

NOON 10





NOON | journal of the short poem

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another day in paradise lost in translation

the same laugh I always laugh when Groucho says that line

at the edge of kind *Kind of Blue* blue

*Jim Kacian*

I dreamed about the zenlessness of scaffolding  
a universe full of light & airy cages  
each one invisible

the ghostly assemblies of most of a lifetime  
shimmer in midsummer dusk  
faint blue July lines are converging behind us

so much of the earth is made of ruin compressed  
into a temporary growing medium  
fenced off & funded for a few baleful harvests

the river is illuminated by late light  
echoing songs of redemption  
though what is carried where remains a mystery

*Peter Hughes*

rain  
a gentle  
suffering

*Stephen Nelson*

snow in the creator's synapses

*Dietmar Tauchner*

## CROW

That black bird in my head: is it a crow or a vulture? It matters which. One's an omen; the other, evidence of death. I checked in on my friends sleeping on the sofa, tired of reality shows. I couldn't finish sentences for a long time. Should I curse myself? I thought it might be a blessing, paradoxical.

## ON TRIAL

A hand's on trial for the body, but the body says the mind's charged with criminal acts and the hand, merely an accomplice. Who gets off and who asks? The body's a pulse-code of beats and abdominal rumblings while the mind is figuring. Look closely at the boundary, in and out. If you're lucky, it disappears and it's not a game of cat and mouse.

*Rebecca Lilly*

Someone puts words into mouth  
just as it tries to describe  
an artichoke.

*Pluck a leaf; smear  
green paste between teeth. Repeat...  
Blink.*

Blink.

Whence such consternation?  
Without vegetable clarity,  
what's left?

*When you reach the heart...*

it's  
not the heart of the matter.

Mouth: *Bridge*.

And repeats.

One

after another spills out  
into a line at the end of  
which a tiny, sad man stands and  
looks back to realize that he  
has crossed all the bridges  
before coming to them.

*Joel Chace*

The horse-head nebula prances & minces, the tail swishes,  
I guess that's where interstellar currents  
come from, from a promontory on the deck

I wish for infinite wishes,  
wish for the horse-headed endurance  
to bring *being* into being the same way I was brought,

to resurrect a ship out of its future wreck,  
to craft a humbler version of myself out of the person I am not.  
A team of horses, a hundred headstrong heads now dredge

the water, earth & air for clues  
pertaining to the disaster, linguists analyze the crew's  
last utterances as they looked beyond the edge

& shook their heads *No*, & knew they were fucked,  
their minds cleft by an insight experts can't yet reconstruct.

The world is pure terror, or was until  
we found form & blunted the terror into boxes  
called *terror, form, boxes*. You have to kill

the pests in the valley with something called *pesticides*,  
the red cubs gnawing off their arms in traps are something called  
*foxes*,

to make my own paws feel better I use the word *wrist* to attach

my hand to my arm, which plants orchards from scratch,  
you can't own a state like *California*, it's too rootless, pure neologism,  
while boxlike homes pop up on all sides,

one-story houses with a million perfectly square feet of dreck,  
the fertilizers & crop-dusters keep spraying jissom  
into the fields, I touch my cheek, a nervous tic, to check

whether my adolescent peach fuzz is coming in,  
& find coarse white whiskers have long since broke the skin.

*Brian Laidlaw*

daybreak  
blackdog  
pixelating

*Helen Buckingham*

anti-malarial dream  
a crocodile-headed god  
crying real tears

*David J. Kelly*

## PREScription

He needs his methadone more  
than he needs me, won't look up  
from the table where he rests  
his head and breathes a forceful  
rhythm; *are you asleep?* But his  
feet are not the feet of a sleeping  
man, they pump up and down  
and say what he tries to hide  
with his crumpled posture.

## UNTITLED

A small hard smile  
where laughter  
marries fury. You don't  
believe him, do you.

*Victoria Bean*

4 a.m.  
A TANKA

And again tonight –  
this is becoming the hour  
of knowing – we're two  
strangers in a bed alone  
together at four a.m.

THERE HAVE BEEN NO ACCIDENTS/INJURIES  
AT THIS WORKSITE IN [79] DAYS

What needs to shatter  
when crumbling will do  
a much finer job –  
no pieces to glue  
together, just dust,  
more permanent – true?

*Thomas March*

## REBIRTH

Love like a snatched-at visitation  
(needing some relief, dwell-time  
away from burned out desiccation)  
drove us over crowded roads  
to find a coastal gleam, a dazzle  
and you yourself translated  
below a heaped-up bank of shingle,  
my Venus rising from the waves  
out on Selsey Bill.

## PORTHMEOR

Caught in a cloud-break's final sun,  
we'll pause about the tideline  
staring, born into those years  
and borne by them, who must  
accept the accidents of time  
as archeologists come to dust

or birthdays, children gone down beaches  
as if being chased by bears  
along this bohemian seacoast  
post-war, and us become that future  
our parents had survived for –  
worked out now, all unawares.

## COASTAL STATES

Given space, red sails in sunlight,  
only pebbles on the beach  
and people at true distances,  
we're orientated, then let be;

we're ranged about West Wittering,  
intimately diminished by  
the glints on rippling, moist expanses  
between a cloud-shadowed sea and sky.

## WATER LIGHTS

Then it's you point out how  
a canoeing school flotilla  
has dispersed the younger gulls  
practising their killer  
swoops and fishing dives.

Rippled over white beams  
of a seafood restaurant ceiling  
are the low sun's water reflections,  
each thing now as it seems.

*Peter Robinson*

this flower  
achieves  
what a whole school of fish  
has in the spaces between their  
swimming selves

broken  
strands

of seaweed a  
child drags

and holds up  
in childhood's

nothing else

*John Levy*

summer's end  
shaking out a few grains  
of plastic

return favors a horseshoe crab might ask

*Bill Cooper*

over the give away table  
clouds that don't need  
a wind

city lights  
snow doesn't fall  
any faster

*Gary Hotham*

## AS IT WAS

The bullfrogs  
guard me

from the noise  
of modern life

the stars  
fool me into

thinking they always  
look the same.

*Jonathan Greene*

dream sky of #6495ED, #318CE7, & #1E90FF blues

noon stars in the beginnings of belief

## SONGLINES

a stick for walking

to help him along

the songs of the

land till the land

sings back to life

its tree rock goat

and watering hole

*Joseph Salvatore Aversano*

## EARTH

I take in  
what I know  
a sliver  
whim

each depth  
earth sings  
falsetto  
winged

the simple way  
of finding  
north  
this thin

compartment  
purifies  
the wind  
of winnowing

## WITHIN HEARING

all around us  
sand squeaking  
gulls aloft

alert to  
tideline  
coming in

we say we fit  
just right  
here within hearing

*Sheila E. Murphy*

from ear to ear      Montana sky

*Michael Dylan Welch*

## BONNIE AND CLYDE

Other than  
the robbing

and the killing  
and the running

and the ending, the way  
it should be.

*Paul Bussan*

## PIRACY

The forgotten islands wait patiently. The boat drifts toward harbor. Something about water levels seeking.

I will give you whatever I have. I will return what I took. I will hold out my hands, I will never name names. I will throw down my gloves. I will take you on. I will hoist sails, fly flags, wear white in the dark.

## WARNING

Message from a room  
formerly filled  
with light:

Nothing prepared me  
for inquisition  
or pilgrimage. Not  
cold stones, not bare feet.

*Ruth Danon*

## MOVEMENT STUDY

*(after Minor White)*

a figure flying, one heel high  
across an open stair, headlong

slipknot, air, aperture, lapsed sun-  
light folded into shadow, Lethe

manifestation: endless leap  
all living blur, illegible

at the threshold ahead, a turn

*Mark Harris*

## ROTOSCOPE

here is the action  
as feebly photographed it may be  
the encrustations of barnacles  
frame by living frame give  
the illusion of movement by  
persistence of vision so that  
the entire artifice appears  
to rise and go as one dead  
shuffling the maggots within

## DEATH CAMP

*to G.S.*

this is the Nordic track  
a stationary exercise bicycle  
the pounds melting away  
to a fact of nothingness  
counterbalanced by the living witness

*Christopher Mulrooney*

snow into rain –  
indexing testimonials  
of genocide

late winter crows skirting the last digit of pi

*Mark Brager*

*eternally*  
casting off earth  
garden worm

*you too*  
sitting in  
the grow light

*a thunderstorm*  
the shape of  
those ferns

*a thunderstorm*  
& then you hear  
the kitchen clock

*John Martone*

checking up  
on things  
I've fixed  
just to see  
if time  
really does  
exist

*John Parsons*

end of the month –  
the clatter of a knife  
in an empty jar

hailstorm –  
re-enactors huddle  
under their shields

*Sandra Simpson*

The king in profile –  
no birdsong ever reaches  
his ivory ear

## AN IRISH GARDEN

The moss and lichen  
on a Japanese maple  
growing in the shade

*David Burleigh*

## JANUARY

and the dark stems

of chestnut leaves  
litter the earth

like the discarded leg bones  
of wading birds.

*Tristan Moss*

surrounded  
by the smell of asparagus  
a house in mourning

*Scott Terrill*

To wash itself  
it goes every morning  
to an opposite shore,

this thing called home.  
And then drowns itself  
in assignations.

*John Vieira*

*from* USER

generally you are remarkable

particularly you are

anonymous

you seem to leave society

only to materialize  
within a story

would you describe yours as a hunger

or

an accursed hunger

once begun

the project of self perfection

can be begun

to be put aside

*Adam Soldofsky*

## THE OLD POET IN THE OTHER ROOM NEARLY GETS IT RIGHT

There's something comforting in a nearby electric fan,  
whirling toward and into oblivion and back out again.

*Kevin Heslop*

problems

“You are the hottest one for years of night...”

John Berryman wrote, in #4 of *The Dream Songs*, about a keenly desired woman eating chicken nearby for whom he (if I err by calling the poem’s narrator the poet himself) hungers. But when he reads it aloud he says, “You are the hottest one for days of night...”

I prefer *years*. Listening to the recording it’s obvious he often reads different words from what’s

in print. Wishing he’d written something else? Or careless with his own writing, disdaining the bridges

of words he’d built, not wishing to cross silence the same way again? Or wanting to sing and dream

a little differently each time? Needing to be free of all that’s boring, especially himself?

*John Levy*

## PARIS ON SUNDAY

Every time the automatic doors  
Start to close,  
A drunk on the metro  
Screams  
*Close the bloody doors*  
Then pries them back open  
With his hands.

*Stephanie Papa*

## LES OISEAUX

mute stones  
sang to  
Brancusi  
out of  
their silence  
birds flew

*William Cirocco*

## LUCENT

behind lapped panes  
of tempered glass

blown vessels of air  
cupped, rendered windless

alabastra, unguentaria:  
our mouths

cross the iridescent verge  
to caress

the belled hollows, echoes  
of ancient breaths

*Mark Harris*

END

And so we have to choose  
between the figure on the vase  
and the grit in the hairline crack.

*Ted Mc Carthy*



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