in art by the likes of his friends Picabia, de Chirico, and Tanguy; ethnographic objects like African masks, Hopi Kachina dolls, and Oceanic sculptures; found objects that had a special significance for him; and glass cases filled with butterflies and other flora and fauna. The apartment had remained intact in the almost 40 years since his death, but in April 2003, the collection was split up and auctioned off, yielding some $40 million. This is especially ironic in that Breton died relatively poor. He’d acquired his collection through shrewdness as a collector and advocacy as a critic. He’d made painters famous through his writings, and works that had little monetary value when he acquired them were in some cases worth hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars. In a very real sense, Breton himself made these objects valuable.

I was angry the apartment had managed to survive so long, only to be sold off piecemeal in the end. The French government should have purchased it and turned it into a museum. One wall has indeed survived and relocated to the Pompidou, but this is a poor substitute for the apartment itself. I couldn’t see how France, indeed the world, could let this happen. It was an act of cultural destruction, equivalent to taking a hammer to Michelangelo’s David or slicing up the Mona Lisa into little squares of canvas.
In terms of specifics, I have little insight, insofar as the words of my poems suggest themselves and I often don’t know their significance. Some might have come from things I’ve since forgotten. The one line I have a suggestive memory of is “so long to the fingerbone that lingers on.” I was in Beijing, China in 2001 and went to a temple said to house the fingerbone of the Buddha. Clearly it was nothing of the sort, but rather some animal bone. But the little pavilion these monks had built for this bone struck me as a genuinely holy place nonetheless. You could feel it in the air, even if the holiness derived from the devotion of the monks rather than the dubious bone. I remember a monk standing there holding a mallet next to a small gong. I remember thinking, “I’d like to hear that gong,” but had no sense of when the monk was supposed to hit it. As I was about to leave, however, I slipped some coins into the offertory box by the fingerbone’s casket, then, splash, the monk hit the gong. The gong was a reward for an offering and it felt like a real reward, for approaching things in their proper spirit. This experience of the sacred felt related to André Breton’s apartment.

Much love,

g!
approaching tollbooth ready to crack door when it dawns on me: i can lower the window automatically. change lanes on highway, head over shoulder, neglecting my ability to act confident in reflection. turn the engine on before turning it over, groping a kill switch that doesn’t exist. my old car’s infirmities imprinted on me. my bumper attached by string. my driver’s side window leaked. i peed on the tires with laurie weeks after a party at dodie’s. i remember i stuffed an upright bass in there, for steve neil of the pharaoh sanders quartet. my old car carried shock-g, lamantia, even barbara guest, and i once lent it to brian lucas to ferry ferlinghetti over the river styx. meltzer and mcclure were among its later victims. it’s been towed and impounded at 500 a shot, but even when i got caught it would hold on one more day. i remember j.stalin telling me, get in the 21st century, g, because i didn’t have gps. it was antique, and except for the radio, analog. my dad bought it for me for graduation, because it met california emissions. i drove it across country packed with my possessions. i was 22. it was 22 when it finally failed to smog. it makes me think of sun ra: the tables are turning—saturn. saturn, the crazy taskmaster. i was never a car guy but it became second skin. i knew what it could and couldn’t. my whiskers told me what clearance i had, spidey sense a-tingling. i put it through the ringer. dui. lsd. rotfl. you name it. its official colors were plum w/ grey interior. it broke down maybe six times. i’m sure i broke down more.
ANDRÉ BRETON, RENÉ CHAR, PAUL ÉLUARD

RALENTIR TRAVAUX (SLOW UNDER CONSTRUCTION)

TRANSLATED BY KEITH WALDROP
In March, 1930, André Breton, René Char, and Paul Éluard--together in Avignon--wrote these poems in collaboration, attempting to merge their individual personalities into a poetry-in-common. The result is one of the most distinctive books of the surrealist years, not quite like those of any one of its authors working separately. The poems were written rapidly--the whole book in five days--each made of lines by at least two, often all three, of the poets.

Driving through the nearby countryside, the three friends saw the road repair sign that provided the title.
for Benjamin Péret
Everybody has seen a table but when we say table the *trouble* is that right now this table is for M. Breton a café table (because he drinks), for M. Char a gambling table (because he does not gamble), for M. Éluard an operating table (because this morning he passed by the Place de l’Opéra). If any one of these gentlemen says table, you see what comes of it. Having once made tabula rasa of whoever listens to them saying the word table, one after the other, poetry goes its own way, like the Tarn as it delightfully floods the Southwest.

--André Breton
If, rather than turn pages always towards the reader's eye, we cast our gaze behind and precisely in somebody's wake, we should be systematically engendering the bad impression: point of arrival, not point of departure. At that moment poetry, at a standstill, tired of playing dead, begins to put on disguises. But skill catches fire like straw. All around, little bundles of firewood, hastily bound together but trusty and pliable, watch for smoke to appear in the open sky, signal that they're doing all right. Collective utility silences reproach and dissolves hesitations. In the head, narrow as space, elbows have no place, hands leveled, the horizon vertical and underneath everything. That's when we hear words at liberty but under the lash.

It's all free.

--René Char
Our covert idea of poetry does not necessarily hold poetry to it. But like dreams we can't admit to, it can trouble the memory and hinder orderly formation of a world superior to the one in which forgetting helps discreetly to conserve the individual.

Reflection of the personality must be effaced for inspiration to spring unendingly from the mirror. Let influences play at will, invent what has already been invented, what is beyond doubt, what is unbelievable, give spontaneity its sheer value. Be the one who is spoken to and who is heard. A single vision, raised to infinity.

The poet is rather one who inspires than one inspired.

--Paul Éluard
BRANDING IRON

The glance that will cast about my shoulders
Night’s undecipherable net
Will be like a rain in eclipse
Will fall slowly from its solar rim
My arms about its neck
THE USE OF FORCE

Don’t shake your hair like that we can’t see ourselves anymore
It’s all of a sudden full of workmen

Don’t shake your hair like that or else the traveler north
Disappointed may turn up in the south again

But do learn to curl your hair
For the benefit of stones
The marble of palaces today is harder than the sun
First proposition

The second is a little less stupid
The fast of vampires will result in blood thirsty to be drunk
Blood thirsty to wed the form of brooks
Blood thirsty to gush from desert places
Blood thirsty for the knife's cool water

Body and soul are re-united by an accolade
Third proposition this one of dubious character
Because body and soul are compromised together
Because they serve as excuse each for the other
ETCETERA

They are madmen
They are dead men
They have their head at the base of the trunk

We do not recognize them

They are madwomen
They are dead women
Their head is no longer inside us

Obsession empty bottle
A checkered handkerchief is hoisted over the house of the Gauls
Chance capitulates
Heads for the phosphorescent door
Thus taking rendezvous
Tomorrow at a certain hour that skips to a shifting site
I will come more alone than I am when not with you
With my unrecognizable face
In my borrowed clothes
I am hidden already in the woods in the ditches
I have already provoked your fear your spite
This time I will be the one you have not known
Whose only care is to astonish you
I will appear to you your hands over my eyes
And you will take hold of nothing
Love will spread as I love
Fog to cut with a knife
IN RETURN

Cynicism does not suffice nor the two hands
Circling the body which draws
Back from clouds pretending frost
The evening’s a show-off we admit that dreamers
Are elegant all trumps in your game
The dumb-bells will grow heavier and heavier
But wrestlers improve with coaching
Today the flat hand tomorrow the hand cupped
The reason we come up in the world is the wild man at the party
The sky is all set

In the day of weeping give indifference its fling
One of three unspecified days in a week with four Thursdays
The other two being Fears-day and Refuse-day
Covered by nights come no morning

We overtake time hugger-mugger in its wheelbarrow
Then a foreigner gets the notion that there’s no more need for couples
That they sing off key
A gang of bandits
Heads off their shoulders
A SCOURDREL

The school for the feeble-minded is decked with flags
And provokes to admiration the coffins piling up in the street
With the good will that always distinguishes love of advertising
I will make sure you catch my name
What virtues I possess and how many years now I have refrained from stealing

The udders of the shadow cow
Give out incendiary milk
That snakes treasure four steps at a time like a staircase of terror

I'll show you what ideas I can pull out of my hand
I no longer scratch my scalp with my nails
But with the lifelong foetus
Packed into the jar with my ancestors
Now in my family
I am the hot shit of the twentieth century
HOOKY

You went in by a secret door
There was a heart on the blackboard
And a dowser’s wand on the desk
You could hear a pin drop

It was love first taught
Lovers good behavior
Stones followed their bittersweet shadow
The eye never relaxing its hold

And if she ask of me my life
He wondered
And the light made its only leap like roots
And set traps of dew

Your hair he wondered
And the silence was enthralled
People are too brave
Some are under the bed the rest in the wardrobe
And those who have a candle instead of a brain
Do not offend these with frilly hearts
When they say we must make an end
You must realize they mean of fear
All sweetness bravery then blames the other virtues
Calmly ill-temper favors risk corrupts distrust

Society activities
FAÇADE

I give onto the heart
Wherever your shadow has overshadowed mine
Blood is vision’s thrust like a rapier’s
And the dew comes to wake you with unique dreams
Which challenge love’s right to be love
As nightshade’s to be deadly
If I’ve trouble following you
I kindle the lips
I enflame the silence
BEGINNING AND END

Merely the shadow of a tear on a lost face
The hands of the clock rusted
And footsteps retire turned on their heel a bit it's awful
Eyes the color of air of the abyss
Two lion-headed fire-dogs gleam in the almost extinct sun
Merely the shadow of a tear memory's stake
Ignorance the head abandons hands and eyes
Laughs at warnings of a death-trap ahead
The rags of childhood no longer curtain any landscapes
Any temptation
Stubborn ruins
A windfall horizon rising like a scorchmark
The toppled head gives in completely to the first sea passing
Is named without being recognized
LOVE’S ENVIRONS

I will bury you in the sand
For the tide to dig you out

Freedom for the dark

I will dry you in the sun
Of your hair where the phoenix is entrapped

Freedom for prey
She heaved a bridge of sighs
Across the uninhabitable sea
She took off her dress of earth
Put on a dress of sand
She speaks a cork tongue
Wears out time in a single season
She dances to packed houses of pebbles
Under tear-drop chandeliers

One day she came back from a foreign trip
Her suitcases covered with orange-colored stickers
One after another her luggage-bearers fainted
Overcome by the dawn she had caught in her swirling underthings
She has come back to filter out the cool from her hot-and-bother
No longer the only one to curse fire

Original
JACK-IN-THE-BOX

Fire reduced to desert winds
My eyes before no matter whom
Rather than believe my own eyes
Laughter like a snail Like a stone underneath the water

Rather than believe my own eyes
I prefer to lose your image
Under my trove of faces

On what horizon would you like it to appear
OTHER POEM

I will remove my shoulders
Each step provokes a misfortune

To be lost in the vast of my temples
A DESTINY SPURNED

This great storm cranky with lightning
The hand reduced to its fate
And its fingers to trunks of highway
You rule over this broken mirror
Over those birds that you slaughter
You stow the last cartridge
In a cellar of nitrate
With the ear of love
Your echo in the heart

The habit of showing one's teeth
ON A FALSE SCENT

The weeds have reached the highway-hair
Speech has switched mouths
Shadow has snuffed one by one the candles
That celebrated fatal accidents
At dangerous curves
So many birds dead for having wings
In the cages of the landscape
Who speaks it’s no longer likeness or knowledge
But the ignorant caress parasite of pleasure
Caress with a mouth of scarlet pimpernel
My my it’s snowing
But no it’s a sunbeam a little paler than the rest
Another one to get the third degree
SUCCESS

My harshest words
Insolence
Calling the beasts to witness

What follows resembles one who splits
Valid reasoning
ORDER OF THE DAY

If we ever shake hands again
More will lack arms than eyes
I say nothing of our mothers’ good sense
Pulling gee and haw the threads of conversation
With not an inkling they’ve brooded a whole arsenal

Whenever we pass by someone
His face is replaced by a sign Aid For The Drowned
But as for artificial respiration and rhythmical traction
As we understand them the rope and a branch
Suffice
We accept gladly sincerelys and yours trulys
DISCOVERY OF THE EARTH

The statue of Echo cries for help
We enter the fire by a raging fountain
Exposing its face free of the slightest splash

The human dust feels its way along
A rocket at finger-tips
It regains the furrow as night falls
Moles are hitched to the invisible sledge
Driving underground treasure to treasure
Beauty of the borderline-unknown
A WALK

We passed by the pharmacy
Its flasks were day and night
Someone was brought in wounded
And in the crowd there was a woman singing
A wilted bouquet over her ear
Her face was a great deserted square
That drink ripened
And bohemians tracked down
Her song conjured up oddments of our life
To come
A terrible odor of cut hay hung about
But the others heard nothing felt nothing
Their mob was a train blocked by a thousand blasts of the whistle
Train blocked by bodiless madness
A great mystery like a lost child
With those dirty tears that would prefer to be blood
And which are nothing but oats
Close all the doors all the windows
Nobody leave
Are the signals functioning
Where is this woman taking us
The coral pharmacy crumbles
The woman spits on the wounded
Amorous bushes cast their love-blossoms into the blaze

Déjà-vu out of control
Sea-horses are the animal most to be pitied
And ferns gave rise to anthropometries
As for the eye-agate mere accident places it in the mineral kingdom
Whose entry lurks behind a pin-cushion
In groan-shops

Royal diadems are no longer bumpers
The heart-rending spectacle of the dog lifting his hind leg in the caserne parade-ground
Brings to mind old men kept on a leash by uniforms

Good soup for beautiful people in the slaughterhouse
CLOSING TIME

We have retained nothing
Of our lessons on the rut and on splotches
On rhythm and on arithmetic
The resembling pillow
Will play hell of hollowing under our head

We have lost nothing
There’s nothing for us to get out of
We let our bangs grow on purpose

We have been nothing
We toted misery’s sack of coal
Before the magic lantern

We never woke up
SCENERY

The great painters of letters love
The word painting
On the wall opposite
They have written that we are at home for no one
Elsewhere from window to window
Hands clasp
We’ve lobbed the house out the window
An interior garden
Here roses are traced with a knife on the bodies of women
It’s more certain
And then it’s one’s own place
The latest fanatics are brought in
With their catapults they launch the latest ball of images
Still on the roll

At last report the earth would just have been laid
There are flames
More clairvoyant than the hands that roll nightmares
Across memory

We gain the sun by enchantment
Love has quite a pronounced taste of glass
Coral that comes from the sea
Lost perfume gone back to the forest
Transparency paying the uttermost farthing
Always this head
The lips deliciously parted
This side of the wall
And on the other side perhaps stuck on a pike
The eternal woman on a park bench
Nameless woman her arms in a clock
As in a muff
The woman who murders work
The woman-lightning-bolt and you go by you are the sound of her thunder
On earth no longer inhabited the earth of rootlessness
Of deforestation of nest-wrecking at the foundations
At the precise point in time marked by the fingers of the destitute woman
You pass through condemned doors
Without protection against shocks of encounter
You visit apartments where people have played
Where they have fought where sometimes they've killed
You prefer flowered wallpaper way down in wells
You always want the view you can't get
From the windows the view of all four sides of the sinister bystander
Whom you love even to the sword's edge
Your wrist fires a stray shot
Beauty whose history draws a blank
SHARES

The pretty white beasts that eat your cheeks
Impatient stones that hollow out your eyes
This sky in ruins that you point out you the mute woman
To the characters on the ceiling trembling with night’s street noises
This wall that every night sheds your portrait
Crumbles into the sea that you loved
The veins in your neck fade out
Subjected to my gaze

The glass punchinello called air
Dances lightly on your somber breast
USELESS STAKE

The world overturned would be charming
In the anti-man's eyes
What an hourglass the earth
What communicating vessels birth and death
Appearance of metal in the mists of agony
Murderous outbursts in a forgotten man
The whole world falls into ruin the elements cannot prevent it
Falls into ruin from constancy and order the idea of man
Is worthless his enemies have bested that phantom
Nourished in espresso-bars a bit after closing-time
The bridge over everyone is a cry you will hear
Without taking life's word for it and passing through the closed eyelid
Of earth a cry forever deafening death and its doings
LISTEN TO MYSELF STILL TALKING

Mad as I am
I am not at death’s door
I tear out the shrubs arresting the suicide at cliff’s edge
Animals in my traps decay where they’re caught
It's practically only dusk that gets their scent
Dusk riddled with shot that my exhausted hounds can’t catch

I hold in my arms women who want only to be with another
Women who in love hear wind crossing the poplars
Women who in hate are taller and slimmer than praying mantises
It's for me they invented unbuilding blocks
A thousand times more beautiful than card games

And I laid the blame on absence
In all its shapes
And I held in my arms apparitions under the mark
Of ashes and loves newer than the first
That ever closed my eyes my hope my jealousy

Avignon, 25-30 March 1930

This translation was originally published by Exact Change, 1990.
RITO RAMÓN AROCHE

“STILL IN GRAZ?”
SANATARIUM

TRANSLATED BY KRISTIN DYKSTRA
“STILL IN GRAZ?”

World moving backwards ways to collide.

It’s my friend, he writes, “And I . . .”

After centuries or however long.

“Everywhere there’s dust I see a name.”

He’ll say: “A crack in the bottom.” Tells me about names already distant. The gestures under the dust. My friend – “Still in Graz?”
SANATARIUM

Talked about a sudden aggravation of the lungs.

For a while longer: “The sun is still shining.”

“If you don’t take in more nourishment you’ll just be a line on a gravestone.”

“Here’s what I’ve learned: not to change.”

Things that no one had thought about accepting, laid out at the wrong time.
MATT TURNER

LATE STYLE IN AMERICAN POETRY
The Pritzker Prize-winner Wang Shu has described his practice as “amateur,” has named his firm Amateur, and has said of his contemporaries, “they have forgotten history, common peoples’ feeling about lives.” Like an amateur, he is willing to work with most anyone, but ready to pack up and go home if necessary.

In an interview, Aaron Kunin was asked about the role of the poet, and replied that there were two paths available: the prolific, process-oriented approach, not too concerned with overall quality, and the radical approach, in which sometimes impossible problems are solved. His exemplars were Raúl Ruiz, the sometimes-bad filmmaker, and Gins-Arakawa, the poet-architects.

Generalizations about American poetry: considering that my generalizations would be based primarily on my sense of things, and not necessarily those of those who don’t read poetry, it seems best to use empirical evidence or data, aspiring to an *Atlas and/or Grammar of American Poetry*.

*n+1* published an article, “MFA vs NYC,” which generated a number of repasts. The author, Chad Harbach, claimed that not only two distinct sensibilities were at work, but two distinct markets existed, in which urbane, non-academic, authors and audience were pitted against prissier, coddled, authors and audience. One audience was larger than the other, if at times lamentably more commercial.

Safe haven economics: “No one with ‘literary’ aspirations will expect to earn a living by publishing books; the glory days when publishers still waffled between patronage and commerce will be much lamented. The lit-lovers who used to become editors and agents will direct MFA programs instead; the book industry will become as rational—that is, as single-mindedly devoted to profit—as every other capitalist industry.”

Unexpectedly, a number of replies were written, most memorably Joyelle McSweeney’s “Lay off the Motherf$%ing MFA Students,” which defends the MFA track for giving (“coddled”) students time to write, and for what she sees as actively resisting the kind of market efficiency implicitly championed in Harbach’s defense of non-academic writers.
She also defends the “Artist” over and above these distinctions. She also ignores the economics of the original article.

The original article, McSweeney’s reply, and a number of other replies all have New York and the MFA system in common. None engage with international practices, in excess of their (NYC’s, or MFA’s) professionalism or Artistry. All assume to understand what American literature is in the broad sense of the term (one city versus a gazillion MFA programs), and so understand the logic behind the scenes (i.e.: biz and entertainment). Furthermore, there is a sense of myopia regarding the literary function: writing for the masses, the high-rent payers, or the Artists.

More recently, there was an opinion piece in the Washington Post, “Is Poetry Dead?” The article was predictable in its complaints about a specifically un-international poetry (crowds too small, writers too many, etc.), but ended lamenting, curiously, that the revolutionary impulse in (American) poetry had disappeared. A revolution, overthrowing the existing order to reinstate the old.

In Ang Li’s movie Lust, Caution, a group of radical students, displaced to Hong Kong from the Mainland by the Japanese invasion, extend their political literary ambitions to assassinating a Chinese “traitor.”

Equally predictable, there were plenty of online replies. The one that stood out to me most was Emily Temple’s “10 Reasons Poetry’s Not Dead,” which gave capsule reviews to ten recently published poetry books. The reviews tended to focus on theme, and the (authorial) individual as one who feels his or her way through basic problems of their identity. Each book is a reason (there are presumably thousands more such reasons). So much for revolution; it’s unnecessary.

(Other reviews did tend to give more attention to form in poetry, if almost always insipidly adjectively described - nothing new there, except that the formal features, i.e.: “humanly linked” line breaks, were thought to inspire better psychological states in the readers).
“...has a mission to redefine the terms of accessibility by publishing challenging writing distinguished by idiosyncrasy and intelligence rather than by allegiance with camps, schools, or cliques.”

“...seeks to publish the best in traditional and nontraditional genres... Both distinguished and emerging artists are encouraged to submit.”

Xi Chuan: “‘Late style’ literature is itself unassailable, containing an irreplaceable beauty, sensuousness, mournfulness, decadence, even incisiveness, and in some cases added learnedness... [not] only sentimental, it’s also proud and self-satisfied.” The absentee landlord also moves to the city, and can have his country connections and remote income while enjoying the urban shopping and stimuli.

Xi Chuan: “Literature is not only a matter of style, it is also a matter of nuanced thought, profound existence, and layered history...” Describing Eileen Chang’s readership: “Many people fuse her ‘late sensibility’ and her ‘petit bourgeois’ or ‘yuppie sensibility’,” which are signs of absentee or, at best, managerial landlord culture.

For the mode of address// equal to the war// was silence, but we went on// celebrating doubleness.// For the city was polluted// with light, and the world,// warming.// For I was a fraud// in a field of poppies.

   - Ben Lerner, from “Dedication”

For years I have been here without a clear map./ That hopes should dim as days go on above is/ natural I suppose, what do I know?/// I am dressed like one of them./ The thick walls quake but stay soundproof./ I fear my fists vestigial.

   - Ish Klein, from “No Soldier Story”

The irony in Creeley’s work, especially his earlier work, is that for all its “apolitical-ness,” its form rests on its syllables. His form, his syllables, are utterances on the page. That is, utterances made by an individual, an individuating subject using form over and above the form itself: thought, existence, and history.
“Dedication” is faux-philosophical confession where the author uses form as an extension of that process (coming across as tongue-in-cheek, reinforced by using double-spaced verses and enjambment for “seriousness”). “No Soldier Story” fuses dreamy sentimentality with extraneous vocabulary to evocative effect (explicitly, “soldiers” or absence thereof as the broad topic, using lines sometimes enjambed, sometimes end-stopped), a poem resting on its idiosyncratic perception. Both examples are “beyond allegiances” and take from, or consolidate, “the best in traditional or nontraditional genres.”

Creeley, from The Island: “He was hungry for pleasure of an uninvolved intimacy, but could any be that. And what was another man to him, at last. A fear he carried, a threat, a judgement, a confusion, feeling too often he could not himself make the measure implied, lacked the vocabulary even, had no words with which to make evident his own manhood, if words might accomplish that. He wanted a friend, of all things, another person simply to listen, to talk to, such a small fact.”

The grid system in Manhattan is a mundane city plan, yet it is both efficient and exciting. The plan of Beijing, at least in its pre-modern versions, is extremely interesting (built to correspond to cosmic orders) but designed to oppress (neighborhoods according to ethnic allegiances, or occupations) - despite its low-rises and high density. Both are expensive cities, driven by speculation.

The subject as iteration of form: it always seems to cost, if not money then time, and, as we all know, time is money. Hold poets to their occupations and income: let there be more than a poor people’s rhetoric: there are thousands of tax returns, the data, to read: the individual sense and history, the individual’s time.

None engage with international practices: all assume to understand what American poetry is in the broad sense of the term: there’s a sense of myopia regarding the function of whatever it is they are talking about: writing for the masses, the high-rent payers, or the Artists.

Late to whom? A: The form belated by the individual.
The sometimes-sentimental poet Lin Huiyin, aunt of Maya Lin, married Liang Sicheng, Chinese representative on the design and construction of the UN headquarters in New York City, architect of the Monument to the People’s Heroes, Communist Party member and urban theorist of the “new,” post-Liberation, Beijing (unrealized) where a new administrative zone would be built west of the city, where the Japanese had previously worked, and the rest of the city would remain a political and cultural center. Lin Huiyin would assist Liang Sicheng in his efforts to preserve the old city, and document fading evidence of uniquely “Chinese” architectural grammar. Often they worked together in the provinces, documenting and/or preserving Buddhist temples.

Generalizations about American poetry: these guys really need to travel more! There are so many audiences and potential audiences (most of them broke) that “they have forgotten history, common peoples’ feeling about lives.”

A: The amateur.
ANDREI MOLOTIU

13 DRAWINGS
These drawings were drawn with a Noodler's Ink brush pen in a 16.5" x 11.5" Moleskine sketchbook between June 11 and July 2, 2016.
GREEN AND BLUE

Classifying these greens again
(those blues and greens from Virginia)
--carousels that restart with the memory.
Another motorboat, its wake uneven.
“The ported fingers of glass hang downwards,”
toward stupidity
toward exposure.
Licentiousness of wanting to cut a boundary
(an appearance)
through which we all pass in the end:
a horizon as obedience,
not as destiny.
This false proof of dying one way or another,
without a course,
monotonously!
Giving the name of “experience”
to the desperation
whose green has been swept completely
out.

Note: The quotation embedded here is from Virginia Woolf’s “Blue and Green.” The poem dialogues with Woolf’s vocabulary, particularly in the closing lines.
OBSERVING PELICANS

I try to capture their dive behind the wall
when the breeze moves the sea toward the pocket
where the bay expires, gapes
and sinks.
The man with a camera loses the current,
the possibility for enjoying the momentum
of sound that wind and wave make
at the water’s feet:
water broken, virtue fallen
--without virtue the fish “that dies via its mouth”
is devoured and half resuscitates –
intervals of salt water
in the mouth of the immense gannet
who like me
is facedown
on this corner
blue and alone
resisting capture.
MICHELLE GIL-MONTERO

LIGHT SCATTER
APOLOGY
NIMBUS
STAGED HOUSE
PARK
Where air
digresses into moss
groveling
along a wire.

What we see,
farther, bluer
with futurity,

fogs into pure
proximity,

blue hills
filtered through a
closeness

they can't stand,
can't meet:

what we see
in what we think to see.
Nothing is a gesture.
Lush, half-lit window linted with
what I thought I read, what I said I thought.

Writing just to listen,
even if quiet affirms the insufficiencies of words.

Not asking: What is it?
As summer Accosts us with direct address.
June, now
July:
sun

weighs plainly
on a metal
sheet, while gnats

riddle this
side of the glass.
Visibility: letting it
sink in
peace.

Hills fade blue
and false—what I call
hills
to mean a feeling-
followed, flowing
into roads.

Clouds
have voluptuous
names, nudge
nothing.
STAGED HOUSE

Whitewash, the flash stays.
You ask the shape, and I say
opaque, latent, the
weight of snow.

Null bulk
buckling—we talk

as a dream
confesses itself, all at once
then slowly

into the ether
of the other and out the
mouth, proud of its
speech.

2
A thing
afraid to touch

a thing, caress
the head of heather
hair, glittering and ready
to collapse as
ash.

3
Every wall is
a mirror, more

a nickel-scratched ticket
than faceted
portrait —

Little piles, grit silver
wherever

the geometry
shifts, settling
into the real.
At the revetment wall,
the river gravels,
gesture sediments,
unmeant.

A mock scrape
of knock-down
stones, browsed
by crows

fitful with withheld flight.

None of the rise
or fall, only thrill
in controlled
unknowing:

the toppling top
of rollercoaster tracks
through trees.
GOZO YOSHIMASU
BORROWING A MELODY* FROM THE HEARTS OF THE THREE GRACES**

TRANSLATED BY SAWAKO NAKAYASU
<<When a dog passes under a frame of paper. I SAW the Three Graces of Film, smiling>>

“The eternity of waiting for the arrival” of a train is connected like a band to “The eternity of watching the departure” of a train, the knot on a band of beautiful lacquer,......

that which passes under the obi, “the shadow of a small, white, happiness,”......

“Style”----- perhaps we are circling quietly around a “flower.”

I moved closer to certainty, with a premonition that I would one day understand.

Three-thirty, it appears that the eye of the typhoon is passing nearby

The quietude of “Lullaby for Birds, Insects, Fish”--- by Fumio Kamei

It was a quiet that layered the blindness of the typhoon and the blindness of my heart.

The young portrait of Christ had also been put away, and I was listening to the voice of a distant, crackly mic check, “one, two, three,......” and why, why do the little birds know the beginning, the beginning of quietness. Is it not the case that “the hearts of birds” also begin with “no” or “no not even once.”

A voice letter from Alicia Vega arrived and I went to the Hachioji post office to retrieve it.

The small package of the frames of film is pretty

I learned, to tilt slightly, I had begun to take photos, peering in)

(From Nobuyoshi Araki)

Comes through, still. When you tilt the frame, the neck the nude self grows pathetic

Horses are nude (THE RUBIES, ARE VERY, BEAUTIFUL......)

Comes through, still. I wonder what kind of small roads under the shadow of white happiness “The Spanish language dog” walks
Gabriela Mistral

“For the amber people”
What can I say, and how

Dylan Thomas, poet from Wales

“For some reason I have been transformed into a bird”—famous words from the later years of Fumio Kamei

“The chirping of small birds” = “the green blood vessel of my heart” = the clickety sound of “old films,”

(According to the musical notes, “kew” is the song of the owl)

I hope to write brilliant words like Yukio Mishima, in old, dream-like characters

HOU-OU (Imaginary bird considered as an auspicious bird in ancient China)

鳳凰台

凤凰网 (plays)

凤凰台

(Referring to plants. Thus called because they grow upside down with their necks to the ground) ("Marquis de Sade") ("Confessions of a Mask")

Tilt/ anatropous/ a light that shines from a different direction/ devoted to this (“peephole”......) “the key to the space between the internal and external” and its “sound/ creaking,” your innocent eyes, that departed from it,....../ were those of a great painter

“For the amber people”

What can I say, I had the slightest feeling that I was one of the “amber people,” as I cut a stencil, smelling the pencils of slate and metal,......

I spread out the Vision of a thin film like a screen, and with long eyes, ------the secret to breathing, I am certain, is in the phonetic soundings

TAKO

An empty kite, ------

“To the amber people”

Comes through, still and even more. When tilting the frame, the neck my naked self grows pathetic.
Horses are naked (THE RUBIES, ARE VERY, BEAUTIFUL……)

If I had grown up listening deeply to a mi Niño or de Niño,
“Becoming a body that finds difficulty in dwelling upon the same branch for all eternity–leaves and wet leaves”

has been something that is no longer to be spoken of

But, you see today I pick up one single fallen leaf. It’s like a frame of paper from a film,……
Again, seated, the faint human shadow, that is “myself”

Alicia, I’m envious of such a beautiful sweater, and the underlay (for shoe polish), I mumbled

“Ghosts are so, passé,……”

Did I hear the chicken crying?!
From smile to smile, the Coca-Cola bottle feels ashamed,……
You were looking straight at it, “the beginning of the ‘film,’” the beginnings for each of the “small gatherings”

I just learned that for Mr. Mekas to film as if he were dancing meant that film is a band of eternity
And then, again, one sheet, again, one sheet, ......

Long, gray, ...... “I stood still for another line,” saying “I am a line of deception!”

Having feared “Small beginnings,” ------ I felt like I was beginning to understand the thinking of the Council of Chilean Film, who deemed it appropriate only for those above the age of twenty-one

Dear Alicia, ------

The way the wooden classrooms of the poblacion are bathed in the extreme radiance (of lightning, and
the Andes, a little damp, again, dries, the light repeats) is, very.

*Very* is *muy bien?*

The old violin, too, reminisced about its homeland, sang of it, ......

And then

That

That Kite, ------

Dear Alicia, -------

Thank you.

In thanks, I would like to fill a large bus, to the brim, with peaches, and send it to you. Filling the spaces with our impoverished hearts.

** “The Three Graces” – from “The Dead” in James Joyce's *The Dubliners*. In a speech given during a Christmas Eve party, Gabriel refers to “the Three Graces of the Dublin musical world.” Also with John Huston’s great work, one day, “in this Athenian film house”...... Our “Three Graces,” here, are Alicia Vega, who sent along a message all the way from Santiago; Gabriela Mistral, likewise a very dear and important poet also from Chile; and Akiko Yosano, from whom this writer was inspired to attempt to write in this form. * Add to that a “Melody” according to the composer Toru Takemitsu.

*** The day after the first “Film poem” event, I was doing a talk for the first time with Masaki Tamura, famous as the cameraman for the “Sanrizuka” series, “Nipponkoku Furuyashikimura (Country of Japan – Village of old houses),” and “2/Duo,” that was to be in the republication of *Eiga Geijutsu* magazine. I was mumbling to Takeshi Shono, the moderator, that he should read the Celan translations by his father, Kokichi Shono. And so then it was that I was re-reading Kokichi Shono’s translation of Rilke and Paul Celan. “That single word, *stylus* (Griffel) in the final section strikes a bolt of some strange, cruel feeling
in me. Sharing the same Latin roots as *graphic*, the word *Griffel* also carries the meanings of slate pencil or carving knife, but in form it seems to be somewhat similar to the Old High German word *Graf* (to grasp). And yet the thing that deeply impressed me was the strangeness of the sound of this word…” ...I was re-reading this, and quoting it. Stylus, slate pencil, metal pencil – writing implements not dependent on sumi or ink. The fact that we attempted to gather and make in a single night this mimeographed copy that you hold in your hands today is perhaps connected to this idea of a “pen that does not come through” or “the strange creakings of the pen that does not come through.” **** A “posthumous” work, created after a silence of twenty years, in his later years (He died in 1987 at the age of 79). “For some reason, I was recently transformed into a bird” (Fumio Kamei). ***** Gabriela Mistral “Lonely lips  sunken voice/ my knobby knees embarrass me/ You are here right now/ I feel sorry for my naked self (Translated into the Japanese by Masamichi Arai). ***** Anthology of Golden Age Poetry (first published in Bungei – May, 1969) Around dusk last night as I was writing this text, the fax started up, informing me of the wake and funeral of Taro Kaneda. For a while I was just stunned, recalling the memory of this excellent editor, this dignified, high-spirited person who I owed so much to. The final two lines of *Anthology of Golden Age Poetry*. I wrote them standing on the train to Ochanomizu, and hurried so that I could hand it over to Mr. Taro Kaneda at Kawade Shobo, which was then located in Surugadai. Yes, Taro Kaneda was also the editor for Toshio Shimao as well as Yukio Mishima (the following day at the wake, I confirmed this with Hiroshi Terada. I had made up the part about him being Mishima’s editor. However, …..postscript.) I hadn’t seen him these last two or three years. By writing this, while praying that he rest in peace, I hope that I might possibly be repaying him just a little bit in this poem – is the small thought that came upon me (6.21. ’97, 10:00 A.M.)
NOTES

This text is a poem, a performance script, comments on film, rememberings, quotes, and responses to the film “100 children waiting for the train,” a film by Ignacio Aguero portraying the filmmaker Alica Vega as she engages impoverished Chilean children in the art of filmmaking. The talk followed the screening of the film, as part of an ongoing series of discussions on film and poetry held at the Athénée Français in Tokyo, Japan. Texts and transcripts from Yoshimasu’s talks were collected in a book『燃えあがる映画小屋』(Film house in flames) (Seidosha, 2001), from which this piece is taken.

2013/12/26

This excerpt is from the forthcoming Alice Iris Red Horse, published by New Directions.
SESSHU FOSTER

THE FAMOUS TV SHOW (THE STUNTMAN’S TALE)
He wasn't killed today so he had a free day, in theory, to take his son to school and pick him up afterwards, perhaps take the kids to the park, meanwhile replumb the sink which was leaking inside the cabinet underneath, peel off old roofing from the garage and take it to the dump in his pickup, perhaps purchase new clothes to make it easier for him to show up for work and to look for work and not have people looking at him the way they recently had been looking at him (so it seemed to him, with peremptory derision indicated by immediate insolent dismissal and pointed disregard---he was thinking if he could just get some partial acknowledgement out of the receptionist's eyes...) because there didn't seem to be much demand recently for our unnamed unaccredited ‘man’ dying, being killed a dozen ways including thrown from a horse (which itself was tripped on a wire, tossing him as dehorsed rider face-forward into dirt in explosion of dust), shot, clutching himself or twitching, falling off high boulders of the canyon onto hidden air cushion behind granite boulders, riding back and forth in the dust cloud of riders (most of them white boys in brown paint, whooping) shot to pieces, fired upon, stepped on by massive horses, get big bruises and broken ribs, too bad---maybe he’d get lucky and some Chuck Norris or Sly Stallone wannabe would remake Vietnam jungle wish-fulfillment battle scene where America wins this time (wins again: the sequel---”in our minds, we are winners”), he could scoot practically invisible through the Malibu State Park chaparral foliage (nameless gook) only to get blown sky high out of a prop palm tree just as he was about to take a deadly fatal shot: by casual offhand rpg from the hero or his cool cohort, while digital flock of white birds fly off over patched jungle shot. “Kill me, kill me, kill me,” some voice whined in his subconscious while he wondered whether it was really worth it to spend $30 on a shirt.

There was a famous TV show where the narrator came on to introduce the eerie subject matter of each evening's fantastic episode in an eerie semi-ironic monotone, cigarette smoke curling offhandedly, vaguely from the unsucked cigarette in one black and white hand, every Ronald Reaganesque spokesperson-hair in place groomed with hair grease Brylcreem product of the day in unironic black tie white shirt and suit, he'd say something like, “our dauntless hero, a famous dirigible pilot in his day used to extreme hazardous duty in the violent storms of the upper atmospheres at the edge of space, is about to find out that there's an even stranger zone whipped by merciless winds of the human heart, a
zone where love may be the most dangerous weather of them all, in tonight’s episode…”
etc., as eerie zither and bongo music rises and the copyrighted title sequence rises against
a black background punctuated or punctured by what a viewer might presume to be stars
and not condensed nodes of weird leftover electronic 1960s sparkles.

This is how to simulate the “Atmospheric Trash Vortex” or “Orange Gyres.”

Industrial fans, small, medium, large:
1. small fans placed immeditely in front of the camera, blowing on buckets of dry ice and
   water, to stream wispy vapors
2. medium fans placed waist high into whose streams assistants toss handfulls of confetti
   and tiny bits of paper streamers or ribbons
3. large fans which blow on great murky cheesecloth screens hung like banners in
   the background, which themselves ripple and billow like waves and like clouds,
   additionally, some of this circulating air spills onto our actors and the set, causing the
   set to creak and sway with realistic tension and gale force, against which the actors
   must lean in order to advance and must shout in order to be heard
4. these streams all combine to produce what we believe to be the most realistic
   Atmospheric Trash Vortex or Orange Gyre atmosphere yet presented to the viewing
   public!
5. every now and then a prop person throws newspapers, cardboard boxes and pieces of
   cardboard, various foam or paperboard objects roughly the size and configuration of
   five gallon drums, shipping boxes, detergent bottles or food containers, etc. into the
   wind stream---sometimes small items such as cigarette packs get sucked out of the
   grip of grips and swirl into the windstream (production stalled for a matter of minutes
   one afternoon when the lead actor nearly swallowed and choked on a cigarette butt
   that flew into his mouth)
6. behind the curtains and billowing sheets of “atmosphere” large sheets of sheet metal
   strung on frames are “played” with soft mallets or rubber hammers to manufacture
   rumbling thunder and crashing lightning and other ‘ambient’ sounds--- (lead actor
   choking, hacking, coughing, spitting)
7. Addition of animated flying items, large black birds flapping or flailing like crushed
spiders, old model cars mostly as silhouettes flapping by, etc.

The lighting is muted, sometimes flashing as with lightning, but otherwise we simply focus spots strategically on figures or silhouettes, and tightly on facial close-ups as we see fit, because---face it---the audience has to see something! It makes for dramatic lighting! Even if our consultant, Liki Renteria, assures us that in an Actual Trash Vortex or Orange Gyre, visibility will be extremely limited or lacking entirely. “You wouldn’t be able to see your hand in front of your face.” (So says Renteria.) “Objects will just fly out of nowhere and hit you in the face!” But we can’t film a TV show in the dark! We’ll have to clear it and lighten the visibility to at least low fog level, called “San Francisco” in the industry.

Actors may occasionally be blown off their feet and have to resort to grasping at stanchions or the hidden steel scaffolding that underpins the set in order to save themselves. Limited visibility enables them to wear padding under their raggedy flapping “atmosphere suits” that cushion some of their sudden falls and spills and take the brunt of sliding horizontally across the set, only to fetch up against the far end of superstructure, the improvised and unstable ramshackle raft-like edifices of “Sky City.” (Liki Renteria assures us his verbal descriptions of the improvised habitation in the cloud vortices are highly accurate, and we’re lucky to have them, given the total secrecy of the government’s own investigations so far. Liki Renteria suggests they have not really penetrated the cloud vortices for lack of minimal competence and fundamental courage. He suggests that, like the citizens of New Orleans after hurricanes Katrina and Timothy, any citizens swept up into the trash vortices in the sky have been abandoned by the very government forces sworn by law to protect them. In fact, the security forces view these people as outsiders, outlaws, threats to civilization and “rogue federal units” are implicated in suspected killings, torture or disappearances of vortex survivors reputed to have returned to earth---so says Renteria.) Some actors will be attached to guy wires and hauled off suddenly into total blackness of howling space in order (at proper points in the narrative) to indicate the fate of anyone who does not grab it fast, whatever they wish to keep they think will last, it’s all over now baby balloon.
We have numerous prototype dirigible replicas in production at all times, since they tend to suffer accidental destruction at a high rate.

My favorite dirigible models: the model is seen piercing the cloudy skies—generally “floating” across a cloudy sky attached to an unseen guide wire strung across the set and propelled by pyrotechnics of some sort—or pulled by a hidden wire—with lightning flashing dramatically on its bulgy tumescent carapace, sometimes with water droplets streaming poignantly across metallic skin, opalescent in pearly glow of lighting by union members of Motion Picture Studio Professional Electrical Lighting Technicians Ass. and sometimes enhanced by passive reflectors held in place by grips or ‘condors’ held by grips to create a “moonlit effect.”

These favorites are:

1. ELADATL “Colima”—papier mache dog head atop an airship constructed mostly of chicken wire and duct tape, the dog head which replicates the amazing iconic ceramic superstructure bridge that perched atop the legendary airship which vanished under mysterious circumstances—unfortunately our model (just like it’s namesake!) was blown up in a spectacular propane accident on set during filming, luckily the explosion was caught on film from several angles and the writers worked furiously to change the storyline to fit in the destruction (of it). “That ship is jinxed, get me out of here,” someone was heard to say.

2. ELADATL “Ehecatl”—a sleek, valient courageous airship of friendly open demeanor, much heart, supposedly has a preying mantis as its mascot—

3. ELADATL “Jolina”—all black pirate ship of the air, all-female crew, strange stoic raven-haired impulsive captain thought to be grumpy and aloof because of “lack of love” and lonesomeness—

4. ELADATL “Agnes Smedley”—awkwardly constructed of papier mache and tin cut with metal shears, spliced together with duct tape and cheesecloth, ‘powered’ by “Smokey Joe” racial stereotype fireworks which sputter and glow and smoke as the ship is pulled across the cinematic skies of projected cloud vistas and darkening atmopheres while—
In one story line on the show he was of course the evil Chinese Fu Manchu horde-villain, black pajama-clad gook weakling sneak-killer. With the other killers, some just regular white guys in yellow face, they swung down on ropes “seemingly out of nowhere” (from the sudden appearance of the evil Fu Manchu Mother Ship, with its communistic red curvy oriental Cadillac tailfins and slanty-eyed windows maniacally glittering with freakish light as the stoic Asian faces (lit from below) peered malevolently down at the Sky City. Their whole job, it seemed, was to exert China’s hold over the Western hemisphere from above, starting with infiltration and take-over of the Sky Cities of America, a devious plan because the government refused to acknowledge the existence of these outposts of disposable civilization sucked up into upper trash-laden atmospheres. So the Chinese agents (they could be said to be controlled by a rogue agency internal to the Chinese government, for “plausible deniability”) could descend upon America from above, dropping out of its own
atmospheric layers. But who stood in their way, to total control first of the skies then of all of American and domination of the Western hemisphere, but Our Hero who was looking for the Love of his Life, to rescue her from being trapped in an Orange Gyre. So happily for the “story line” (so-called) he could kill us all (reluctantly, but he had to). He just had to, because we were so mean, killers, devious, inarticulate, just violent even beyond self-interest in our own survival, we just had to rush at him on the various levels of the Sky City ramparts and balconies and rickety, gale-swept walkways which sometimes ripped apart in the huge winds, sometimes at opportune moments when the hero was trapped, tossing black clad Chinamen ninjas to the black winds of night. The wire harness would suddenly jerk him, our nameless figure of a low budget extra (and villain), backwards off the set and off-camera. Then he could get back to work and re-enter a later scene.

So that was the ‘story.’ He was (of course) glad to get the work. He did decide to purchase the $30 new shirt. Might as well look the part when asking for work, professional working man now. As he fastens a safety line and leaps with his big knife drawn upon the unsuspecting turned back of the hero, but a woman’s piercing shriek pierces the howling gale—the hero pirouettes in a spinning roundhouse kick that connects with the villain’s jaw, knocking the evil-doer against his own safety line, which snaps. Dragged—elbow banged a stanchion painfully—he’s sucked up swirling into stormclouds of vagaries of the upper atmospheres. The body count of this one movie had to approach that of Pearl Harbor, therefore he would (re)appear in several scenes. He could purchase another shirt; he chose to decide to purchase earrings for his wife when he got a chance. He would buy the kids some healthy snacks. He would take the wife out for dinner! In one penultimate semi-climactic scene, he dangles from a high tower (from which red, black and white Pacifica Radio call letters “KPFK” can still be read through foggy whisps of shredded clouds in weather-beaten ancient sans serif font from the 1990s), after being totally defeated and beaten to a pulp *mano a mano* by the Bruce Lee martial arts prowess of Our American Hero. But as the unknown extra (henchman) slides into the gaping maw of the abyss, the All-American Hero grabs his fallen opponent’s wrist, showing utter generous humanity towards the nasty, duplicitous snarly loser. Offers mercy, showing his great American respect for life! What does the villain do (with close-up facial grimaces spliced in during editing, provided by a son of late Syrian-born actor Michael Ansara, who looked vaguely
Asian, especially with taped eyes when he played Klingon aliens) but pull out a hidden scary Filipino escrima dagger! The Hero's sorrowful eyes widen! In a gesture meant to convey the notion that even the sneaky, cruel, inhuman Asiatic has come to understand and respect (almost worship) the moral superiority of his conqueror, the vanquished Asian creep cuts off his own hand with one mighty slash! Because he'll never be anything other than just a cruel, evil Asiatic killer and his pale vanquisher is too good! Then he nods with understanding and respect at his would-be rescuer! So he plummets upward! To certain death! (Redeemed and dead--- the perfect Indian.)

The scene is filmed several times, to make sure his final Nod of Respect is visible through the vapors and flying trash. Then the Hero contemplates the Asiatic's severed hand in his own soulfully for a moment, and tosses it over the edge. It swirls around in the tornado force winds as if waving goodbye and flies out of sight. The solemn Hero tries to get back to rescuing the love of his life but little does he know that the nameless unaccredited dark extra has re-entered the stage from below with others of his ilk and is working his way up to attack him again! Through a trap door! Oh, will he ever know peace? To think, according to Liki Renteria, this is all “based on a true story.” Twelve minutes of screen time left before the credits roll.

Our unnamed, uncredited, unknown heavy or gangster extra, Indian, killer of innocents and of luckless whites, horde member, future zombie of plague apocalypse, mob torch bearer chasing the White Hero Monster, Napoleonic battlefield corpse, pistolero, bandido machinegunned by cynical Peckinpah outlaws, pirate falling from Disney’s high mast, German casualty in trench warfare of World War 1 epic shoot, killed at Marne and Vicksburg and Monument Valley and fake-front towns of the manufactured 1950s West, not to mention blown up, riddled with M-16 full-auto fire, blasted dozens of times in rice paddies and simulated East Asian jungle foliage, chanting “Oogah boogah” from the scaffolding in torchlit scenes for Francis Ford Coppola’s gook shoot-em up Apocalypso Whatever, another shadowy figure lurking backlit behind high window but spotted like a dummy by the squinty eagle-eyed detective, stupid thug running herky jerky forward into the headlights right into blazing copper's guns, he happily took the bus and joined the crowds on the democratic sidewalks of downtown Los Angeles. Bright day, taking
his time purchasing two shirts, so he could look his best soliciting more such jobs. He was certainly on his way to success in his chosen line of work. He knew how to paint his face white, black, yellow, red. He could have long abominable shaggy yak hair, neat sneaky braids or appear completely bald. He could grimace, yowl, growl, creep, clutch, saunter arrogantly, overbearingingly overconfident right into the expert sights of the expert shots that never missed and never could, because his chest was wired to explode with erupting sacks of blood, that’s how he could afford to grab fried chicken drumsticks at the downtown stand a couple blocks from Grand Central Market where his dad had taken him when he was a kid, before running out of his life forever and leaving him to grow up on these streets on his own (he thought of them as his own, too). With his fingers still greasy, even after wiping them repeatedly with thin white paper napkin, then wiping them absentmindedly on his pants, he stepped through the crowd under the theater marquee (of the dead grand old movie theater now used as an evangelical Spanish church---”Pare de sufrir”---), pushing his way through expecting to see some mildly grotesque street performer (whatever the contemporary equivalent was for a man and a monkey, the grimacing death’s head monkey thrusting forward its little monkey cap, snatching with its little hands and their tiny black nails at any dirty proffered coin) but instead it was a thick-necked red-faced cop kneeling on some scrawny kid’s back dislocating the kid’s shoulder twisting his arm behind him, the kid howling in agony and the cop screaming curses at the kid for what reason? “Do something, do something, that’s you down there, you know it too, when nobody stood up for you, nobody did anything, that was you---” one voice exhorted in his mind, while the other said louder and louder---“piss on that, let the kid deal with it himself, he’ll learn the same way I did,” ---already the first voice finished, “you cheap bastard, cowardly bastard, you bastard! Rub two new shirts together in a crisp paper bag and suddenly you’re too afraid to step out in front of the crowd and open your---” as he found himself stepping forward, pushing past dazed bystanders with some unseen hand (like that of a child’s) pushing him forward, he could hear his own voice, “Wait a minute! Wait a minute, he’s just a kid, you’re hurting him, you’re breaking his arm---”

A missing front tooth, anyway, the further scars on his face, did not count against a man in his line of work, though of course the thirty dollar shirts were long gone by the time
his wife went his bail, the clothes he'd been wearing before he was handed the orange jailhouse jumpsuit so ripped to shreds he had to have her bring him a change in a paper sack when she came to pick him up, she was outraged (not at the cop when he explained what had happened, through the aching of his broken face, with his new lisp he was going to have to get used to, this new way of speaking with swollen rubbery mouth---no, she was thoroughly enraged at him, what was he thinking going near a cop---“all I did was grab his arm and pull him off, give the kid a chance”---she just clamped her jaw closed and drove, her last word was ever that bitter silence)---he sensed it would be so much the worse if he mentioned the little earrings he’d purchased for her were in that shopping bag, failed gesture puny and ineffectual in the face of the season of worry tormenting her, all that anyway just a memory he might review daily, almost hourly the previous week he spent in jail while she, prompted by his one allowed phone call out, got his cousin to secure, co-sign the bond. Weeks later, felony assault on a peace officer arraignment approaching, he could come home to the place emptied of her and her possessions, her purposes and aspects, “I’m not going down with you. I choose not to be one of the women who enable the self-destruction of her man. I’m not holding your hand and going down that road. You get paychecks for them killing you off in big ways and small, but you finish the job off yourself on your own time. This is my life, too. I don’t have to give my assent and be part of that choice (you say it’s no choice, due to lack of choice). I care too much about us both. We are responsible for us. You made choices that hurt us both. Take care of yourself. Love,”

So what if he should have known, could have expected it. That was in the future, anyway, the strange future of war over Los Angeles of zeppelins versus dirigibles, zeppelin attack dirigibles against an insolent seething roiling black and orange sky, where unpredictable papier mache kraken surprised on-lookers by appearing (as if guided by puppet strings from above, off-screen) to destroy huge airships clasped in giant suckers of writhing tentacles, in fireballs, escaped gases and deadly lightning (from the dark clouds or somewhere). So not only did entire crews of good guys and bad guys have to lurch back and forth as the cameras lurched back and forth to imply the violent forces with which airships were destroyed, but sometimes he and the rest of the crew had to fall out of suddenly ruptured gondolas, screeching for all they were worth as the skies exploded
around them. So what if he could hardly breathe even when he landed on the piles of cushions, his broken ribs unhealed as yet, his shattered left zygomatic arch pounding in his cheek with the force of a continual punch, his left eye so full of broken capillaries and blood it had gone partially sightless, red and later red and yellow and an object of discussion. He did his best to keep his broken nose out of the game, broken finger taped together with its mate. The aspirins he ate all day with coffee made his stomach a swirling vortex. Red and black back screen projections simulating the dystopian futuristic skies could have been projected from his own gut. Next time, it was true what his wife had said, he might just have to let the next kid or whomever deal with the cop (or whomever) all on his own. He was never able to explain to his wife that he was surprised as anyone by the way things worked out, stepping from the crowd, stepping forward. These things he thought about as he executed his falls, his attacks, his runs, as best he could. Meanwhile, they called on him to kill or be killed (regular, mostly the latter).

What were these stories even about? He did not understand them, it's true. His mind wasn't on the story line or whatever it was about. Some science fiction bullshit, just this side of ray guns and bubble helmets, rubbery latex monsters floating out of cardboard caves on papier mache moons in far off galaxies where everybody was white and even the colossal-headed monsters spoke English. They explained in this latest episode that they were members of a death squad dispatched the kill some gallant self-taught illegal immigrant engineer who was holed up in an abandoned airfield, building one of the last (or was it one of the first?) dirigible airships by himself. Their ostensible purpose was to infiltrate the vast abandoned airplane factory and chop this illegal immigrant genius to pieces with machetes, knives, pistolas, and--- Something like that. He'd been thinking about his wife and hadn't caught the rest of the plot. He had a hard enough time focusing on the present, cracked and loose teeth tasting like metallic fillings, ribs grating, broken finger sore still weeks later, pulsing face where blood from his sinuses drained into the back of his throat, he swallowed it. He took his falls like a professional. He ran like a twenty year old. He took every tumble, fall and shot and never asked to be excused nor complained. His eye flared like a black marble shot through with red tiger stripes. He was swallowing his own black blood as viscous as green flu snot. On his way home, he'd get off the train downtown to replace those shirts; luckily he hadn't mentioned them before, he remembered exactly where to pick up the earrings.
PAUL CELAN
PETRE SOLOMON

PAUL CELAN’S LITTLE EVENING BOOK

TRANSLATED BY PIERRE JORIS
III.11.47.
1.1 Paul confirms that he will make self-love with Ciuci

1.2 Comment on Barbu Lazarenu.
Why shouldn’t words also have their cemeteries?

1.3 The great peacock Paun (A+)

1.4 ____

III.15.
- I have sleep.
- Sleep or sturgeon?

1.5 -Good morning
- Wasn’t necessary.

1.6 In spring we make a few excursions that will never become part of the history of the mountains.

1.7 Tell me something in another idea-disorder, Margareta.

1.8 She is start but smerile.

1.9 I would even eat a piece of Viorica.

1.10 Dedication in a volume of poetry:
You were the coffin from which I descended to coffide this.

1.11 If someone keeps his mouth shut, his words become proverbs (Jünger)

1.12 Who rides a tiger, can’t get off anymore
1.13  Paul Celan: persona gratinata

1.14  On Sasa Pana vis-à-vis Tzara:
The shadow that has finally found its man.

1.15  -What are you thinking about (in silence)
-Multiplication tables

1.16  A thought for Margareta:
It’s good when you feel the wind, but the wind should feel you too.

1.17  In poetry one doesn’t wait for the dial tone — when one phones.

1.18  Aragon: a Great Poet
Eluard: a great Great Poet

1.19________________________

April
She - In what quality should I come to the mountains?
He - As a sister of charity.
Or as the charity of a sister of quality.

1.20  Mister Alafon to the Telederca

1.21  Manivocal equifesto

1.22  We cent a rar

1.23  Margarete Dorian
Dogarete Marian / Gargarete Dorian

1.24  Antechamber music: Solo for Petronome with Paolocello accompaniment.
1.25  There you go, splitting woods ???

1.26  From the program for the Hölderlin-memorial at the Lovinescu-circle of friends: Hölderlin and Lovinescu will meet in the Ether and sing a methylic hymn.

1.27 V.1.47

   And a journey will come from which we will day away.

1.28 ———

   Neither in evening tuck nor in morning nip

1.29  Variation on:

   And a time will come when we'll die of hunger.
   And a hunger will come when we'll die of time.

1.30 ————————————————————

   -What function does that have?
   -Sinus.

1.31  Mister Philippide will hold force on Tolstoi.

1.32  A soul sub-engineer

1.33  Decembrie

   John Step advanced two steps back

1.34  A perry by Sartre and a straight line May wine

1.35  in strangling HAR HAIRA will transpare

   millennial kerchief for getting-out-of and into-the hair

   Infringer-in-chief: Bosaru
1.36  Constantin Paranoia

1.37  Petre Solomon

V.1.47  / who stops in Batiște street/
       A love-murmur:
       Advance in cambric!

1.38 ——

Nina’s account
From critic to critic or crow to crow he scratches out the eyes. (Moni against Cornean)

1.39  ——

-What do you do in summer?
-Warm.

To Jani:
-And what shall I do with that?

1.40  The refuge in case of Moni’s death:
his sister will come with a jaw in heaven and a brother under the earth.

1.41  Moni’s chronicle on the communion-wafer-mustached poets:
that’s a talmuddy.

* 

The Cărtica de seară /Little Evening Book is a collation of some forty puns and aphoristic notations in Roumanian by Paul Celan and his friend Petre Solomon, gathered between 3.11.47 & 5.1.47, with some additions in November & December of that year. It is not always easy to determine exactly who came up with a given line, Solomon or Celan. Solomon even seems to have added a few texts after Celan left Bucharest for Vienna.
MARK WEISS
PASTORAL
The eternal ghost dance.
So many creatures to recover. Sow
dragon teeth, or teeth of bison, skin of toad or crimson feather.

A prince has it that we need to grant
hedgerows and the margins of fields
to the cultivation of wildness.

What then would be the meaning of red
if purity were green?
What for purity and transparent virtue, blue
for divinity purple for kingship.

Furrows ploughed in a blank field.

Tassels
of the tall grasses bent
just so, the wind
just so, the light
forever such.

Terror of night in the forest.

The rest of a life imagining a loved-one.
Testing and rejecting words.

Suspend criteria and the daily facts
attack as if the wagons were circled and it’s all
Indians, we like to say, so much fodder.

Make amends to Mother Kali.

If there’s a hole in it
kiss it.

A perfect fierceness.
Think, then, of Snow White as the Virgin.  
Think of her as the higher gnome.  

Queen-Anne’s-lace, thistle, dandelion, heather rose foxglove. 
Call her “thistle.”

Clover buttercup  
all manner weeds and grasses  
bracken aster  
fuschia gorse.

Each blade  
peaked with a tuft of wool.

“How do you like your camel? One hump or two?” she asks.

Mary and Snow White white and blue.  
The awakening kiss of God or Prince.

Folk dance/ghost dance.

A critique of pure farming.

The primordial the only show in town.  
See what happened?

Top of the morning  
top of the town  
bog down.

Grow some gorse for the queen of heaven.
Elaborating systems
and throwing them away.

You put your pants on
then your shoes.

Each sock on a line a message to the sun god.
Penny-candies in a twist of paper.
Who? How? How many
the hour?

See the details of the making of day. See from whose labor
small graces.
Bird Mary lost of thanks.

Stripped off the roofs. As need arose
made graves and gardens of.

Chalk horse
brings horse-god,
mates.

Nothing so much as a figure for continuity, the task
as ever to hold it together break
it apart hold
it together.

Announcement of gender in a cast of hip.
The gradual ascension of consciousness.
A long summer of feathers and shells.

Overhead, a classful of girls clog-dances, they practice
to flatten the field, how to make of it
the hard earth of a cottage floor. Ferocious pounding of a forge, swords, spears,
clatter of horses, these little girls
learning to become the nation’s story. Conquest,
or at least resistance.

Dwarfs in the grotto see the Virgin.
She appears in blue and white to seven
chukka chukka she appears in blue and white
and the prince kiss kiss
will wake her.
Clothes on the line so many prayer-flags.

The dog says: “Behave like a wolf to terrify sheep.”

Be easy with instinct.

Here, my child, is the lesson of shadows.

As a bee be unto thee.

Both two and frowardness a nest of
who? who? An owl?
What follows? Itch
too deep to scratch.
Itchery the eighth vice.
Cold and wet for the fun of it.
Want! Wait! Let her come to me!
And thinks of himself as the stalker.

They chirp they chirp
and a man can’t sleep.

A sailor a tailor a telltale a liar
and do it again in the clover,
lost in an ice cream. Absent thee
from complexity, anticipate
of little fate the patter.

It was the son or sun the king sent kissed
the sleeping girl.

Pleasure in the play of wrist within a fixed vocabulary.

Sheen of sun on the black railing, and beyond,
ebb tide, and beyond
a green hillside and beyond
a far one in hazy light, clouds beyond it.

One small cactus on an otherwise bare sill.

On the back of her slacks is written
“California” in an arch, cleft
between f and o. Like a vale
between hills.

One could compile a history of apologies.

Celestial bracelet.
Spanner silence Jazus.
Jazus.
Silence the celestial bracelet
and I’ll spanner yez.
Culled spanners of oceans from their celestial path
to a bracelet of feathers, flesh
and silence.
Jazus, the meat comes dear.

Lamb on the run
spam on a bun.

A man with a nose on his nose.
Bird, bracken, moor.
You write some verses and... what verses!
Never seen anything like them:
each line armed with pebbles,
knuckledusters every one,
as if they’re made for thwacking
those who read them in the nose.
WOE

Why’s it exist? Who is it? Where’s its proud home? Artful, how does it thrive?
Light sleep or passing cloud
is all it is for many, hardly leaves a trace.
Others feel its perfidious blows
lay siege to them with dark treachery
from start to end of life’s slaving.
But they never see it, though they look all round to avoid it; how many are there who never feel its pestilent breath in air or space, nor on earth nor on the sea, though it’s everywhere, ever damaging.

Evil is the child of hell, good that of heaven; whose is woe? She-wolf never sated, who redoubles her furor on sighting a deep and bloody wound.
Where’s it come from? What’s it want? Why’d you let it, mighty Maker, when you see us suffer?
Can’t you tell, Lord, that its power suffocates faith and love, in the spirit that’d faith in you?
How it hardens a heart that once was every softness! How it kills light in hope, so that hope’s peaceful gleam amid the stars is struck from existence, light that lent new strength to tired feet and renewed courage in the timorous soul!
All rots in its passage, its damned plaint chokes everything forever:
it sticks its muck to everything.
And what a deep pit it digs around whomever it pursues! How folk flee from it so as to block the laments
its pain provokes, or the frightening
blasphemy that with trembling lip
it pronounces, biting!
No pestilence exists in life
that causes so much human horror
as it does to those touched by woe.

And why not, if good turns its back,
if even sun does not shine where woe lives,
if the tap that gives water daily
is poisoned, if even bread tastes
of dry nothing in the mouth, and endless sea
instantaneously goes dry
if woe wants to drown in its harsh waves;
as for the arms of death that weary it,
even death leaves woe alone!

Take pity, Lord! Bar the shadow
that keeps casting eternal night
over the light of faith, love and hope!
Horrific shadow that obscures
shining stars in the heavens, that’s made
new hell in this world, and a new world
where all courage loses its zeal
and all strength shatters without struggle,
where the long dark of pitilessness
bars every path that leads forward.

Kind Maker, with your potent breath,
dispel this horrible phantasm from us
and let woe come to an end;

enough already of aches, of wretched
weak flesh and of infallible death,
that torment and punish those sad ones who
having gone wrong, live banished
from the exalted home for which they sigh!
NOT IN THE DARK!

I

—All’s dark, shadows couch the pathway,
and not even heaven has eyes, nor pine woods tongues.

Let’s go! Who knows the depth of what’s hidden?
There’s no soul who knows! Come! Night’s dark.

—Dark? But there’s a glow of some treacherous light...
—It’s a star that glows in roiling waters.

—And don’t you hear something rustle in the grass?
—It’s the wind gone crazy, twirling foliage.

—Listen, I feel footsteps, and some shape hulks there...
—If it’s alive, we’ll kill it; it won’t talk if it’s dead!

—But here, by this headland, there’s a deep hole:
come on, and saint or devil, we’ll see what finds us there.

II

And where’m I heading? Where’ll I hide?
So that no one sees me and I see no one.

The light of day startles me, starlight astonishes me.
And men’s stares penetrate my very soul.

And it’s that whatever is inside me, can be seen
on my face, just as tides deliver up their dead, at last.

If it be so, then let it be seen....! but no: I bear you
inside me: terrifying phantasm of my remorse!²
**

—You claim that marriage is blessed and good. So be it, but Saint Anthony never wed, even though the very devil tried to get him to try.

As many hairshirts as possible, yes, and heaps of penance; but I notice that no saint wished to shoulder the heavy cross of the married.

Not even the holy fathers, of whose scriptures we have plenty, along with all their hallelujahs, wanted to sink their holy feet into that kind of muck.

From every angle, matrimony, you’re a noose; you’re a temptation to hell, but I’ll get married..., for winter’s coming... I need someone to warm my feet!
WHAT'S UP?

Always a plaintive oh!, a qualm, a desire, an anguish, an ache...
At times it's a star that dazzles, at others it's a ray of sun;
it's the leaves that fall from trees, then it's flowers that burst in fields,
and it's the wind that moans; and it's the cold, and heat...
And it's neither wind nor sun, nor is it the cold; it's not..., no it's just
the soul assailed, poetic and sensitive, all lashed by disappointment
railing at everything.
NOTES

1) Rosalía de Castro’s reflections on *desgracia* merit note. This title in Galician translates, in one sense, to what it looks like: *disgrace*. Un-grace. Un-lightness, if grace is lightness as it is in the word ‘graceful.’ In fact, Rosalía de Castro speaks of what we today call depression. I titled ‘Desgracia’ in English as ‘Woe’ rather than depression, to widen the register of the title word a bit, yet to make a link with depressive illness, which often is exacerbated by the social. Rosalía’s passionate social ire is evident in this poem, and it is no plaint, for even if depression touched her deeply (during the period she wrote these poems, there were political and familial and health setbacks), she was able to rise to speak, which many cannot. The struggle in Rosalía de Castro marks not simply melancholy but a steady rage. She touches and acknowledges a wrenched hole in the social and personal fabric and she does not draw back. Depression in her era had no pharmaceutical alleviation. Then, as today, women were more prone to it, or more prone to admit to it and admit to treating it. It’s no coincidence that an early anti-depressant, Valium, was known as ‘Mother’s Little Helpers.’ From market entry in 1963 to the end of patent in 1985, it was a top-selling drug in America. Along with it, drugs such as Quaaludes, marketed as a sleeping potion, found their way into our bloodstream as anxiety-repressants, and turned out to worsen depression and suicidal thoughts, further degrading the lives of women. In our time, the pharmacology of depression treatment is more sophisticated, but it still remains that depression, *desgracia*, is often an offshoot of societal precarity. The World Health Organization (WHO) has predicted that by 2020, major depressive illness will be second only to heart disease as the world’s leading cause of disability. De Castro was ahead of her time. I don’t think there’s any poet in any language active in the nineteenth century who more clearly addressed depression as a women’s and human health issue, as an issue provoked by migration and precarity.

2) The dialogue of the fleeing couple. Rosalía wrote a lot of women trying to assume their independence; in reality, this often meant fleeing their families in the company of a suit-or undesirable or impossible otherwise. In the first poem the scene is described from outside, and we see but the shadow of the border guard along the Miño (the river that forms
the border between Galicia and Portugal) and of his gun, signifying his readiness to kill. In the two-part second poem, the dialogue of the fleeing couple in the first part is taken up in the second part by the woman’s frightened voice alone; the man’s voice is absent. The poems work eerily together; we too are in the dark. Is the man dead and the woman found out and brought back?

3) Saint Anthony of Padua is saint of marriages and of reconciliation of couples. His feast day is in June, considered the month of marriages. An anti-clerical poem for it makes light of the holiness of wedlock, finding only one good reason for getting married: warmth for cold feet!

These poems are from the collection *New Leaves*, from SmallStations Press.
GALO GHIGLIOTTO
FROM VALDIVIA

TRANSLATED BY DANIEL BORZUTZKY
one night i went to speak
with the scriptwriter who was crafting my dreams
i asked him not to write any more nightmares
he told me he couldn’t stop because that’s
how it was written in the book of zombies
i insisted that he free me
he told me
it’s time i take control
of my own dreams that it was time i realize
that his god was an ancestor of mine
that in this life you can do anything except die
he advised me to not get frustrated
if at first my dreams broke open when i touched them
he told me that this destruction is a symptom of inexperience
he told me that in Valdivia it would be very hard for me
because those who die frustrated invade other people’s dreams in order to resurrect
because as soon as they start to enter the dreams of the person they have picked they try to complete the dreams they left unfinished when they died
he told me that the Calle Calle is not a river
it’s a parade of white dresses that float in a procession to the sea
he said all of this and much more
other things i don’t remember but i know that even though i don’t remember them they are there the scriptwriter of my dreams told me these things and he took off on an elephant facing me followed by a flock of green goats jumping next to it at which point i realized we were at the bottom of the river but i was breathing normally at last i was breathing normally at the bottom of the river
those clowns have fangs
they are a few meters away from me
they haven’t seen me
sometimes there are four sometimes there are hundreds
they transform and multiply
they laugh they fight
they knock back bottles of blood
their mouths are red from their teeth spill
little threads that sparkle
with a light that leads to i don’t know where
i move one of them looks at me and then
they pulse stroboscopic stares over me
they approach me a wall appears stuck to my back
i hear their jabbering as they walk towards me
they clean their mouths and fangs
with their long and sharp tongues
the walls are suddenly next to me
and i get stuck between someone’s thighs
saber toothed clowns come towards me
jabbering
tossing off grotesque and keen cackles
beneath their painted eyes
their red mouths
the gazes that sparkle
silvery plains
like shards of a foggy or empty mirror
like shards of a piercing or starving mirror
last night i dreamt was the devil
and i had amazing powers
i could transform
men into women and vice-versa
i could turn humans into ghosts
and give the ghosts back their flesh
i could move objects from one place to another
just by pointing my finger at them
i could make anything appear

i was sitting with a group of people
and they were asking if i wasn’t ashamed
to be the devil
i told them i wasn’t and i tried to explain to them
that i wasn’t the devil but just one of many
but it was a lie so i thought it best to keep quiet
or just to say no i wasn’t ashamed

someone asked me for
a photo album lost thousands of years ago
and instantly i made it appear

a man told me his young daughter
had died a long time ago
and that he missed her so much
and so i slowly turned my head
following the line of the horizon
and i could see inside some houses
where old films were projected on the walls
i saw the father and his daughter playing
on a patio that is now this building
i saw them construct it
a house in the only tree on the street
and i also saw the ghost of the young girl glowing in the night
walking on the tree branches
sadly pretending to feed dead chicks
inside a house as ghostly as she was
so i said to the father
climb up on this building and jump over to that tree
he believed in me and he did it
and the moment he touched the foliage he turned into the ghost
of a young father who he himself was
and he fell into the house that was shining
like a translucent cube made of radiant lines
and they hugged each other so much
that i had to pause time for the living
in order to see the entire embrace
it lasted five hundred years
and from its tears were born
the sea and the rivers of Valdivia
last night i dreamt i was the devil
but i was good
i found a dwelling for the lost souls
and sealed them in beer bottles
which i distributed throughout the city of Valdivia
one night i went to speak to
the scriptwriter who wrote my dreams
i asked him to kill me while i slept
and to leave me locked in the images of sunflowers rubbing the river bank
with the brilliance of the sky
in the whisper of our true names
through the wind’s mouth

i offered him my god as a sacrifice
i promised to revere him in the world where he left me
i told him that just like the creator of the heavens and the earth
i was a child lost in the universe
who needed to invent his own parents
i told him i no longer wanted Valdivia
to be the name of my genealogy
but he told me everything was predetermined long ago
from long ago he told me remember
the divine vicious circle
he told me
perhaps a message at the moment of escape
but the rest is written
in the book of zombies
that you yourself wrote
long before you were born
you yourself wrote it
ALOYSIUS BERTRAND

FROM GASPARD DE LA NUIT

TRANSLATED BY ANDREI MOLOTIU
THE TULIP MERCHANT

The tulip is amongst flowers like the peacock amongst birds. The one has no scent, the other no voice: the one prides itself on its robe, the other on its tail.  
The Garden of Rare and Curious Flowers

No noise but for the rustle of vellum leaves under Doctor Huylten’s fingers—Doctor Huylten, who’d only take his eyes off his Bible, strewn with Gothic illuminations, to admire the purples and golds of two fish captive inside a bowl’s damp walls.

The doorpanes swung open: it was a flower merchant, his arms laden with tulip pots, who begged pardon for disturbing the reading time of such a learnéd personage.

— “Master,” said he, “I come to show you the treasure of treasures, the wonder of wonders, a bulb as once a century blooms in the emperor of Constantinopole’s seraglio!”

— “A tulip!” cried out the old man, incensed, “a tulip, that symbol of the pride and luxury that, in the unhappy city of Wittenberg, gave birth to the hateful heresies of Luther and Melancthon!”

Master Huylten pinned shut his Bible’s clasp, slid his spectacles back in their case, and drew aside the window curtain, revealing in the sunlight a passion-flower with its crown of spines, its vinegar’d sponge, its whip, its nails, and the five wounds of Our Lord.

The tulip merchant bowed respectfully and in silence, abashed by an inquisitorial glance from the Duke of Alba, whose portrait, a masterpiece by Holbein, hung on the doctor’s wall.
He recognized beyond a doubt the pale figure of his close friend Jean Gaspard Debureau, the great pagliaccio at the Funambules, who watched him with an undefinable expression of malice and jolly.

THEOPHILE GAUTIER, Onuphrius.

By the light of the moon,
My dear friend Pierrot,
Please lend me your plume
Just to write a word.
My candle has died,
Fire I have not,
Open up your gate
For the love of God.
Folk song.

Barely had the kappelmeister questioned with his bow the rumbling viol, that it answered him with a burlesque gurgle of slapstick and trills, as if its belly contained an entire colic of Italian Comedians.

*

First came nurse Barbara scolding that dumbass Pierrot for having, big klutz, dropped on the ground Monsieur Cassandre’s wig-box and blown the powder all over the floor.

Then Monsieur Cassandre woefully picking up his wig, and Harlequin kicking the nincompoop’s behind, and Colombine wiping away a tear from too much laughing, and Pierrot’s floured grin stretching all the way to his ears.
But soon, by the light of the moon, Harlequin, whose candle had died, was begging his friend Pierrot to pull open all the bolts and help him light it back up; and in the end, the traitor ran away with the girl too, along with the old man’s money-box.

* 

—“The devil take Job Hans the luthier who sold me this string!” cried out the kappelmeister, laying the dusty viol back to sleep in its dusty case. — The string had broken.
In two ways can our art be learned, to wit, through a master’s teachynges, from mouth to mouth and not otherwyse, or through divine inspiration and revelation; or agayne through bookes, whych are much obscure and tangled; and so as truth to find in them and ryghtnesse one ought to be discernynge and patient, studious and ever vigilant.

The Key to Philosophy’s Secrets by Pierre Vicot

Still nothing! — And in vain have I been leafing for three days and three nights, by the lamp’s wan light, through the hermetic books of Raymond Lull!

No, nothing, just the hiss of the sparkling cauldron, the mocking laugh of a salamander who takes his greatest pleasure in disturbing my meditations.

Sometimes he hooks a firecracker from one of my beard hairs, sometimes he lets fly from his crossbow a flaming dart into my cloak.

Or else he polishes his armor, then blows furnace ash onto the pages of my formulary and onto the ink on my writing-desk.

And the cauldron, sparkling ever more strongly, hisses the same tune the devil sang when Saint Eloy pinched his nose with forge-tongs.

Yet, still nothing! — And for three more days and three more nights I’ll keep leafing, by the lamp’s wan light, through the hermetic books of Raymond Lull!
ANNE KAWALA

FROM SCREWBALL (THE INDISPENSABLE DEFICIT)

TRANSLATED BY KIT SCHLUTER
Sur la neige, it’s a huntress-gatheress who, at the wheel of white hummer™, crosses what’s left of the sea ice. Looking out for the passes, plants and animals to flee and eat, she is looking to strike twice with one stone, to survive two dangers twice. On the dashboard are mounted a P38, a knife and a switchblade, a GPS that isn’t on. Riding shotgun is a buckled-in bassinet, a calm baby blows spit bubbles. Hidden under the roadmap laid out between the driver’s seat and the dashboard there is, in the sunlight, a kalashnikov, a first-aid kit, and in the glove compartment, two loaded beretta 92FS’s, a BIC™ lighter, an iPad™, a compass, an astrolabe. In the backseat a child watches the landscape whizzing by, he absent-mindedly pets Dzeta, whose snout rests on his lap; on the floor are two storm lanterns, a kevlar composite bow, a wooden daikyu, their quivers full (sharp, plumed, and explosive arrows), pulleys, carabiners, four 8.6mm dynamic ropes, a 10mm rope. She knows how to tie every knot: overhands, double overhands, flat knots, running knots, sliding knots, lark’s heads, cat’s paws, reef knots, grannies, dogshanks, fireman’s chairs, fisherman’s knots, sheet bend doubles, overhand loops, marlinspike hitches, collars & capstan knots and carrick bends, double fisherman knots and rolling hitches, in simple figure-eight loops or in double ganses. In a timeworn satchel are a pair of cutting pliers, a leather stitching kit, a split hinge, splicing hooks, fids, a packet containing solid and hollow needles, spools of marline twine. In the trunk are crammed pelts, a tent, a deflated lifeboat, its motor, pump, oars, a seawater distiller, skis, poles, ten jerry cans of gas, piles of dried yak droppings, distress flares, a toolbox, a jack, tubs of spelt grains, rice, chicory, tomato, parsley, corn, cabbage, string beans, peas, broad beans, garlic, crates of germinating potatoes, lemons, cardboard boxes of canned foods, five 50-kilo bags of rice, ten 20-liter containers of potable water, two containers of oil, a gas camping stove, a saucepan, three bowls, a mixer, a solar panel. She bears down. And for now everything is going just fine.
At the wheel of her white hummer™, protected by the passenger compartment, having to think about having to relearn everything. Not shooting the bow or popping off her gun, but behaviors of what she will be ferreting out and the appropriate traps. Paths she will be able to take without risk. Relearning as learning that having learned won't necessarily be of use for more than a moment. A season. A landscape. Nature. Unforeseeable. Homages. Witches and wizards. The—merging, which has been left behind, which accompanies her, which is to be met again. Explana,quest,ions – un circuit. Which stories for the kid, in the backseat. Which gestures. Which songs. Which babblings to the baby. In keeping with. What form love will take when the reunions take place – that, 

Marches on
the white.
Disquieted by the hissing
more resounding
where the motor floods.

CONTINUER.

TOUT DROIT.

PLUS VITE.
PLUS VITE.
PLUS VITE.
PLUS VITE.
PLUS VITE.

SUR LA NEIGE,
The cracking.

The sea ice
gives way.
   Zig-

zags,

fissures,

chasms.

Black,

liquid,

diagonal.

Sheer.

The huntress-gatheress accelerates toward what seems the most
stable,

expansive

breaking apart the least.

Muted rattling, still

the sea ice gives way. Everywhere.

Fragments drift.

Theirs, wide and great.

Enough to without danger, for a while at least. Conditionally. Wide

turn.

Off.

Motor killed. She takes a look at the baby, rear-view mirror, at the kid, at the dog. Relaxing. If they’re not worried, and she mixes up the animals and the children while taking her shortcut, that means everything’s all right: no danger for the time being. To be adrift on the sheet of sea ice is neither the most comfortable nor the most reassuring thing, but, given her height, there are clearly worse situations, sighs, puts on gloves, sighs, rear-view mirror, wave, steps out.
CLAYTON ESHLEMAN

CAVE ART THEORY
The earliest theory of the meaning of Upper Paleolithic art—based on portable art discovered in the 1860s and 70s—was that it had no meaning. It was doodling, play, "art for art's sake." This view reflected the anti-clericalism of such scholars as Gabriel de Mortillet who refused to believe that ancient people had any religion. Like nearly all of the theories that have followed it, it was a blanket theory, and one that distracted attention from details in the actual work, envisioning the artist as a kind of ancient gentleman (a gender bias that was hardly noticed for a hundred years), and one with lots of time on his hands, whiling away the hours. I will come back to this now discredited theory, as it has recently been re-envisioned by Maxine Sheets-Johnstone in a way that deserves our attention.

With the authentication of prehistoric art at the turn of the 20th century, and a dawning awareness of the often elaborate compositions involving animals and signs in caves, it was becoming harder to believe that primeval art was completely meaningless. Not only was this art complex, but it was often placed in remote and nearly inaccessible areas that suggested initiations, rituals, and other magical motives. Other evidence for genuine antiquity made use of any or all of the following: parts of paintings covered over and sealed by layers of ancient calcite; objects or paintings covered by archeological deposits; depiction of long-extinct species; stylistic affinities with antlers and other organic surviving materials from which radiocarbon estimates (beginning in the 1950s) could be obtained.

That prehistoric art might have been produced as part of a ritual hunting magic was supported by Spencer and Gillen's work (1899) on the life of the Australian aboriginal Arunta said to perform ceremonies in order to multiply numbers of animals. Such ceremonies and sacrifices involved drawing the likeness of animals in the sand or on rocks. Fraser's *The Golden Bough* (1890) argued that before there was religion, there was magic which attempted to manipulate the material world. The notion that like produces like was the basis of "sympathetic magic," which gave further support to a Western understanding of Arunta sand and rock rituals. The prehistorian Salomon Reinach's position, based on both Arunta ethnography and *The Golden Bough*, was that the only way to know why cave dwellers painted and sculpted was to ask the same questions of living primitives. This position, based on the assumption that ethnographic parallels
provide meaningful information about the past, has continued to proliferate through the 20th century, achieving its most popularized form here in the cross-cultural mapping of Joseph Campbell in his tetralogy *The Masks of God* along with the best-selling *Hero with a Thousand Faces*.

Hunting magic theory enabled scholars to understand lines and v-shapes on painted animals as spears and wounds—that is, wounding the animal on the wall was done to insure good luck in the hunt. Claviforms became clubs, penniforms arrows, and tectiforms huts, traps, or soul houses. The Abbé Henri Breuil, who wielded enormous influence in the understanding of primeval and primitive art for many decades, adopted the hunting magic theory because he felt that Upper Paleolithic art expressed hunting anxiety about the availability of game. Such also explained, from Breuil’s viewpoint, pregnant horses: artists were expressing the tribe’s hope that animals would reproduce and flourish to provide food. Regarding the human sphere, fertility magic theory, yoked to hunting magic, proposed that the so-called “Venus statuettes” were pregnant and that sexual imagery (cupules, vulvas, ithyphallic male figures etc) indicated a preoccupation with conception and childbirth.

There are many problems with both hunting and fertility magic theories. Here are some of the most basic: there are no verifiable hunting scenes in Upper Paleolithic art. Very few of the animals depicted are wounded: Paul Bahn claims about 3 to 4%, while R. Dale Gutherie claims more than 10% but some of his data is questionable. And we are not sure that all spears signs, for example, are spears: Alexander Marshack, using infra-red filters, claims that some so-called spears are actually grasses. The animals depicted do not correspond in any predictable way to species eaten. The most striking discrepancy in this regard concerns reindeer which abound in middens (at Lascaux, for example, reindeer account for 90% of the bones, while only one is found engraved in the Apse), but are rarely depicted. At Altamira, peopled seemed to eat red deer, but drew bison.

However, in this regard, we must also take into consideration that large mammals like mammoths were probably slaughtered at kill sites, with only the meat brought to camp, thus there is no record of their bones in middens at the edge of camps. And it is possible that those who painted certain images were not the people who slaughtered the animals whose bones are found in the middens.

In regard to problems with fertility magic: we now know that Upper Paleolithic
hunting and gathering peoples inhabited much richer and varied environments than do modern hunter-gatherers like the Canadian Inuit. Herds of horses, reindeer, woolly mammoth, woolly rhinoceroses, bison, deer, elk, megaloceroses, and aurochses inhabited Western Europe in great numbers. Such availability throws into question Breuil’s assumption that anxiety over game was the driving force behind portable and parietal art. Because art depicting copulation is very rare, and depictions of childbirth (with one controversial possible exception, from Laussel) completely non-existent, and because the presence of pregnancy is not verifiable (the mares could have been well-fed, the “Venus statuettes” based on obese women), fertility anxiety seems, on the basis on the visual evidence, a very minor preoccupation.

In *Shamanism: The Beginnings of Art* (1967), Andreas Lommel proposed that prehistoric and primitive art is largely based on the outgrowth of shamanistic practice. For Lommel, the shaman is the central figure in what he calls “hunting societies,” a composite magician-priest, medicine-man, and healer, who, acting under inner compulsion, enters into trance states in which he has an amazing array of psychic experiences, including flights to paradise and to the underworld, battles with ancestor shamans, the escorting of the recently dead to their final resting place, the rescue of lost souls, and the penetration of the source of animal vitality. In these senses and others he acts as a kind of magnetized psychic quagmire for his group, and often, especially as a novice, experiences symbolic destruction (his body cut up and cooked, his organs torn out and replaced with solidified light).

While the shaman may be the best candidate that we presently have as an ur-prototype of the self-creative artistic personality, all evidence that Upper Paleolithic art is shamanistic in practice rests on cross-cultural comparisons with relatively recent historical hunting societies in Siberia, Greenland, Alaska, Australia, and North and South America. Lommel’s evidence, in fact, when strictly focused on Upper Paleolithic art itself, is meager. He proposes parallels between man-animal representations, hybrid or grotesque figures, men and animals fighting, and drawings in X-ray style. However, he actually produces no examples of Upper Paleolithic X-ray style, and as for men and animals fighting, he simplistically states that the Lascaux “Shaft” scene with the ithyphallic man and the disemboweled bison represents a fight between two shamans, one of whom has
assumed the form of a bison.

I must acknowledge that it is very tempting, in trying to trace the figure of the poet (or the artist, at large) back through shamanism, to sense his primordial presence in a small but potent series of compositions involving mysteriously wounded or killed male figures as well as bison- or bird-headed males, some of which appear to be in magical conjunction with animals. While I do not agree with Lommel that the disemboweled bison is another shaman, I am willing to accord magical significance to this composition, to see the bird-headed man as in a trance and definitely not, in this context, representative of a hunter (who would wear a bird mask to hunt a bison, let alone the rhinoceros in the left side of the composition?). So while I agree that the traces of something that looks like shamanism can be discerned in Upper Paleolithic art, I do not believe that shamanism can be confirmed as a general theory. Given our present awareness that Upper Paleolithic art did not have a single beginning and a single line of development and disappearance, I think that the era of seeking single theories to explain this art is over.

After Breuil, the dominating theorist was André Leori-Gourhan, whose range of research, at once quite complex and very simple, is set forth, in English translation, in *Treasures of Prehistoric Art* (1967). Breuil’s tack was to look at the animals on the cave walls as isolated figures, presumably done on a one by one basis. Leroi-Gourhan intuited that not only whole galleries might contain an all-over compositional motif, but that each decorated cave might represent a compositional lay-out permeating all of Upper Paleolithic cave art. He decided that the animals were not to be taken literally (as in the hunting/fertility hypotheses) but that they were symbols that participated in a complementary/oppositional dualism, tied to male and female principles (he later, in the 1980s, rejected the sexual component, but kept the primary dualism). Using a computer, he studied the contents of sixty-six caves (not all of which he visited—thus he was sometimes piggyback on early observers whose research would have been questionable by 1960s standards), identifying the species, counting them, noting what was next to what, and in what location of the cave. Because he found some evidence that bison images might be considered to be interchangeable with images of women (on the underside of a Pech Merle wall), he decided that bison (and aurochses and mammoths) represented the female principle, and that horses (along with ibexes and stags) represented the male. Since bison and horses
are the most often depicted animals, and since, according to Leroi-Gourhan's research, they appeared mostly in the middle portions of the caves, they became the centerpiece, as it were, of his evolving system, with less-depicted animals located at the peripheries of the central zones, and seldom-depicted animals (bears, felines, rhinoceroses) located in the most remote areas.

Seeing a relationship between triangles, ovals, and vulvas, he determined that all enclosure-oriented signs were female (variations on the vulva) and that their complementary male signs consisted of lines (variation on the phallus). Dots remained indeterminate, as did seldom-depicted animals. Leroi-Gourhan formulated an “ideal sanctuary” in which the female category was central, the male category semi-central and peripheral. The image of female centrality encroached upon as well as guarded by a male periphery has deep mythological resonance and is sympathetic with theories that posit matriarchal organizations—about which there is no solid evidence—for ancient cultures which were destroyed by patriarchal invasions.

Before offering some criticisms of Leroi-Gourhan’s system, I want to acknowledge that regardless of its limitations and inconsistencies, it has made everyone involved in the deep European past look much more carefully at its art than before. Just by countering his proposals, new aspects of what can be hypothesized as a multiphasic and regionally-specific art come to the fore.

I became suspicious of Leroi-Gourhan’s layouts while visiting Combarelles in the 1970s. On the basis of his map of the cave in Treasures of Prehistoric Art, one is given the strong impression that there are roughly a hundred or so figures and signs there. However, the Combarelles guide and care-taker, Claude Archambeau, pointed out that Leroi-Gourhan’s map left out a number of figures and was designed to highlight material that supported his over-all theory (as of 1997, Archambeau claimed there are over six hundred engravings in the cave).

Leroi-Gourhan himself acknowledged, regarding his map of Lascaux, that he had not taken into consideration the hundreds of engravings in the cave (presented in the 1979 book, Lascaux inconnu). He also noted that he had never visited the three “Volp” caves in the Pyrenées: Les Trois Frères, Le Tuc d’Audoubert, and Enlène—the first two of which are of major import—because he had bad relations with the Begouen family on whose property the three caves are to be found.
Furthermore, his survey was based only sixty-six caves and rock shelters. When he did his research, over one hundred and thirty caves were known in France alone, not counting Cantabrian Spain, Central Europe, and Russia. Many caves with only a few paintings or engravings which would not have supported the “ideal sanctuary” concept are left out of the survey. In short, the combination of selecting only certain materials within his limited choice of sites seriously undermines Leroi-Gourhan’s theories.

There are other problems as well. Caves are all different and their shapes and sizes vary considerably. It is often impossible to determine what the central zone is, relative to peripheral areas. In some cases, the original, or Upper Paleolithic, entrance is either unknown or not the same as the entrance discovered in the 20th century (thus throwing into question locations of first and last decorated areas, the exactness of which are essential to Leroi-Gourhan’s schema).

Alexander Marshack has also used a technological approach to cave research. He believes that microscopic photography of primarily portable objects enables him to read the mechanics, micromorphology, and ballistic traces of incisions. On the basis of excellent photographs and blow-ups (which enable the nearly unreadable to be read), he has worked out a thesis that grants intentionality to notches on bones that were in the past considered to be random doodlings. In *The Roots of Civilization* (1972), he argued that there is a conformity, on portable objects, between notch series and lunar phase cycles. This is a fascinating proposal which implies that a single, formal notational system existed in the Upper Paleolithic. In Marshack’s view such a system would have enabled people to calculate the passage of time, to predict the seasons, and to juxtapose carved images of plants and creatures according to the time of their mutual appearance. Marshack calls this process “time-factoring.” After carefully observing an engraved bone from La Marche with a horse head, an apparently pregnant mare, and many notational marks, he writes:

> The Mare drops its foal in the spring after an eleven month gestation and so the mare may be a seasonal image. The associated darts and signs may then represent rites, sacrifices or acts of participation related to the time of foaling. The combination of naturalistic “art,” sequences of darts and signs, and a lunar notation hints at a complex time-factored symbolism and mythology.
At work here is almost sheer guesswork based on a primary assumption that we are dealing with people who think like we do. The seasonal message that Marshack extracts from the composition is based on counting the notches (some of which he acknowledges are lost on a broken portion of the bone!), and coming up with a count which he interprets as “a possible lunar phasing” which “gives a perfect tally for 7 ½ months.” To make a solid case for lunar phases (or for that matter, menstrual periods, which he does not address), Marshack would have to demonstrate repeated sets of 28 to 31 notches, representing lunar months. Such groups of notches within the “7 ½ month” period do appear, but many other groups do too, with much larger and much smaller numbers.

Like Breuil, Lommel, and Leroi-Gourhan, Marshack (on the basis of portable art alone) has come up with a provocative if very questionable theory (that often disappears into circling generalizations in his writing), to interpret, as he puts it, “the roots of civilization.” At this time, it makes sense to suggest that there are undoubtedly traces of hunting and fertility magic, shamanism, and intentional notation based on observation in what has been rediscovered of what is left of the image-making from this 25,000 year continuum. Recent improved and solid carbon 14 dating has revealed that Cougnac and Pech Merle, for example, may have a multiphasic decoration period spanning 10,000 years. It is possible that one set of images came from a people in involved in hunting magic while another set (or an addition to an earlier composition) was made by people who used the cave for shamanic initiation and who had developed a notational system which associated female shamanistic rites with menstrual cycling. Images may be layered with differing world views even in a single composition.

In her essay, “On the Origin and Significance of Paleolithic Cave Art,” in *The Roots of Thinking* (1990), Maxine Sheets-Johnstone argues that all theoretical approaches to the significance of Upper Paleolithic cave art fail to take into consideration the experienced character of the caves themselves and what might have moved someone to make marks on their interior surfaces. Sheets-Johnstone believes that merely being inside a cave was a magical experience for Cro-Magnon people.

“To engrave or paint on the inside surface of a cave is precisely to enter actively into the potential magic of insides. To draw on the inside walls of a cave is to be part of
the potential transforming powers of insides.” In other words, she believes that a flurry of lines on a cave wall need not have been connected to hunting or fertility or shamanism or time-factoring to be experienced as magical. She proposes that merely to draw a line on a stone wall was to animate a surface and that it was through such animation that the wonder of enveloping forms was discovered. For Sheets-Johnstone, an oval has impact as an oval, or a closed enclosure, and before it could represent a vulva or a wound, it must have generated a kind of aesthetic pleasure based just on being an enclosed shape, implying interiority, in the cave’s enclosed space.

Her thinking here seems to me to be a sophisticated and thoughtful re-envisioning of the old “art for art’s sake” theories of the late 19th century. Sheets-Johnstone’s ideas fill in an important gap between the unadorned cave wall and the various theories that have been brought forth to account for why someone might draw or scratch there. She has grounded what might be called a “line for line’s sake” approach in the physical, kinesthetic sensation of participating in an “insideness.” She sees cave art as an extension of ancestral stone tool-making, in as much as both were generated by manual concepts, the results of “handiwork,” and the creation of spacial forms. Reflecting on her work, it occurred to me that a person standing before a cave wall with a burin-like object was in a position to redirect the tool initially involved in destruction/survival to an involvement in creation: the pleasure of inscribing a wandering or containing line. The wall itself becomes, in a sense, a tool-extension of the burin redirecting gouging and tearing (as in the case of hides) to a lateral glide.

A line in itself, especially an engraved one that cuts into a surface, creates a kind of suspended insideness, somewhat thwarted in that the stone resists direct penetration and by its often large and semi-flat surface encourages an off-shoot exploration. It reminds me of the thrill of ice-skating, of cutting into a surface and then horizontally extending the cut to form figures that with every drive and swoop not only contain their own integrity but imply an ongoing, even endless, charge of creative integrity.

Of course, we will never know why someone made the first line on a cave wall. Such a move might have been stimulated by cave bear claw scrapes, interesting cracks and fissures, or someone with a dirty hand slipping and grabbing for the wall.

At the point the engraver associates a curving line with an animal’s dorsal line, and is then in a position to add a head and legs, or to draw a specific animal marked by
certain signs, Sheets-Johnstone's ideas become less relevant. At the point we can say that a curved enclosure is probably a vulva (or a tooth or horse hoof), then all of the theories I have briefly discussed become worthy of consideration. There must have been many occasions in which the drawer of a wandering line saw, in his mind’s eye, a bison’s dorsal line and was thunderstruck by the sensation that the bison which was not there was there.

In bringing up the matter of the experienced character of the caves themselves, Sheets-Johnstone touches on a possibility that to my knowledge has not been discussed in studies of Upper Paleolithic cave art: that becoming part of the potential transforming power of insides might involve experiencing the cave insides as a living power whose presence the visitor might feel compelled to depict. While such activity evokes shamanism and may merge with shamanism in certain instances, it does not require shamanistic “credentials,” as it were, to experience a force outside of oneself in an isolational situation—especially one of prolonged time. The difference might be that unlike the uninitiated visitor, the shaman would have a mythic system to draw upon in explaining to himself and to others the power structure he is participating in.

In her essay, “Sensory Isolation and Vision Quest” (1980), Barbara MacLeod reports that a shaman's assistant—an uninitiated apprentice, I gather—left alone for some hours in the Balank'anche cave (near the Maya temple complex, Chichen-Itza, in the Yucatan peninsula) reported feeling a chill, after which “four times he heard noises from the water, as if something was moving on its surface. The shaman told him that he had been listening to the Galames—underwater jaguar spirits commonly propitiated in Yucatecan cave ceremonies.”

For the Maya, the sun in its night aspect became the Jaguar God of the Underworld, often depicted on Classic Maya monuments. Thus it would make uncommon sense for the Jaguar God to manifest itself in a cave—even today. In a similar way, certain Upper Paleolithic animals may have become associated with caves, and have been thought to sound or to manifest themselves in particular caves. The night-jaguar-underworld complex of the Mayas makes me think of the Upper Paleolithic depiction of predators, usually found in the most inaccessible or terminal areas of caves. With seventy-three lions in full view, Chauvet, discovered in 1994, in the Gorge d'Ardeche, is an exception to this.
Were a cave to manifest itself as bison or as horse power, it would be understandable if the person who experienced such would leave an image of that animal on the wall as testimony. Were the cave's power to have been indeterminate—a power neither animal nor human—then hybrid and/or grotesque depictions might be the coming to terms with a power that challenged visualization.

None of the Upper Paleolithic archeologists I have read or spoken to have reported visions or other psychic experiences that came about through prolonged time spent in a cave. Implicit in this lack of psychic experience is a position that treats the caves as potent in this respect only in the deep past. And it is possible that the power of a cave like Lascaux, having been magnificently received and documented in chamber after chamber, is now contained—having been “trapped” and applied to the walls some 17,000 years ago, it only exists today as the images themselves. Another thought: might cave decoration, or cave ensouling, been exorcistic in nature, in which fearsome powers were “tamed” by being “translated” from psychic manifestations into concrete images anyone could observe?

Given the lack of reported visions, it was very fascinating to read MacLeod’s account of the first of a series of experiments in sensory isolation in the caves of Belize. In November, 1972, with a Peace Corps companion, she spent 48 hours without lights or watches “an hour’s scramble from the entrance” of an unnamed cave. She and her companion, Kim, had water, food, foam pads, ponchos and sleeping bags (brought into the cave with the help of friends who were instructed to return 48 hours later). Given the fact that MacLeod’s account is believable and genuinely mysterious, along with the fact that such experience has yet to be brought to bear on the meaning of Upper Paleolithic cave imagery, I feel that it is worth quoting here at length:

At first I perceived the darkness as two-dimensional—a flat screen spattered occasionally by drifting, bluish cloudlike images whose edges continued to unfold. I had observed this on other occasions, on caving trips, waiting in darkness for five or ten minutes. These images were the same whether my eyes were open or closed. A ripple in the visual field accompanied the motion of my hand back and forth before my face; this too was unchanged by closing my eyes. I assumed that my brain could somehow translate positional information (it “knew” after
all what my hand was doing) into visual experience. The ripple itself seemed to be a barely perceptible shift from the very pale illumination to no illumination. Throughout the stay this phenomenon did not vary.

The most striking feature of the early phase, beginning within some four hours, was synaesthesia. While we were in total silence but for the sounds we ourselves made, the cave occasionally yielded a murmur—a drip plunking into some distant pool. This triggered a brilliant geometric pattern before my eyes (open or closed) much like the visual displays produced by psychedelic drugs (with which I had been familiar for eight years). Duration of these images was measurable in fractions of a second, yet they occasionally occurred in rapid-fire sequence. The scrape of Kim’s foot on rock (but not my own) triggered them as well. More “realistic” content appeared: street scenes, images from last week, last year, Little Lulu scenarios, faces of elementary school playmates. The dredging up of early material, while not emotionally charged, was unsettling; I felt that “anything” could happen. Otherwise I had the impression of being “not quite awake”—in an eternal hypnopompic state. At no time did I think the visual phenomena were outside my head. Struggling to “awaken” and shake off the growing uneasiness, I began to explore my immediate surroundings with my fingertips, and found fascinating complexity in the variegated landscapes of the cave floor. Somehow reassured, I gave in more easily to the random visual play. We discussed this briefly; as soon as each was satisfied that the other was experiencing the same thing, we returned to silence. Thus it seemed that acceptance of the inner kaleidoscope was facilitated by occasional external contact.

My only panicky moment came upon awakening from my first sleep. I found myself in interstellar space, chest tight, heard pounding. Then I felt the ground beneath me, and heard Kim’s even breathing, and knew where I was. It was an important transition point. The visual displays were much diminished after this first sleep period, and another phenomenon prevailed instead. The darkness had acquired three-
dimensionality, and seemed to be illuminated by a light behind and above my head. There was of course nothing to be seen, and the infinity of the field before me seemed to take me into itself, such that I was no longer contained in my skull. The “illumination” varied in intensity. Briefly I considered this light against that of flashlights, carbide lamps—and the thought of the latter made me wince. Artificial lighting was a deception, a lie. Stalagmites knew the truth. Had I undertaken a walk to another part of the cave—even out into the adjacent room—with this attitude, I’d likely have had a come-uppance, but I felt no more need to move than stalagmites did, and I was amused at the absurdity, the simplicity, the profoundity. I perceived the incessant, now disorganized verbage in my head as a disintegrating tapestry. I watched warp and woof drift apart, watched threads slide silently off-stage... this is it... all there ever was...I could not hold my concentration for long, but that was it, and I returned easily to it, letting the last thought go, again and again. It was a gentler yet more profound merger with that elegant emptiness than any I had ever experienced with LSD. Much of the last half of the stay was spent in this state, or drifting in and out of it.

Two auditory phenomena were noteworthy, in that they were unexplainable, and we both heard them. Nearing the halfway point (as best I can judge) I heard a tinkling sound on the ceiling—some two meters above my head, as though two soda straw formations had been repeatedly struck together. Only a human (or the unthinkable...) could make such a sound. I told myself it was a cave cricket... doing a staccato drum tap on a soda straw with his antennae? Impossible! Still, it was a cave cricket. Fifteen minutes later Kim asked me if I heard that sound, like a small bell tinkling. He’d been pondering it too. The other unexplained sound came perhaps three hours later. I heard a series of howls coming from the direction of the entrance. This time there was no delay:

“Did you hear THAT?”

“I SURE DID!”
End of conversation. My disordered mind grappled with explanations... a dog at the entrance in pursuit of game? No, the entrance was too far away. Another small entrance hitherto unsuspected? A possibility. The Maya K’ank’in dog, who guides the souls of the dead on the first leg of the journey into the underworld? A possibility, as good as any other, and for that matter, that was no cave cricket. Now I knew I had crossed a discriminatory threshold, beyond which supernatural explanations worked as well as any other, and rather than fear for my sanity I welcomed the chance to meet ancient Maya gods head-on. Much later:

“Isn’t the entrance too far away?”

“Much too far away.”

The supernatural tour de force was not long in coming. Kim was suddenly struck by a chill. He climbed, trembling, into his sleeping bag (the cave was a stable 74 degrees) and I wrapped mine around him, and then put my arms around him. On contact, I felt his chill as an energy field, and my trembling was that of fear. There was something else in here with us. My last vestiges of rationality crumbled, and I felt like the sorcerer’s apprentice who’d thumbed the wrong spell book. Neither of us could speak for several minutes, and during this time I had an image of the “presence” as an amoeba-like consciousness which was the cave, rather than some spook flitting around in it. I knew the several kilometers of its corridors quite well, and now I felt myself to be everywhere in it at once. I suddenly realized that this was only the portal—that I could still choose to enter or not—into a relationship with this entity. I chose to postpone the apprenticeship, to be better prepared before I sought it out again. (I have not yet encountered it again, nor have I consciously sought it out, though I have had other remarkable experiences in this domain.)

When we could speak, Kim and I concurred that we had been three, and were again two. He had felt no more prepared to deal with the Other than I, though, like myself, he had considered it essentially
benevolent. Thereafter, until our friends came (more or less when expected), the rest of our sojourn was tranquil, anti-climactic. At the distance of this writing, it is extremely difficult to grasp the certainty I had about the entity and the potential apprenticeship. I feel that the strategy of a second approach requires a long solo sit in the same place; I have not yet done it. On the other hand, if this entity was a projection from within myself, it should be accessible in another cave, or in the isolation tank. The concepts of “strategy” and “approach” are linear; I actually have no adequate way of thinking about a second encounter. May we meet again. May I not blow it.

What for the shaman assistant was something moving on the surface of the water has, in the context of MacLeod’s experience, become an “entity” with whom one could enter into a relationship. MacLeod’s sensing it as an “amoeba-like consciousness” evokes two things for me:

1) A fusion between MacLeod’s projected subconscious material and the forceful presence of the cave’s stone and darkness—an unstable fusion, to be sure, a wavering intermixing that could be sensed as “amoeba-like”—

2) The hybrid heads and figurations in Upper Paleolithic caves in which there appears to be a struggle going on within the head (or figure) itself, as if some amoebic power were on the brink of division (elsewhere I have identified these figures as “grotesque,” recalling that the word means “of the grotto, or cave).

I have also elsewhere suggested that in Upper Paleolithic art we may be witnessing the result of the crisis of Cro-Magnon people separating the animal out of their about-to-be human heads. On the basis of Sheets-Johnstone’s and MacLeod’s writing: what role did the caves themselves play in this process?

I more and more think that the empirical daytime world of hunting and surviving
effected a widening gap between early human culture and animal life, a gap that was fraught with ambivalence: via tools and weapons (spear throwers and bows and arrows in particular) which led to increasing group coordination, man was no longer fundamentally prey. In fact he was beginning to assert himself as superior to animals which were increasingly his materials as well as his arsenal: he used their bones and antlers to help him kill them. At the same time, they were still his teachers, auraed with a sense of perpetuity, extraordinary display and variety, and innate survival instincts so mysterious as to make them divine. Cro-Magnon had entered a separation continuum with creatures upon which his life depended, with whom he must have felt a profound bond.

Under such circumstances, it would seem that a terrible need welled up in Cro-Magnon to somehow deal with sensations that were psychologically tearing him apart. I think the caves may have presented themselves as a kind of primordial laboratory in which this unsettling innerness—sensations that were completely inexplicable—could be dramatized, or more simply, expressed. In comparison to the animal-filled, flurry of a world above, the caves were a tabula rasa: blank and receptive once the play on “insides, that Sheets-Johnstone discusses, charmed people into simple, mimetic gestures involving scrawls and meandering lines.

At the same time, the caves were hardly a tabula rasa at all: they possessed personalities with their marvelous natural formations. They were fearsome, awesome, and charged with an atmosphere in which the burgeoning human subconscious may have become aware of itself as part of a conjunction experienced as the “entity” of a particular cave.

Returning to the two numbered points I made following MacLeod’s commentary, it seems possible that the amoebic “entity” experience (an unstable fusion between a person and the cave itself) was transformed, on the cave walls, into grotesque and hybrid figures which, on one level, represented a momentary truce in the separation continuum—Cro-Magnon rejoining in image his world-in-division. And as I have also elsewhere written, proto-shamanism may have come into being as a reactive swerve from this separation continuum, to rebind human being to the fantasy of a paradise that did not exist until the separation was sensed.

Now it might appear that after meandering lines and crude cup-shaped indentations (called cupules), the earliest figurations would have been grotesque and
hybrid formations, and that once Cro-Magnon spotted the emergent animal as part of a hybrid, he would have been in the position to draw the animal itself. However, several considerations lead me to believe that this perspective is false, and a trap.

It will probably turn out that hybrids appears in all periods of Upper Paleolithic image-making, and that realistic animals do too. Chauvet, with its earliest figures (realistic animals) dated earlier than 32,000 years ago, contains what appears to be a Minotaur-like figure bending over a large black vulva. I think this set of figures is considered to be around 30,000 years old. Combarelles, whose engravings are dated (stylistically) between 13,000 and 11,000 B.P. contains over 50 human figurations, many of which are hybrid or quite grotesque.

Furthermore, I tell myself, I must not fall into a new blanket, monolithic theory trap of positing a gradational scale of image evolution for the entire Upper Paleolithic. Since it is turning out to be multiphasic and highly regional, a kind of magma of appearing and disappearing creative peaks and hollows, one needs to study a specific regional culture from start to finish to be able to assess the changes in its image-making. This will most probably never be possible..

Finally, I think we must acknowledge that there is a significant difference between experiencing an “entity” in isolational cave darkness, and the kind of work that appears to have taken place in Lascaux: many lamps, scaffolding indications, and a high probability of coordinated team work. I suspect that a significant number of the animals, especially in the Rotunda and the Axial Gallery, were painted by people who went into the cave with the intention of painting them.

In the long run, the images most difficult to get a grip on may turn out to be the realistically-depicted animals either in isolation, such as the single engraved bison at La Grèze, or in groups that appear to have no narrative connection (the Salon Noir of Niaux). Most of the cave art theories over the past one hundred years have been based on exceptions, not rules:

--the “hunting hypothesis” was based on the relatively small percentage of wounded or “struck” animals;
--the fertility theory on the tiny percentage of questionably pregnant figures and childbirth scenes;
--shamanism on what I have found to be around thirty hybrid or
“magical” figures;
--Leroi-Gourhan’s “ideal sanctuary” on a statistically inaccurate “ideal” model and his “sexual pairing” on an arbitrary symbolization of animals and a Freudian reductionism of signs;
--Marshack’s “time-factored,” “storied” symbolism on arbitrary “lunar” readings of notches on portable objects alone.

All of these theories have two serious faults:

1) On the basis of a small percentage of questionable evidence (are the animals really wounded? Are the notches really lunar countings? etc), over-all blanket theories resulted which attempted to sweep everything under a single explanation.

2) No theory has accounted for realistic, unwounded, non-pregnant, non-narrative animals, almost always depicted from a side view, for the most part horses and bison, that make up by far the largest percentage of Upper Paleolithic imagery.

Hans Peter Duerr writes: “concepts such as fylgia, nagual, and chargi designate that part of human nature about which we can say nothing, or at least nothing that would be intelligible to those who have never cross the boundary.”

Since no one today has crossed what might be called “the Upper Paleolithic boundary,” some of us find ourselves like hungry ghosts hovering a primordial psychic feast that we can sense, and see, but cannot contextualize. It touches something in us that we struggle to unlock, and by attempting to do so find a grounding and belonging that historical antecedents do not provide.

I continue to intuitively believe that there is a core complex radiating through certain aspects of Upper Paleolithic image-making: animal figurations, whether partial, hybrid, or whole, represent the collective passing of certain Ice Age fauna through Cro-Magnon mind. As the animals pressed through, this mind infused them with its own animality about which it felt so ambivalent—with the end result being a simulacrum of the animal world on the surfaces of a cave’s “insides.” Stone walls became a kind of image
range containing the paradoxical application of animal outlines on stone as emergence of animals from stone. The facilitator of such two-way traffic may have been, in any region’s cultural turmoil, the fusion of a person and a cave, stuff moving out of each to “grotesque,” as it were, in the lamp-lit or total dark.

Such experiences were certainly not limited to shamans or artists or even to adults. The wavering spectrum of groping crudeness to masterly finesse offers a foundational dream for universal creativity: art can be made under almost any circumstances by anyone, anywhere.
CONTRIBUTORS
James Arnold’s work on Aimé Césaire spans four decades. In 1981 he published a book on Césaire’s poetry at Harvard University Press. In the mid-1980s he established the CARAFBooks collection (CARibbean and AFrican Literature translated from French) at the University of Virginia Press. Arnold commissioned Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith to translate Césaire’s Lyric and Dramatic Poetry, 1946-1982 for the CARAF series (1990). He was the editor-in-chief of Césaire’s complete literary works in French, completed in the poet’s centennial year (2013) for CNRS-Éditions. Since the 1980s Arnold has emerged as a major figure in comparative Caribbean literary studies. He was editor-in-chief of the three-volume History of Literature in the Caribbean, published under the sponsorship of the International Comparative Literature Association between 1994 and 2001. During the same period he founded, at the University Press of Virginia, the cross-cultural book series New World Studies. James Arnold is writing a new book in French on Aimé Césaire’s poetry and poetics that will draw on major discoveries made by his research team for their Paris edition as well as the refinements resulting from his collaboration with Clayton Eshleman.

Eugénio de Andrade (1923-2005) was, after Fernando Pessoa, the best known Portuguese poet of the 20th century. He won all of Portugal’s literary awards, as well as the prestigious Prix Jean Malrieu from France. His work has appeared in well over twenty languages, including French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Hungarian, Polish, Norwegian, Greek, Japanese and Chinese. In 1988 he made a reading tour of the United States with his translator, Alexis Levitin. Here in this country, eleven volumes of his work have appeared: Inhabited Heart, White on White, Memory of Another River, Solar Matter, Another Name for Earth, The Shadow’s Weight, The Slopes of a Gaze, Close to Speech, Dark Domain, Forbidden Words: Selected Poetry of Eugénio de Andrade (New Directions, 2003), and The Art of Patience.

profesiones (stories), the first part of a trilogy. English translations of his poetry have recently appeared in Americas Quarterly and Dispatches. A bilingual fine art broadside of Aroche’s Andamios / Scaffoldings (tr. Dykstra) is forthcoming from Red Hydra Press.

Dawn-Michelle Baude is an international writer, educator and Senior Fulbright Scholar. The author of seven volumes of poetry (Finally: A Calendar, Mindmade, 2009 being the latest), two volumes of translations, three art catalogues, three communications books, and one children’s book, Baude has written for Condé Nast, the Los Angeles Times and Huffington Post. Her writing on art, design and culture has been featured in Newsweek International and on artcritical.com, as well as other outlets. Baude’s prose and poetry have appeared in The Writing Disorder, Interim, TXTOBJX, and New American Writing, among others. Excerpts from her memoir, FREEZE FRAME, won First Place in Nonfiction at the 2016 Tucson Festival of Books and the fall 2016 Noepe Residency Fellowship. She has taught at the American University of Paris, American University of Beirut, and John Cabot University in Rome. At present, she makes her home in Las Vegas, where she is a Contributing Writer at the Las Vegas Weekly.

Susan Bernofsky directs the translation program at Columbia University’s School of the Arts. Her awards include the 2015 Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, the 2015 Oxford Weidenfeld Translation Prize, the 2015 Ungar Award for Literary Translation, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translation Prize and the Hermann Hesse Translation Prize. She blogs about translation at www.translationista.com.

Aloysius Bertrand (1807-1841) is considered the father of the French prose poem. His masterpiece, Gaspard de la Nuit, subtitled “Fantasies in the Manner of Rembrandt and Callot,” dated 1836 though published posthumously in 1842, gathers the bulk of his prose poetry. Influenced by the German Romantics, and particularly by E.T.A. Hoffmann’s collection of short stories and essays, Fantasy Pieces in the Manner of Callot, it offers, in compact fragments few of which are longer than a page, a phantasmagoric vision of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance complete with alchemists, minstrels, saltimbanks, executioners, gnomes, witches at their Sabbath, and the devil himself. The book proved an inspiration on Charles Baudelaire, Stéphane Mallarmé, and Isidore Ducasse, and was
Paul Blackburn was born in St. Albans, Vermont in 1926. He translated work by Federico García Lorca, Octavio Paz, Pablo Picasso and Julio Cortázar. He also translated the entirety of the Poem of the Cid. His translations from the Provençal are collected in Proensa. His own Collected Poems was published in 1985. He died in 1971.

Daniel Borzutzky’s books and chapbooks include, among others, The Performance of Becoming Human (2016), In the Murmurs of the Rotten Carcass Economy (2015), Bedtime Stories for the End of the World! (2015), Data Bodies (2013), The Book of Interfering Bodies (2011), and The Ecstasy of Capitulation (2007). He has translated Raúl Zurita’s The Country of Planks (2015) and Song for his Disappeared Love (2010), and Jaime Luis Huenún’s Port Trakl (2008). His work has been supported by the Illinois Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Pen/Heim Translation Fund. He lives in Chicago.

André Breton was born in 1896 in Tinchebray, France. For over forty years he was the leader, and primary theorist, of the Paris Surrealists, and whose work served as a touchstone for Surrealist groups around the world. His later life was also marked by a commitment to Anarchist and Antifascist activities, as well as opposition to French colonialism—he was one of the signatories of the Déclaration sur le droit à l’insoumission dans la guerre d’Algérie. He died in 1966.

Garrett Caples is the author of three full-length poetry collections, including the brand-new Power Ballads (Wave Books, 2016). He has also written a book of essays, Retrievals (Wave, 2014), and a pamphlet, Quintessence of the Minor: Symbolist Poetry in English (Wave, 2010). He co-edited Incidents of Travel in Poetry: New and Selected Poems by Frank Lima (City Lights, 2016), Particulars of Place by Richard O. Moore (Omnidawn, 2015), and Collected Poems of Philip Lamantia (California, 2013). A freelance writer, he is also an editor at City Lights, where he curates the Spotlight poetry series. He lives in San Francisco.

Valerie Mejer Caso was born in 1966 in Mexico City. She has five books of poetry: de la ola el atajo (Amargord, 2013), Cuaderno de Edimburgo (Amargord, 2012), Geografias de Niebla

Rosalía de Castro is the grand poet of the Galician Rexurdimento or resurgence of Galician in the late 19th century. She lived from 1836-1885 and wrote two books of poetry in Galician, *Cantares Gallegos* (Galician Songs) and *Follas Novas* (New Leaves), as well as poetry and fiction in Castilian. Her work is influenced by German romanticism as well as by the political events in her own country, Galicia, which was treated negatively by Spain (the state that still encloses it to this day) and whose economic situation forced the emigration of one-quarter of Galician men in the late 19th century. Her work resonates today as our contemporary for its relentless defense of women’s rights and for the rights of the poor, of migrants, of those who live precarious lives. *Galician Songs* was published on 17 May 1863; since 1963, the 17th of May has been celebrated as a Galician holiday, Galician Literature Day, and each year one writer is chosen for extensive celebration.

Paul Celan is widely considered to be one, of not the, major German-language poets of the twentieth century. Born in 1920 in Czernowitz, Bukowina (now in the Ukraine), he was sent to a forced labor camp during World War II. After two years in Bukarest, Romania, he settled in Paris in 1948, where he lived and wrote until his suicide in 1970.

Aimé Césaire was born in 1913 in Martinique. In 1936, he founded the journal *L’Étudiant noir*, and published the first works by Leon Damas and Leopold Sedar-Senghor. In 1941, he and his wife, the writer and scholar Suzanne Césaire, founded the journal *Tropiques*. He is best known in the United States for two books: *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* (available as *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*, tr. Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith) and *Discours sur le colonialisme* (available as *Discourse on Colonialism*, tr. Joan Pinkham). He died in 2008.

René Char was born in L’Isle sur la Sorgue in 1907. His poems began appearing in
publication in the early 1920’s, and his first book appeared in 1928. Soon thereafter, he met Paul Éluard, André Breton, Louis Aragon, and René Crevel and became active in Surrealist activities. During the Second World War, he was a commander in the French Resistance, and remained engaged in political activism for the remainder of his life. He died in 1988.

Kristin Dykstra has translated numerous poetry collections, including many by contemporary Cuban writers. Three of her most recent bilingual editions, with her critical introductions, appeared from the University of Alabama Press in 2016: The Counterpunch (And Other Horizontal Poems), by Juan Carlos Flores; Breach of Trust, by Ángel Escobar; and The World as Presence, by Marcelo Morales. In 2015 she wrote the commentary series “Intermedium” for Jacket2. Her translation of Other Letters to Milena, by Reina María Rodríguez, was published by UAP in 2014, and her prior translations of poetry by Rodríguez are available in bilingual editions from Factory School and Green Integer. She won the 2014 Gulf Coast Prize in Literary Translation for her renditions of poems by Morales.

Paul Eluard (1895-1952) was an active member in Paris DADA and an early participant in the Paris Surrealist group. By the late 1930’s, he had moved completely away from Surrealism. During the Second World War reaffirmed his commitment to the Communist Party, and also became an active member of the French Resistance. His poems of resistance during the war were widely circulated throughout occupied France. In English, his books include Capital of Pain, Love, Poetry, and Last Love Poems, all from Black Widow Press.

The three Clayton Eshleman poems in this issue are from Penetralia, a manuscript of poems written over the past decade to be published by Black Widow Press in 2017. The essay on Upper Paleolithic cave art was written in 2007 for a lecture with slides on Eshleman’s research on the origin of image making that resulted in his 2003 study: Juniper Fuse: Upper Paleolithic Imagination & The Construction of the Underworld (Wesleyan University Press). This is the first book ever by a poet on this vast, essential, and relatively uncharted realm. Eshleman continues to live with his wife Caryl in Ypsilanti, Michigan. His most recent books include Clayton Eshleman / The Essential Poetry 1960-2015 published by Black Widow
Press, and (as editor) *A Sulfur Anthology* from Wesleyan University Press, 2015, based on the magazine he founded and edited from 1981 to 2000.

Sesshu Foster has taught in East L.A. for 30 years. He’s also taught writing at the University of Iowa, the California Institute for the Arts, Naropa University’s Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics, Pomona College and the University of California, Santa Cruz. His work has been published in *The Oxford Anthology of Modern American Poetry*, *Language for a New Century: Poetry from the Middle East, Asia and Beyond*, and *BAX: Best American Experimental Writing*. Winner of two American Book Awards, his most recent books are the novel *Atomik Aztex* and the hybrid *World Ball Notebook*.

Antonio Gamoneda (born 1931 Oviedo, Spain) is the recipient of Spain’s Cervantes Prize (2006) among other honors. The poems in *Arden las perdida* (The Burning of Losses), like those in *Gravestones* (U. New Orleans Press 2010, trans. Donald Wellman) draw upon memories that originate in the last years of the Spanish Civil War. In these poems Gamoneda unpacks trace memories from his childhood that derive from witnessing unspeakable acts of violence and atrocities committed by the armies of Francisco Franco who used punishing brute force to consolidate his powers. The fascination of these images, for the reader lies in the process of recovering memories that the poet and other survivors were forced to suppress for the sake of survival. At several movements in the unfolding of this collection the theme of voluntary suicide arises, desperate acts on the part of those unable to cope with oppression and whose fate is memorialized here. Gamoneda uses a fragmented language struggling to grasp unspeakable contents that haunt not only the spirit of the author but the spirit of contemporary Spain, a spirit not in the least secure about its recent past and its current identity. A key image from these poems of mournful soul searching is that of un armario lleno de sombras (“a wardrobe filled with shadow”) a phrase which also serves as the title for Gamoneda’s recent autobiography.

Galo Ghigliotto (Valdivia, 1977) is a poet, fictation writer and editor. His books of poetry include *Valdivia* (2006), *Bonnie&Clyde* (2007) and *Aeropuerto* (2009), and a work of fiction *A cada rato el fin del mundo* (2013). He is the publisher of an independent poetry press – Editorial Cuneta. He lives in Santiago, Chile.
Michelle Gil-Montero is a poet and translator of contemporary Latin American poetry. Her book translations include This Blue Novel by Valerie Mejer Caso; Dark Museum (2014), Mouth of Hell (2013), and The Tango Lyrics (2013) by Maria Negroni; and Poetry After the Invention of América: Don’t Light the Flower by Chilean poet Andrés Ajens (2011). She has published one poetry chapbook, Attached Houses (2013). She lives in Pittsburgh.


Anne Kawala is a transdisciplinary artist & writer based in France, who often collaborates with directors, choreographers, musicians, and artists. Performances for dialogue, dance, and theater have been performed internationally at venues such as Palais de Tokyo in Paris, Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart, and Mamco in Geneva, among many others. Books include De la rose et du renard, leurs couleurs et odors (CiPM), Le Cowboy et le poète (Editions de l’Attente), and Le déficit indispensable; screwball (Al Dante). Anne Kawala co-directs the online review RoTor. More information can be found at http://anne.kawala.free.fr.


Born in Spanish Harlem in 1939, Frank Lima endured a difficult and violent childhood, discovering poetry as an inmate of the juvenile drug treatment center on North Brother Island in the East River, under the tutelage of the painter, Sherman Drexler. Through
Drexler, Lima met Kenneth Koch, Frank O’Hara, and other members of the New York School of poets, leading to his first book, *Inventory* (Tibor de Nagy Editions, 1964). After publishing two further volumes, *Underground with the Oriole* (Dutton, 1971) and *Angel: New Poems* (Liveright, 1976), and earning an MFA at Columbia University in 1976, Lima withdrew from the poetry world, pursuing a successful career as a professional chef. A new and selected poems, also called *Inventory* (Hard Press), edited by David Shapiro, appeared in 1997. He continued to write a poem a day, but seldom published, for the rest of his life. He died in 2013. *Incidents of Travel in Poetry: New and Selected Poems* appeared from City Lights in 2016.

Nathaniel Mackey is the author of six books of poetry, the most recent of which is *Blue Fasa* (New Directions, 2015); an ongoing prose work, *From a Broken Bottle Traces of Perfume Still Emanate*, whose fifth volume, *Late Arcade*, is forthcoming from New Directions in 2017; and two books of criticism, the most recent of which is *Paracritical Hinge: Essays, Talks, Notes, Interviews* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2005). *Strick: Song of the Andoumboulou 16-25*, a compact disc recording of poems read with musical accompaniment (Royal Hartigan, percussion; Hafez Modirzadeh, reeds and flutes), was released in 1995 by Spoken Engine Company. He is the editor of the literary magazine *Hambone* and coeditor, with Art Lange, of the anthology *Moment’s Notice: Jazz in Poetry and Prose* (Coffee House Press, 1993). His awards and honors include the National Book Award for poetry, the Stephen Henderson Award from the African American Literature and Culture Society, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize from the Poetry Foundation and the Bollingen Prize for American Poetry. He is the Reynolds Price Professor of English at Duke University.

Andrei Molotiu is the author of the art-historical monograph *Fragonard’s Allegories of Love* (J. Paul Getty Museum) and of *Nautilus* (Fahrenheit Verlag), a collection of his abstract comics, and the editor of the Eisner-Award nominated *Abstract Comics: The Anthology* (Fantagraphics). His art has been exhibited nationally, and his poems and poetry translations have appeared in *Exquisite Corpse, The Hat*, and Beacons. He teaches at Indiana University, Bloomington. His art can be seen on the sporadically updated blotcomics.blogspot.com.
Erín Moure has published 16 books of poetry, one of essays, a memoir, and has translated 15 books of poetry from French, Spanish, Galician and Portuguese. Recent work include *Insecession* (BookThug), a biopoetics published with Chus Pato’s *Secession*, and *Kapusta* (Anansi). New in 2016 are translations of François Turcot’s *My Dinosaur* (BookThug), Chus Pato’s *Flesh of Leviathan* (Omnidawn) and Rosalía de Castro’s *New Leaves* (Small Stations). *Planetary Noise: The Poetry of Erín Moure* (edited by Shannon Maguire) is forthcoming from Wesleyan in 2017, as is her translation of Wilson Bueno’s *Paraguayan Sea* (Nightboat).

Sawako Nakayasu was born in Japan and raised in the US, and has also lived in France and China along the way. Her books include *The Ants* (Les Figues Press) and *Texture Notes* (Letter Machine), and recent translations include Tatsumi Hijikata’s *Costume en Face* (Ugly Duckling Presse) and *The Collected Poems of Sagawa Chika* (Canarium Books), which won the 2016 PEN Award for Poetry in Translation. Other books include *Hurry Home Honey* (Burning Deck) and *Mouth: Eats Color – Sagawa Chika Translations, Anti-translations, & Originals*, which is a multilingual work of both original and translated poetry. Her translation of Takashi Hiraide’s *For the Fighting Spirit of the Walnut* (New Directions) received the 2009 Best Translated Book Award from Three Percent. Nakayasu has also appeared on Japanese television as a poetry judge, performed in a re-enactment of Yvonne Rainer’s *Grand Union Dreams* (dir. Yelena Gluzman) as well as in Cornelius Cardew’s Paragraphs 4 & 7 from *The Great Learning* (dir. Tomomi Adachi).

Gaspar Orozco was born in Chihuahua, Mexico in 1971. He was a member of the punk rock band Revolución X in the 1990s and codirector of the 2011 documentary film *Subterraneans: Mexican Norteña Music in New York*. His books of poetry include *Abrir fuego* (Mexico City: Tierra Adentro, 2000), *El silencio de lo que cae* (Mexico City: Programa Editorial de la Coordinación de Humanidades, UNAM, 2000), *Notas del país de Z* (bilingual, translation by Mark Weiss) (Chihuahua: Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua, 2009), *Astrodiario* (El Paso: Bagatela, 2010), *Autocinema* (Mexico City: Conaculta 2010), *Plegarias a la Reina Mosca* (Monterrey: Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, 2011), and, in collaboration with the artist Jairus, *Game of Mirrors*, an interactive e-book with English and Chinese translations. His work is featured in several poetry anthologies and has been published in literary publications in Mexico, the United States and the United Kingdom. He has translated
poetry from English, French and classical Chinese into Spanish. A career diplomat, he has served in New York, and at the Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles, as Consul for Community Affairs. He lives currently in New York.

Virgilio Piñera was born in Cuba in 1912. He was an extremely prolific poet, playwright, critic and fiction writer. His writing began to appear in publication in the early 1930’s, and he spent much of the time in the 1940’s and 1950’s in self-imposed exile in Argentina, where he was friends with Polish author Witoldo Gombrowicz. He returned to Cuba in 1958, just prior to the victory of the Cuban Revolution, and soon ran afoul of Fidel Castro and Che Guevara due to his homosexuality. His work languished in obscurity for most of his remaining years, but is now regarded as a giant of Cuban letters.

Reina María Rodríguez was born in 1952 in Havana, Cuba. She currently has more than thirty books in print, with others forthcoming. PennSound hosts an author page for Rodríguez with audio and video resources. In 2014 Rodríguez won the Pablo Neruda Ibero-American Prize for Poetry, an award granted in Chile by an international jury and Chile’s National Council for the Arts. Previously she received Cuba’s National Literature Prize for 2013, the Alejo Carpentier Medal for achievement in Cuban literature (2002), and numerous other awards. She first emerged onto Cuba’s national scene after she won a Julián del Casal prize in 1980, awarded by Cuba’s National Union of Artists and Writers (UNEAC) for a collection called Cuando una mujer no duerme (When a Woman Isn’t Sleeping). It was followed in 1984 by the prestigious international Casa de las Américas prize for another book, Para un cordero blanco (For a White Lamb). Rodríguez went on to write a string of poetry collections, including En la arena de Padua (On the Sands of Padua, winner of the Plural Magazine Prize [Mexico] and a Cuban National Critics’ Award in the early 1990s), La foto del invernadero (The Winter Garden Photograph, with which she took a rare second Casa de las Américas prize in 1998 and picked up another National Critics’ Award in 2000 for good measure), and many more. An incomplete list of her books of poetry from the twenty-first century includes Catch and Release (2006, National Critics’ Award; a reprint will appear in Spain in 2016), Las fotos de la Señora Loss (2009), Poemas de Navidad (2011), and El Piano (released in Brazil in 2014 in a bilingual Spanish/Portuguese edition), as well as several editions forthcoming in various countries in 2016.
Kit Schluter is a writer, translator, and bookmaker living in Oakland, CA. His translation of Anne Kawala’s Screwball will be published by Canarium Books in 2018. More information at www.kitschluter.com.

Susan M. Schultz is author of several volumes of poetry and poetic prose, including two volumes of Dementia Blog (Singing Horse Press) and the most recent installment of Memory Cards, this the Thomas Traherne series, from Talisman House. She founded Tinfish Press in 1995, and also writes criticism, reviews, and meditations on her blog. She is also author of The Poetics of Impasse in Modern and Contemporary Poetry from the University of Alabama Press. She lives with her family in Kāne‘ohe, Hawai‘i and cheers for the St. Louis Cardinals.

Petre Solomon (1923-1991), was a Romanian poet, translator and critic from Bucarest who met Celan during the latter’s stay in the Romanian capital between 1945 & 1947. The two remained friends and corresponded until 1969. In 1987, Solomon published Paul Celan: Dimensiunea Româneasca (Paul Celan: The Romanian Dimension), a memoir of Celan’s years in Bukarest.

Yoko Tawada was born in Tokyo in 1960 and moved to Germany when she was twenty-two. She writes in both Japanese and German and has received the Akutagawa Prize, the Adelbert von Chamisso Prize, the Goethe Medal, and the Tanizaki Prize.

Matt Turner (b.1974) is a poet, translator and critic who lives in New York City and Beijing. His work can be found in Dispatches, Hyperallergic Weekend, Jacket2 and is forthcoming in SET. He is the translator of Lu Xun’s Wild Grass.

Keith Waldrop is the author of numerous books of poetry and prose, and has also translated works by Charles Baudelaire, Paul Verlaine, Anne-Marie Albiach, Edmond Jabès, Jacques Roubaud and Claude Royet-Journoud. In 2009, his Transcendental Studies: A Trilogy, won the National Book Award for poetry. He currently lives in Providence, Rhode Island where he, with Rosmarie Waldrop, runs Burning Deck Press.
Mark Weiss has published nine books of poetry, most recently As Luck Would Have It (Shearsman Books, 2015) and Dark Season (Least Weasel, 2011). Thirty-Two Short Poems for Bill Bronk, Plus One appeared as an ebook in 2013 (http://www.argotistonline.co.uk). He edited, with Harry Polkinhorn, Across the Line / Al otro lado: The Poetry of Baja California (Junction, 2002). Among his other translations are Stet: Selected Poems of José Kozer (Junction, 2006), Cuaderno de San Antonio / The San Antonio Notebook, by Javier Manríquez (Editorial Praxis, 2004), and the ebook La isla en peso/ The Whole Island, by Virgilio Piñera (www.shearsman.com, 2010). His bilingual anthology The Whole Island: Six Decades of Cuban Poetry was published in 2009 by the University of California Press. He lives at the edge of Manhattan’s only forest.

Donald Wellman is a poet and translator. As editor of O.ARS, he produced a series of annual anthologies of experimental work, including Coherence (1981) and Translations: Experiments in Reading (1984). His poetry works with sources from several languages. His collections include Roman Exercises (Talisman House, 2015), The Cranberry Island Series (Dos Madres, 2013), A North Atlantic Wall (Dos Madres, 2010), Prolog Pages (Ahadada, 2009), and Fields (Light and Dust, 1995). He has translated books by Antonio Gamoneda, Emilio Prados, Yvan Goll, and Roberto Echavarren. Albiach / Celan: Reading Across Languages is forthcoming (2016) from Annex Press.

Gozo Yoshimasu was born in 1939 in Tokyo, Japan. He is the author of numerous books of poetry and prose, and is the recipient of the Takami Jun Prize in 1971, the Rekitei Prize, the Purple Ribbon Medal in 2003, and the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays in 2013. His Alice Iris Red Horse, edited by Forrest Gander, is from New Directions.