

NOON 14





NOON | journal of the short poem

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**red leaves** against the sky

a flicker of bird shadow within the sunlit room

write it now,

write it on glass

## **Paeonies**

– she must have stripped the yard. All the jugs and bowls and vases from all the glass-fronted cupboards in all the rooms filled with them. Mounds of pink & white petals on every table and desk, on surfaces usually left bare, clean-swept. And yes, some critters, some raindrops . . . Oh, and the scent!

‘It was storming,’ she said, when I asked.

passing shower  
words the rain takes  
from us

clouds separating  
what passes  
for time

*Gary Hotham*



*from* **Bethesda Constellations**

leaden skies tilt  
down towards  
the west track  
hugs a massive  
heap of spoil  
where youthful  
silver birches  
hum about the rain  
& glow amongst  
the fragments  
of wet slate

a white pit-bull  
looks both ways  
crosses the road  
& disappears into the woods

on the fencepost  
by the gate  
someone's left  
a muddy bobble hat  
a pineal chakra  
information sheet  
& keys

the River Ogwen  
whitens  
blinks  
the dipper  
on a fist-sized rock  
is gone

another lorry load  
of animals  
is driven by  
towards the edge  
of reason

*Peter Hughes*

**near St Erth**

old fox by a hedge

coke can hung on a twig end

hub cap in ivy

**Filtered** rose light of dawn awaits the stretching of perennial sowthistle. You only know a lane by repeatedly walking amongst its dust. Vine leaf dangles on spider web strand, dances to the shift in breeze. Later, ivy leaf joins in to a different tune: repetitive blackbird song.

**There is no need for the phone box.** Yes, it can be adapted into a coffee kiosk or library, but its telecommunication days are over, ask Ed Ruscha. Dusty crossroads mess with the fabric of time. Remote service stations with neon are enticing, hot coffee, hot food & solid rest.

*Andrew Taylor*

gulls on pause for the rest of the beach

what could have been a cloud is



from that polyphony light as breast milk

not counting the daffodils for mother's invisible visitors

downloaded the existential angst app full of ads

*Johannes S.H. Bjerg*

tethered to new worries cold wind

uploading  
to the cloud ...  
loneliness

No text  
No call  
18,844 steps

at the junction I choose a road not knowing which

*Kala Ramesh*

## **Directions**

What is not right  
left before the eye  
is left right out  
and right left by.

What is not left  
right before the mind  
is right left out  
and left right behind.

## **Incubus to the Muse**

where her hot gush  
has cooled, it leaves  
behind a fine ash  
and a finer snow  
forming the flour  
from which is made  
manna of my day

*Jim Kacian*

samuel menashe  
i stop awhile  
to write with your ash  
a poem in your style  
am i too brash  
to wish this to be  
a phonemic, vatic  
poem to be?

Speak to me.

*Jesse Glass*



## **Re-reading Ashbery**

The back &  
forth of  
poetry.

I forgot to post  
the sky a letter.

The moon did not  
come. All day

the sun. Darkness.

## **Sang**

Didn't realise  
how much  
blood there was  
in memories

until she  
threw them over-  
board &  
the sharks  
went wild.

## Escapology

White spaces filled  
with drawings, white  
noise transversed  
by the song of  
wild dogs. Given that  
it is essential  
nothing is left where  
more could be added  
where then to hide  
the small hint  
of hesitation, the door  
that leads outside?

*Mark Young*

the art  
is not  
a part

or apart

*John Vieira*

blue reef heron  
studiedly  
ignoring us  
I'd like my poems  
to operate like that

*Tony Beyer*

I told the swallow  
to fly to the solid cloud  
I swallowed

vehicular sight  
smacking the doomed grass  
with a fresh coat of paint

Swimming in the air, albeit  
like a river rose skimming  
blue-white-grey tillage

I told the swallow go there really fast  
the swallow desired its own wings  
and swallowed

[soma]

Hearing the news the  
time sucks the air out  
of itself with a tubular  
grimace in which nothing is  
inflatable except the  
camera pointing inward  
as though seducing  
a universal schism  
of the head

[response]

all of the water      splashed  
out of the pool



A cloud is a lake aloft, set it down again  
entirely on my head,  
prints along the paving  
can't dry off  
without wetting something else.

Each poem starts with a doubt  
to which more are added. To part-  
sketch is to etch, for instance  
if we could interpret the trees  
when we have no instance, only silence, which  
is never instant, we hold our one chance to draw  
a map for a spider: each letter you  
write is the size of a fly.

The sentence walks through the poem  
distributing gifts and punishments, saying  
language misunderstands me  
the poem is an impossible object  
on which to fly, which is why I  
take it to high buildings and jump.

*from* **The Review**

## THROW ME A BRANCH

The tone struck            must be full of the wisdom of  
(pick something at random)  
trees, 'big things' erupting suddenly, and  
exhilarating secrets that wait            to be revealed.

My frame of reference is adjusting a tad.

No longer sarcastic, cynical, curmudgeonly or adrift I am  
a patchwork of charm and delight and delight and charm.

There's not much scope for anything else.

The design of my life is the nearest            thing I know to turmoil  
but it's alright. Seeking            answers in artifice and verisimilitude,  
two rival and magical factions, there are moments of true beauty,  
and beauty is its own thing            entirely.

## TREES LISTED Etc.

A bird was singing in an elm tree; at least,  
it was definitely some kind of tree but I'm not good on trees.  
It may have been a yew or an alder, or a poplar or a birch, or  
an ash or a beech, which is a list of trees  
and does not include those less often named in lists of trees such as  
the dogwood, the hornbeam and the rowan. I can identify  
a garden, its lawn, the patio and barbecue and the servants,  
but I'm always vague when it comes to trees. We ask around  
as to what things are and everyone, with all their education, seems  
able to crap on like so much wind. One has to adore this,  
and to write a love letter in the circumstances is  
neither transgressive nor dangerous,  
though perhaps it's a smidgen too discontinuous.

Deep in the age, my road's not clear  
as time puts miles between me and my goal:  
the crook of the ash that stands there, weary;  
the copper, its miserable green-hued mould.

*14 December 1936*

Just as a stone from the sky will jolt the earth awake,  
a scandalous line will fall, but never know its father.  
Whatever we can't halt is a godsend for those who create:  
no one can judge that find and it can't be anything other.

*20 January 1937*

*Osip Mandelstam, trans. Alistair Noon*

### **Translator's Note**

Remembering her lines,  
a wandering widow  
winds forward the hours.

The caller views  
the map of lamps,  
creaks open the booth,

and the Eiffel Tower  
lights up with the Pyramids  
in the Harbin ice.



## **Paris**

In winter, nothing gives.  
The tree holds tightly to  
its fistful of sky

while the wind arranges  
and rearranges  
some leaves  
at the entrance to the Tuileries,

always seeking  
a different disorder.

*What Not to Pack for a Trip to Mt. Vesuvius*

Not a Victorian jar for leeches, not astragalus, those small bones used for dice; not turtle scutes disappearing under water below a bascule, and not burb sprawl or forest trespass. Not a stump ripper to grip snake. Not scrawl, not graffiti in multiple languages as left on Pompeiian walls. Not today's typed draft wanting serifs in its face. Not anything but what to rule out. To pack enough to discover later what was secretly kept, not pants and shirts, but counterweights of spirit and sound, until foreign ground appears in the Gulf of Naples as you gape, looking for volcanic spit.

*That man*

native to the hills  
sits on the black rock  
of one crater of Mt. Etna, a small box

with toy ladybugs glued to bits  
of lava beside him – sad smile, one hand  
on his goat you can pet

as you ask the man's permission,  
'Posa?' to take a photograph  
while Etna smokes

and this man, for a few coins  
and our own smiles,  
smiles better.

*David Giannini*

another *urchin smile*  
immortalised  
... bucket list ticking

open mic night:  
the rain's  
low patter

(refer **X** end) um =

## Swan

Now from a start-of-year  
emptiness I hear  
another inland seagull's cry –  
like someone asking why  
I should even care  
now this or other outcome  
has been put, rehashed, rehearsed,  
oh, *ad infinitum*?

At which I had to wonder  
how such-a-body could even ask  
when care too seems an alibi,  
a parochial concern;  
and down the slow canal,  
smoothly there, a swan  
is riding its reflection?

## **Raptors**

Through those strains of suffering  
a politician, pre-disgraced,  
I'm remembering still the shame  
we're born with, now their sure  
ambitions for our country  
flap like some white-paper dove;  
and all of the above  
is an interim report and love,  
however unrequited, you're  
the only deal I'm offering.



## **Marketisation**

in keeping with our commitment  
to customer choice, you will pay  
only for the air  
you actually use

should you exercise your right  
not to breathe at all  
there will be no charge other than  
the meter rental fee

## workout

1

ove  
lust

2

ust  
love

3

o  
lust

nude

dune  
sears

arse

anonym**ous** source

*LeRoy Gorman*

no fake news between you crows

mo rning  
wi dow

*Olivier Schopfer*

the cat lady's mind  
strays  
each with its own name

deep in her eyes the patience of radium

*Robert Witmer*



Pacing the gaps in my pulses my doppelganger choreographs my  
life's goals

A stopover somewhere in my heart's pulse persistent sparrow song

White noise of water drip this torture of attention's alternatives

Mist the echo of horizon stringing down an infinite hole

*Rebecca Lilly*

Faintness of being  
The raked garden  
Dying inch by inch

Falling apart  
Ideas like leaking faucets  
My stoma erupts

On a boat  
Eating everything with chopsticks  
Even my hair

Smile at the horizon  
Kite aloft  
Branching out to sea

flight

*after Aram Saroyan*

## **For Leonard Cohen**

the ash of poetry  
filling the hearth . . .  
winter chill

silently I add  
a hallelujah . . .  
first snow

dark aquarium  
a crack in my poem  
lets the light in

kelp swelling  
in and out  
I become the ocean

*Michael Dylan Welch*

## On Wavelets

the blue thickened b  
y just how far dipped in

into the deep & thinned  
by just how far dipped in

to the light

at land's end the  
peninsulas

almost islands

the tips of a  
continent;

a stray comes to  
sniff at this

stays put

desert highway

silence  
& the chatter

of a cow's skull

*Jennifer Hambrick*



long night some of the dinosaur's neck

autumn wind

*the smell of popcorn*

your love

*oswald*

a boeing 747

*steps into a movie theatre*

*Michael O'Brien*

## **Pronouncements from the Median Strip**

Watching *The Sorrow and the Pity* on a cracked Android,  
one earbud half working.

taking off my glasses  
so I can't read the words –  
prison camp museum

this accumulation of facts      acorn

a peach in his hand yes still the occasional erotic dream

*Sandra Simpson*

rejection leathers  
she finds my keloid  
in the dark

driftwood smooth cabinetmaker's erotics

needle  
in an empty bowl  
waning moon

waiting for her answer  
to pop up on the screen  
a swarm of flies

*Lee Gurga*



not wise guys  
in tux and ties –  
vultures on a cow

hardpan truth  
the dirt is swept away  
then you kneel to pray

*Richard Stevenson*

## **Lilliputians**

I stopped and crouched to inspect  
a bumblebee atilt in the dirt

and a breathing wreath of petals  
taking shape on the backs of ants

*Funeral*, I thought, *bier*

*Scaffolding*, said the entomologist  
*So the ants can go to work on Gulliver here.*

the first humans  
climb out of a clam shell  
Easter Sunday

*Victor Ortiz*

as we look around God severs ties

*John Levy*

## **Poem Beginning with a Line from Sir Thomas Browne**

There is another man within me that's angry with me.  
He's got my knees in his teeth.  
If I could kneel I would say I am sorry.

There is a man within me that's sad for me.  
His dark brown cowl is draped around  
the dura mater of my brain. His mother weeps for mine.

There is another man within me that wishes he were not.  
Behind my eyes he peers out endlessly  
at another woman within you.

## **Depression**

You could get up and write something.  
You could let the poem be the one that just lies there,  
let the roots of words sink into themselves as far as they want,  
down to old meanings that mean whatever they mean  
to whoever that is who strokes them with her eyes  
saying 'there there' and 'there there'.

## **Crossing the Room**

I hold your cup filled close to the brim  
the way a toad holds its head when it is carried  
across a road.

### **Haiku: Monadnock**

November rain –  
two bronze deer turn to face me  
as I pass.



## **Without Blinking**

House a little cold, stomach a little hungry,  
hands a little empty.

The planet is porous, wrote Borges, and so it might be claimed  
that all men have bathed in the holy Ganges.

Sponges alone,  
that live always filled, may filter this thought without blinking.

## **A Strategy**

Living by implication:  
where the ink isn't is moon.

## **Notebook**

A venus flytrap can count to five.  
Crows and bees recognize faces.  
Mice suffer when seeing a mouse who is known to them suffer.  
Trees warn one another to alter their sap as beetles draw near.

Our one remaining human distinction:  
a pre-Copernican pride in our human distinction.

‘Arthritis in both ankles!’  
Neruda wrote in a notebook,  
January 3, 1959, on a boat leaving Valparaíso for Venezuela,  
limping like an old race horse, then starting his poem.

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