

NOON 11



NOON | journal of the short poem

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Where sea meets sky
light shivers

barely a tether,
a sprinkling of crumbs.

•

Ants spill
into rays of uncertainty,
wave or particle?

from COUNTER FLUENCIES

5

I am writing what
I do not know
Out of what I no longer make

A slit longing
Emptied of all sun

(The sun is a wounded face)

My own face restless with distraction

If I sleep now
Can I still not bleed?

6

The argument of my
Desires is
Bent back

Clouds break
Across the horizon like fat
Birds

Imperiled
At the fragmen-

tary narra-
tive em-
bedding

History's luminous pose

17

The meditative is a kind of stain,
A rehearsal for something darker,
More perverse. (Wind chimes at
This

Moment just added
Notes to Monk's
Piano)
Now the wind

Picks up
Its violence
Moving swift notes
Along
In shrill, cartoonish frenzy –

THRUM

go on,
be unfinished

Cameron Anstee

MUSICA UNIVERSALIS

we have	the spheres	the stars
an ear	ringing	singing
which can hear	in the frosty air	the winter of space

CROSSING THE PASS

snow patches
a cairn
a prayer-flag fluent on its bending pole
in a clear high wind from the uplands

crossing the pass
 everything is air and light –
new territory, the first look in
to an unknown land

 high plateau
 the roof of the mind

Hui Neng:

*it is neither the flag nor the wind
it is your mind that flaps*

TAKING OFF FROM ORLY AIRPORT

Out and back the mind
- William Bronk

The city below,
the houses among

the mists of morning,
the stands of trees and

as we ascend the
wheat fields beyond them

all, the eye seeing
farther – we are just

as much there as here,
alien and true.

FEBRUARY, NEW JERSEY

Trees lean over the road,
twigs and branches holding
the sunlight in our days

of white taut cold, the snow,
the afternoon not so
bare, the night not so close.

Burt Kimmelman

LESSER CRIME

Night's heavy thud
as the twisted
comes undone,
a straight fierce line
to the stink
of harm, somehow
made glorious in a brain
misfiring though such,
too, is human, is us.

YARDWORK

I am helpless before weeds, wretched
and adorable. Oh, the leaves and the stalks,
the seductive blooms. I wrench and slash,
tears nicking at my eyes. What's wrong
with wilderness, aside from human ruin?
Kill the mowers and the blowers, the edgers
and the eaters. Neighbors, you don't know me.

behind a strip club
weeds in the wind

between here
and eternity
pull of a wave

strawberry fields forever ago hung about

November wind
the garden reverts
to Latin

Rick Tarquinio

axis mundi the tetherball unwinding

flat time an echo of the next crow

Mark Brager

ONE

Each leaf
suggests
another

even if
there is
none.

OLD MASTER

By looking at looking
itself

paint
permits us to see.

John Phillips

ONE NOTE re SOUTINE

given, free, a home
by someone who
hoped artists

would
paint landscapes
Soutine wanted

and did paint dead
poultry
in the room

LA CHAMBRE D'ÉCOUTÉ

Pink walls, a wooden floor, and a window with white trim. Ambiguity and enigma drifting in like a draft and an apple so vast one would be daft to bite it. Loulou the Pomeranian doesn't eat many apples, but he admires this one, its skin as green as Georgette's eyes. An apple the size of a room commands fear and respect.

This is hardly an apple anyone would expect. It is hardly an apple which could be bested physically. If one did try to eat it, one could perish before ever having time to finish. It may not even be made of apple. It could as easily be stone and therefore non-perishable. Loulou's not sure if it could be bested in a battle of wits, but the master has painted it to look almost sentient. Loulou cherishes this apple.

The apple's chamber is a listening room, so says Magritte. But what's at the core, wonders Loulou, never one to resist a pun. His pom ears, dainty and faintly veined as petals, hear the small, polished object grown huge whispering, *I'd like to see you try to dismiss me now.*

L'ÉTERNITÉ

The master did not include any guards, but these objects, in a museum, seem guarded, velveteed off behind red rope. Propped atop three neutral-toned pillars: a bust of Christ to the left, a bust of Dante to the right, and a hunk of butter thunked with a wooden paddle in between. The paradox, Loulou the Pomeranian perceives, is something about authority and perishability. Eternity in sequence.

Your surroundings give you a positional value in addition to your intrinsic one. In a different environment, Loulou could be used for food just as easily as for companionship.

Loulou does not consume much butter – he watches his figure – but if he were to breathe on this chunk, could he make it melt? Inspiration can mean “creative breath.” Loulou keeps his pom teeth clean, but he is a dog, so he supposes, regardless, he can be said to have “dog-breath.”

The master says, “Inspiration is the moment when one knows what is happening. In general, we do not know what is happening.” Memory is individual; history is collective. Exterior spectacles provoke internal majesty. Not so much meaning as the suspicion of meaning.

Like everyone, Loulou resides in his head but also outside it. “If you need me,” he says to Georgette, on his way to the garden, “I’ll be over here, having a hard encounter with the real.”

Kathleen Rooney

he hung his life
on a dead-end wall
crooked and faded
it finally fell
without provocation

self-scrutiny
the murky pond
amputating sunbeams

high tide
my OCD splintering
on the sea wall

George Swede

FRACTURED MUSE

My bonfire life submersible, my whole life frozen,
Noose, I walk on cracked ice, explosions through winter.

My whole life immersed. My sky, twelve inches of frozen water.
The water my memory. The water recalls upward from this pond.

Somewhere, in here is the truth, combustible in water.
The ice wobbles on the water. Pawn, fire on the snow.

Rook, flames in the air. Ruse, I return home.
Honey bee, Thieves' Thistle and Oak Beam, She turns

over the green leaf of wild rhubarb, the shy mushroom. The water witch
seeing molasses in White Ladies' Hands, thumbs the medicine in the
poison.

My curing happens at night in bird chili and ash salt, in the
witching of water, in the washing of blood.

I skitter over veins of rime; I sink in hoarfrost. Frozen in place, I sing ice.

GIACOMETTI

Down inside the thickening night,
the cicadas are contracting their muscle membranes,
and with the stacking of pattern upon pattern
they churn the air into a sound
as solid and attenuated
as the bronze insect waist of a Giacometti figure,
faceless, striding forward.

spanning the vernal equinox panic attack

past the needle marks winter stars collide

Roberta Beary

morphine fog for one

redwoods increasing the dosage after rain

island – sky –
and water equally –
winter geese

I build a stone wall for the sun to knock down

John Martone

a murmuration
of starlings
the concrete poem
in pieces

Stephen Toft

transparent
eyeball
out on a limb

Philip Rowland

THE POET

sees nothing. He feels
a pencil moving in his hand.
He hears it
scratch. It makes
the sound a beak makes
inside a shell.

BRAISE

Dusk, a few crows settling in a pine.
Smell of pork chops braising
in a cast iron pan. Rosemary.

The couscous comes to a boil.
She turns the knob and the blue fire
under the glass boiler vanishes.

"Just need to let that sit and absorb," she says.
"That's what I do," he says, looking out,
perhaps at the crows.

"Is *that* what it is?" she asks.
It is not really a question.

"Yes."

"Good to know," she says.

PROCRASTINATION

What other long word we learned early on
felt so fine and fitting? How else capture

the desire to say No in the moment and No
all week long? Procrastination arrived, a formal

almost religious appellation bestowing upon
each delay an immediate blessing.

FOR LENT

My sister refused to get Ashes this year
because she's giving up self-inflicted wounds.

THE INFIELD FLY RULE

Let's try this:

When either of us disappoints,
the other will make no deliberate attempt
to enhance his outrage
beyond a measured response
to the present circumstance.
Forget Santayana.

Anthony Nannetti

IN MEMORY OF THE PRESENT

The way you live coincides
with something else
but you don't know what it is.

Like the way a stolen Chevrolet
has its own majestic way
of gliding through the night,

both hands gripping the wheel,
criminal flex of your wrists,
adolescent fever of

peer-group validation burning
beneath the pearled perspiration
on your moonstruck brow.

NOW

The way I feel you must feel it too.
The gun in a world without any hands.

QUERY

Why would anyone want to be a poet?
I could be outside, April cool and crisp
As a rear spoiler glazed with frost.
I could get in, start the car, and go
Anywhere, or at least to Stop & Shop
To pick up the milk and eggs we need.

from SUBWAY POEMS

9-27-12

We have, on the F train today,
a surprising number
of the young – and haunted.
Good luck to them
in their tragic trajectories!

10-15-12

“Ladies and gentleman,
a crowded subway
is no place
for unlawful
sexual conduct,”
a simulated
man’s voice
says on the PA system.

1-28-13

"This is Carroll St., transfer is available to the G train."
I could spend a whole ride listening to the simulated voices.
What's poignant about them?
What's poignant about simulated voices?
That they'll never be real?
That that woman will never love?
It's what Keats says in "To a Grecian Urn."

2-6-13

Billy Collins' poem "Grand Central"
stares at me from the wall.
It's almost great, but instead it's bad,
all because of the extra words
"of the universe." Waste kills,
to quote William Empson.

TO HAVE KNOWN

To have known,
known for so long.
That's the killer.

To have known
and done nothing.
Isn't that it?

counterclockwise wars of my father

ACT IV when the winter crow recognizes me

Michelle Tennison

using the newspaper
to practise origami –
swans in Fukushima

Sandra Simpson

sculpture park everything suspect

SIX DEGREES OF CONTINUOUS DISCLOSURE

It is important
to differentiate

between a
good metaphor

& an asteroid
that has ripened.

The child
inside my child
slowly diminishes
like a piece of steel
corrodes
only to expose itself
again and again.

YOUTH

w
a
x

Tristan Moss

CHILDHOOD

In walls caked with fat and argument,
a Mysteron haloed on the ceiling
from a lamp.

LAST TRAIN

You watch a man stare off
at infinity –

steeped in the big questions
his eyes seem like religion.

Hands-free, there's time to move toward glass,
time to look far past the washing lines and off

to where the scarecrow makes his lonely
wind-filled wave of straw;

past balloon men spiking like lunatics
in the forecourts

of all that empty.

NIGHT SHIFT

Buildings –
silent like teeth
in a sleeping mouth.

TRAJECTORY

I can't wait to go home,
watch my serials, sink into
green velour and make a brew:

the glass coaster;
rocking to True Crime,
taking up where I left,

*this place seems truer,
this place seems realer.*

The office
where I sit for hours staring at a bullet
on its way to a skull.

BEDTIME STORY

This intimacy bothers her,
his hand fumbling with the radio
for the right ambience,
his other asleep on her breast.

NOT EVERY HOLE IS A WINDOW

Grayness peeled from the walls.
She tried to remember the words
to wake response, his reach.
Long ago, touch had retreated
from her vocabulary. Clueless,
innocent as oranges, he paid
the bills, played baseball
with his sons. His lips gave her
dried lemons from the maze,
without a map.

Peggy Aylsworth

FORCED RELOCATION

to which paradise
my former soul?

from what goose-down
to whose dahlia?

God said, "I think I'll make me
a logical proposition!"

and there was weeping, gnashing
of stomach acid, mouths clenched,

calcium chipped
on prepositions

FORGETFUL SURRENDER

There's a reason not to give up,
but joshua's forgotten it.

He suspects it'd come back
right after throwing in the towel,

unless he did that already, like one who
keeps checking that the oven's off.

But if so, maybe it's reversible
(like a vasectomy of the soul),

but only on condition one never know
why it will have been worth it.

Joshua M. Hall

RACER

(Coluba constrictor)

Racer, you erase yourself
when I step near.

The first I know, you've flung
a fluid curve of tail,

that olive muscle,
down the rocky mountainside

in a matter of course,
a maze of motion.

– *Ross Lake National Recreation Area*

SERVICEBERRY

(Amelanchier alnifolia)

As if that is what sustained old Robert
on his way to the Klondike,
its blossoms rhyming white in spring
but fading in fall
to berries of black doggerel.

– *Ross Lake National Recreation Area*

Paul Willis

VILLAGE IDIOT

the poem is dumb
it points speechlessly at the world
of which it is a part

and which masters it
with strangeness

and it is reduced to
penury
by the shock of that meeting

the trees are huge
damp living creatures

the river rushes
between its banks from all its sources

ENTERING

standing under
the fringe of the last pine

beyond
the last gate

in the steep
valley loud with its beck

the path leading
off through bracken

to mountains
beyond mountains

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