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Angela Ball

Only those deficient in idealism object
To our dazzling Hospital
For the Dead.

It’s just beginning,
How fireflies flare haltingly
In misty hollows
And a single, tawdry milk truck
Rattles all the way up the mountain
To serve a Miss Smith.

All her life, Mavis Gilbert
Bored the pants off anyone
Who would stand still.
As part of our pilot facility,
She’s sprightly, radiating
A pure quantity of fun.
No matter what their storms,
Our clients find a haven
From the vultures
Who impolitely click the windows
With their beaks.

Cows provide even heating. We enjoy
The efficiency of their chambered
Stomachs, and their lowing
Lifts spirits wherever it goes.

Alas, a semi-vaginal response
Has incapacitated
Our keyboard. But keep trying.

We vow to keep the afterlife
From one-sidedness
And cloud mongering.
Remember, light can only
Predict light. Giving night a little warning bell
Is no good.
A sweetness grows in mouth—
    My mouth—of me
    Telling me
What tree I am I must cut

Down. Elm-beetle *brittles* the branch
    Not mine, my mouth
To gypsy-moth’s mouth’s unknown—
    My voice
    I learned to throw
Inside a leaf to tell moths, *No—*
    *Starve—you’ll starve*
Before I let my house grow cold.

I own the arm that owns the axe—
    I tend
My iron edge’s volcanic urge *to cleave to*
    wood
Cleaves the wood asunder. Molten edge—
    Cooled-to-form—
    Never less cruel
Than at the first axe-swing’s wooden end, how
    I learned
    To tame me
With you. Learned

A volcano’s red gaze urges one stone
    To melt
    Into a stone
That cast to water floats (pumice, punish)—
    Melts
    One stone
Into dark-glass, axe-edged, obsidian
    That cuts the thumb
    That thumbs
The edge and asks: *How sharp?*, asks: *Why?*
I see on pond how I can float and push
The pond-edge up—
How my iron-edge sinks, but ripples. I know

How sharp to be to split water-in-half. I see
   Behind glass—
   My window's glass—
Wife stir flame with wooden spoon
   Inside my house
I own—
   Am half-owner
Of pond, these woods—am half-owned.
Wear Simple Lines

Rachel Beck

“If you are petite, … you don’t have enough display area for anything complicated.” —Emily Cho, *Instant Style*

I’m full with crinoline and a desire to try on hats, blades down, bluster-width open to debate; she’s highly constructed of scratchy excuse—who’ll give

a feather? Summer bespeaks limed linen and clocks, which startle,

felt still a statement at this time of year as is tufted chenille; clothes

wear off on the wearer (jersey that stained, collarbone indigo), will never come back. Except “ribbed knits” sounds nothing like voile and tulle; crushed

net underskirts—nettle legs bedraggle me. Jet blue shifts, she won’t wear a clip on her, sheath-gowned, on the town—if you name it velour, press it into service.

Laws govern the use, both of warfare and carfare, light from my cig may be seen, green flick says I’ve got a great brain, these are just lungs, girl, papery jewels putting on

the fritz. I believe in taffeta static, velvet columnar. Make me an accessory, tortoiseshell, sharp appended (the side of the head

will not be loosed, not an earring drop too soon), hair in beads in rage (a state) in shambles—deshabille for a less political context—in the fine

rubbed to the suede of things sweetly, the fisherman sweater swelling of landbuoys and bare legs. Nothing in the trunk that’s a fixative

liquor. Isabelle is a name the color of stained linen, Petticoats in siege—o yellow and love-ridden and long.
We were preparing to miss our President
And his long resplendent, minky hands when he is gone,
When we will rue prosperity and youth blown
Off like a bard traipsing past dusk under a hunter’s moon.
Regarding suffering:
If it is all technique and not a drop
Of substance, then don’t bother coming home.

The last owl of October was perched here, on
The tiny antler of my dream, obsolete as a flintlock
Gun, and camouflaged by the wisdom of a jumpy age.
In the chat room of your fluorescent orange
Imagination, you will find me lying in the saddle between two saw-Tooth mountains like a swamp deer out of bedding,
In the rain.

Regarding rain:
I hunt for it, its rut and arch, its tracks
That splash the slippery creek past weepy
Willows near the slough.
And by winter, our new President will be muzzle-loading the wrong dark men
In a long dark jerrybuild of robes.

Even the fawn
Bag limits have been reached, and the lung shots shot
And the harvesting of fallow deer will be done by Tuesday night.
By November, the tines of my deepest thoughts will be “in Velvet.” And I, the mother
Of nothing, of nothing at all, will spook, be
Loving still, but just
The same.
Elsewhere

Lucie Brock-Broido

I had wanted for a moment to keep still
Like the Lindbergh baby who left here, likewise, lulled

Into a childish stirless form, as he was gone on
His small way to elsewhere then.

Somewhere else, tonight, the first to go is sleep.
The second, some realities. Thirdly, I had loved,

I thought, with all my heart, but intermittently
Like inclement weather: unseasonably cool.

Regarding warmth: elsewhere
The night is Promethean

With punishment, elaborate as the Tower of the Winds
constructed in the second century.

It is now the Lighthouse for the Clouds, still in and of
The air. Elsewhere each hour

Was a mercy and is spent.
The raids on others’ wants went on.

Roads in autumn will continue to be carnal roads,
Elsewise I would be keeping still, living on & on

Redundant in your sleep, endlessly unreasonably warm,
Elsewhere in and of the air.
Don't Adjourn Yourself, You

Lucie Brock-Broido

Little day of thankfulness, will you be gone
So soon, a Mason jar of chutneys sealed

At the end of autumn's adjudicated spell,
Desperate as a hardwood root come overground

Near winter in the shape of a wolf's ear,
Or a plowshare, or a velvet scar.

In this room I will be beholden on this
Day done, too quick, just as I was about

To wake in the adjoining hour and be
This glad to be alive and tinned and tangible.

I will be dead by spring, she said, and so she was
Adjourned to Dresden then to Prague.

It is night now, early, every day.
The rare light left is like the putting

Up of big quart jars for venison.
Do not leave this place so easily,

So soon adjourned, like urnfuls, offertory bells,
Some stammering.
Today I saw my father floating past. 
That's my dad, I said, 
turning inward. I began 
to flail; I was on the shore. 
I am swallowing water, Dad, I said, 
but how could this be? when he was the one 
asea. I began weeping, and the salt in my tears 
matched the water Dad was buoyed upon. 
Let the fucker drown, I made up. 
I made up words like corpulescent, and 
flame. Dad gulped water, and men-of-war 
pulsed round his arms.

When my father drowned, I was born. 
Seawater couldn't really keep me afloat. 
I swam, and the world I imagined 
eating my legs 
was worlds I imagined— 
nothing else. 
It was beautiful.
Unmissed, and catatonic, Lucifer
grabs dandelions by their lioness
heads and pulls out petal-prongs
with his blood-purple teeth.
“He loves me,” he mutters, and likens himself
to Hector, who decayed and decayed
on the brine-infested beach
until his father came and said,
“A pyre, please, I’ll give you
anything, let my son alone.”
And the sun shrank. Diminished,
Lucifer strangles the dandelion
and mangles the stalk to milk.
“He loves me not,” and how so!
“I don’t want these wings, anymore.”
Lucifer squeezed the ring
finger of his father. One plus
one, Father, equals an utterance
you won’t leave up to me. Irreconcilable,
this altar of red bricks with your weatherproof
heart. You without a heart,
how consolable you are. But we,
we are an army of famished soldiers
left to rot
on the so-scenic shore. We are inconsolable,
this world we are pasted to
grows tacky and peels
when the sun vibrates on the horizon.
A legion of Satanists notwithstanding, I give
these wings back to you and score the red-bricked altar with my fingernails.
Notes on the Enclosure of Sparks

Amy Catanzano

Deep waves are invisible.

White beach knots the glass.

How many rush to the bright outline?

Step forth from its splayed shoots?

Was once spring off that mountain.

Someone will say, yellow marigolds slip through rushing.

Forming droplets.

Stained glass blue of an underwater world.

Between the green and starship.

Know this.

A long departure where blossoms.

The micron planet.

Such as the glow of altered fields.

The city was crowned with expansive borders.

It was called a spin-exchange.

The inconsistency of impetus.

Parallel flutter of falling leaves, a water mist.

When the body’s entry initiates contact.

An army of self-assembly.
Wing of biomimicry.

Made of marble or mirror, birch or brush.

A solar cell inspired by a leaf.

Let’s say a particular view of spectrum, a theory of vanishing.

With a roadmap for refueling.

With the field flowers spraying their plasmas inward.

Hitting the purple fold of the bright field, the burning false edge.
 Ça ira

Joshua Clover

Drinking back to the others, count
These romantic self-immolations
Interruptions and lurid distractions
Marie and Cecile on the roof near the sun the sun flattered
The sun was not a system simply sun on real estate
Marie and Cecile on the roof dodging the deixis
Of the grand boulevards along which taxis

Past allegorical window-displays
This will go this will stay this will go
Their relfast lit secret in parenthesis
These spacials in their corners
Infected Elegy

Joshua Corey

When I last looked on her who was my life, it was the denial of song. It was her whole bony head a bird. That which fed was feeding now on air overripe with oxygen. Her eyes sank back in their sphere, bits of sun reclaimed by the brain's dry loam. Lungs like wet newspaper drying. The lines shone through her flesh, bright and two-dimensional. In the afternoon of her death I subtracted a dimension, and time became space's phenomenal eggness. Then the line becomes pure space and the point—the star of her—a line without duration. Then there's no point any more.

we had no recourse but discoursing on the volume and verse of being what we were a blind pair of throats meeting and missing in the orchard thin skin a place for the pulse to empurple enroyal blood-temper ah the moment before letters form burns heaven behind your eyes though I parted your book not in order to kneel or clutch your knees or bemoan the hopeless equivalence of systems who teaches me how to find God on the pale printed page of your bed look love the light's better here

What is the morality of lyric? Mere overlushness of song? A greeting from the bottom of a well? A single voice fills like a well with water, privacy, blood and money. In a pewter dipper gleamed the last hour: hers. Even if it's mine was it ever mine to share? What's put in my eye's a spangled thing, manifold spent-shook foil, my skin peeled back so others can taste the chill. A lime wedge stains my gin and tonic, white lime preserving the greenhaired grave. That a goose stepped over. The lines are ordinal and quick.

we had no recourse but discoursing what we were a blind pair of throats thin skin a place for the pulse ah the moment before letters form though I parted your book not in order the hopeless equivalence of systems on the pale printed page of your bed
look love the light’s better here
who teaches me how to find God
to kneel or clutch your knees or bemoan
bums heaven behind your eyes
to empurple enroyal blood-temper
meeting and missing in the orchard
on the volume and verse of being

We suppose immortality of lyric. Who I address isn’t here, be you you or a vehicle of
the air. You is a belly I fill with my eye. They are all but stomachs and we all but food /
They eat us hungerly. How can she be lover from the bottom of my mind? How can a
ghost be fed by these numbers?

who teaches me how to find God
we had no recourse but discoursing
meeting and missing in the orchard
ah the moment before letters form
to kneel or clutch your knees or bemoan
on the pale printed page of your bed
on the volume and verse of being
thin skin a place for the pulse
bums heaven behind your eyes
the hopeless equivalence of systems
look love the light’s better here
what we were a blind pair of throats
to empurple enroyal blood-temper
though I parted your book not in order

My prose repository. I mourn her presence in my bed of mind, made by me into a
gimcracked rhyme. If I put a photograph here might its black and white turn blue? If her
smoke climbs up the white space would your hand go to the wound? I bleed for myself
and for strangers. Then you turn the page.

we had no recourse but discoursing
look love the light’s better here
on the volume and verse of being
on the pale printed page of your bed
what we were a blind pair of throats
who teaches me how to find God
meeting and missing in the orchard
the hopeless equivalence of systems
thin skin a place for the pulse
to kneel or clutch your knees or bemoan
to empurple enroyal blood-temper
though I parted your book not in order
ah the moment before letters form
bums heaven behind your eyes
The poem of the death I owe puts some words in a reader's mouth. This machine which makes you a messenger, which wills out of song my peer—

_ah_ the moment before letters form
burns heaven behind your eyes
to empurple enroyal blood-temper
though I parted your book not in order
thin skin a place for the pulse
to kneel or clutch your knees or bemoan
meeting and missing in the orchard
the hopeless equivalence of systems
what we were a blind pair of throats
who teaches me how to find God
on the volume and verse of being
on the pale printed page of your bed
we had no recourse but discoursing
look love the light's better here
from *Antigone Sequence*

John Cross

#(at Colonus)

: the Greek girl keeps pigeons over her father’s tiny blue-screams
   it carry old swell-foot’s pain

: between the cage’s wire grates
   it young eat the head off it

: the Greek girl, eyes crowded, leaves her father. unqualitied, he handguesses the change
   old cane-tap scald it soft parts

: pushed-out little bluish knots of cry
   it eat the head off it young

: it don’t quiet, forevered

:

#(audition with Sophocles)

S. I call them scene paintings. you crouch there in the vastly

A. : flyapart.
   and my father?

S. chiseling out the sockets for a closer look

A. : an insuck of sacristy, crowded and icy.
   and I’m his bowgrace?
   I remember
   how you could change us into birds just before we hit
   the earth.

S. continue as if the lines you’ve memorized
   could be memorized
#(on Polynices)

did you see him in the tabloids? my uncle’s soldiers in the picture – o, one hooks my brother’s scalp, wrenches his eyes (still open) toward the camera. another knuckledeeps through heart-wound. it don’t learn that in one day.

Headline: *uncle won’t bury bad meat.*

what else could I do? I drove out there. the ground was hard, unbroken. my sister, part of my body, stayed in the car. nothing left that was warm to the touch, I shoveled.

#(dramatist personae)

I. [Two guards with Antigone and Ismene on bridge. Creon below in nightgown with torch searching dry riverbed.]

(Creon.) Where is it?

(Antigone.) One of us. Birth-strangled.

(Creon.) Come down and dig it up, bitch!

(Guard #2) [Aside.] it eaten it own farrow

(Chorus.)

II. [Creon, Antigone and Ismene in limousine.]

(Creon.) Girls, please speak freely. No one here but the immense hour and me. What is love like for you?

(Antigone.) I’d like to make a phone call.

(Ismene.) Uncle –

(Chorus.)

(Messenger.) it pale and scarify once it eyeless forever. it heap the earth above it

[Exit.]

#(lacuna)

[... ] hole instead of the word [...] – the gods [...] have left us – light switches, shit, suit-coats, [...] [...] [...] yelps of red-tight syllables. [...] tell-tales.] this is home. [“...] and I’m the [...] one [...] who will pour you down its wide throat.”
Looking for an unmutilated place –
At every periphery lies
Something terribly roadside

: God’s footprint –
A hole
Big enough for child-house.

: A quiet that will never
Be silenced –
From an arid language

Driven toward fire
red pear

Greg Darms

red pear - the religious aspects - incomprehensible
until a boundary is breached - only beauty
sex - is like a passport - wait for validation - juice
a veritable sea - psychology - a number to count on
invention of reverse - before looking - glass eye
such grapes as fall - in fall - or berries left there
enables - the crossing over from into - bibliography
subject - skin - special government vellum
permit - tracery - seal of sensory - irreferential
of a kind - invitation - lunch dance - look it up
with full intention - ferrous indignation - oh desire
there I said it - abstractually - if I am accepted
how the it becomes - particular - expressed
with various endings - the language - registers
on the way a way - kiss - a specific gravity
for each and finally - what to do with feet
that close - and rising and opening and
not by brain - already full - mouth reaches
the sanctorum - say howdy - not one - they
are agreement - so it flows - the two no one
are by fruit - all - mostly taboo - is known
Trembling at the edges of riots, great queens prayed, "O my people, tug my calm compassion out through this berlin's gilt window frame.

Bend it back in as frightened empathy. Do I feel helpless not unlike a subject?

Kids, reach in, snatch my crown. I'll chase you around, my nibbled nails stretched over your heads, mud flying up into my robes.

Let this solid flesh feel too, too awkward, unprotected.

Go, dump red poster paint into each intersection. Let tread prints criss-cross, inscribing,

all over town, the tired lines in our eyes. Just to make love just to feel on top."
The Driver of the Car is Unconscious

Timothy Donnelly

Driver, please. Let’s slow things down. I can’t endure
the speed you favor, here where the air’s electric
hands keep charging everything, a blur of matter fogs the window
and my mind to rub it. Don’t look now, but the vast
majority of chimpanzees on the road’s soft shoulder can’t
determine: Which fascinates more, the thing per se
or the decoration on its leaking package? How like us, they—

(The hand mistook me that arranged my being
bound here, buckled. I have been mistaken, ripped
from a wave of in-flight radio: wakened brutally
is brutally awakened, plucked from the grip of
“asleep on the slope of an open poppy.” One has meant this
torture for another, clearly. Do we welt the same,
make similar whimper? Did he take my name? I’ll take another.)

it is the decoration. By which I mean, we have a lot
between us. You’re European, and I have been to Venice
where the waters pave and they can’t play tennis.
Fair gondolier, it is my pleasure to confess: nor will you ever
catch me in athletic dress, hunched waiting at the net
for a ball knocked fast in my direction, hot with fervor
to knock it back to the opposing player. It just won’t do.

Driver, please. I have shared with you. I have become
a person. That’s supposed to make it hard to hurt me.
The future rises, bellows, wrinkles. I can’t keep living
in a cramped sedan, I won’t keep living in a cramped sedan—
though you hold the road, I’ll give you that. There are
instances of smoke and mirror, instances of shouting fire.
Though you hold the road, I’ll give you that, there are
instances of “sticking to it” that I can’t admire, and ours
isn’t an adhesion I ever expect to look back on
wistfully. But that’s for time to decide, not me.
“Just around the corner, there’s a rainbow in the sky.”—
Haven’t you ever just had to believe it? Look, if it’s a cup of coffee
you’re after, I bet there’s someplace brilliant up ahead.
I bet there’s someplace right around the bend. Ash in the eye
and the nose and the mouth, shit in the pants
and the mouth and the hand. Hound on the back
of the hand in the lap, slap on the face of the hound and the ass.
Ash in the eye and the nose and the mouth, mouth
on the nose on the face in the pants. Hound on the back
of the hand in the lap, shit on the face of the hound
in the ass. Ash in the eye and the nose and the mouth and

the mouth won’t stop, it comforts itself, it comforts me.
Funny I keep on looking out the window, identifying
even as you do this. The orchids cry that yesterday were pollen
ground in the fuzz of dead-drunk bees. I will not submit
to being ferried that way. Driver, please. Where to now,
Tierra del Fuego? There is no travel but the travel that concludes
in shrieking with abandon, is there? —No. What you need

is to remember what it felt like beforehand, that emptiness.
Call up pictures, melodies, etc., but part of you will resist
that assistance, divide from it. Drag the edge of that memory—
yes, it’s more like forgetting—across that divide, until
something like a rabbit-hole opens inside you. Vanish into the hole.
Vanish, it is your only opportunity. It will stun you
for another minute, but when the stunning passes, you will again

be nowhere, nothing, and even more at peace with it.
Delphinium

Timothy Donnelly

We didn’t mean what we had said, yet very happily that much was understood, so far as we could see, beneath the canopy we stood beneath both after and before the formal ceremony, where, wanting something new to say, we said how beautiful the flowers were, although there were no flowers there, only memories of flowers flaunting blue remembered beauty, which, being disembodied, wanted something like a sentence to secure it. So much was understood, we really didn’t need to say anything but wanted to and did. Moreover, all that beauty, disembodied as it was, wanted something to secure it, so far as we could see, beneath the canopy we stood beneath together half an hour, between the food and music. Later, in the evening, both surrounded by those flowers and unwilling to admit it, we wanted something new or something newer, a form of filling in a crust, we said how beautiful the canopy beneath which we had stood was, knowing, as we did, eleven ways in which it wasn’t.

—But when the rain began to fall too heavily upon us, when the rain became too heavy for us ever to withstand, we found ourselves, again, reflecting there beneath it, the canopy beneath which we had understood before, understanding, as we did, beneath the shelter of that canvas—where the memories of flowers and their flaunted beauty haunted us, admit it—that it moved us, brought us back beneath a happiness, that place where we could call something beautiful and not mean and, moreover, mean it.
Ahna Fender

July: a suicide pact, a peach highway motel
miamic with sex.
Overnight the carnival tents appeared, red
sores surfacing, spit sizzling on asphalt, music stumbling out
drunkenly onto the road.

*  
In the funhouse, selves upon selves
in mitotic divide, kaleidoscopic
shifts, you said how can we lead
these lives disunited?

*  
Bitter dill and copper-toss. In god we trust.
You found irony in everything, laughing to yourself.
We walked the dank straw-lined stalls, past goats with amber eyes burning
to escape: rode roller-coasters
till the ochre taste rose.

*  
Screams in the distance. The ferris wheel with its spine of lights, turning
into different towns, different states.
Without you, the tents still rise and fall,
each summer, like one long breath. When your mind stopped spinning revolutions,
how the world moved on.
Last Breath Blue Nude

Katie Ford

As if the line of your body means you are not made of torn things onlookers can consume what is pieced unpieced in you dear turning away dear story

unmade in her she is unmaking something with the exactitude of a black line she is whispering into her knees retreats into the oblonged grid of skin

where it is mapped out truth has become the weight of a body unappeasable facts undraw her she cannot listen to what has unfolded in stages layer by layer

of wet wing shredded down onto canvas in an unjustifiable shade of clouds and sky why is it she is in this position of having to salvage what is left of herself

there where the forehead is fused to the knee she is made of one unrevelatory border like the line the crow makes in something dead to open its thick trunk

the internal rising out so literal so she turns away this is how she has been made ravenous maker he has gutted her

and oh she cannot look her bruised grafts of skin she knows no hand can touch her would go right through as if she were made of more water than sand maker what lodgment is this that she cannot turn to you maker she cannot move you have made her this way so you will never have to face her

shattered iris diminished pupil against the knees how dark it is.
Nature Averts Her Eyes

Fool. He’s mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse’s health, a boy’s love, or a whore’s oath.

—King Lear

James Galvin

Fool. I had an exaggerated interest in death, so much so it was possible I might already be dead.

Anyway, I had this ridiculous feeling that I could walk around, that I had found my wallet, that a beautiful woman had kissed me twice, once on each of the lenses of my spectacles.

No, that’s wrong.

Actually I was someone else.

Could it be you?

Is causality a structure?

Nothing happens that is supposed to happen, of that I am certain.

Probability cannot be enthusiastic, only the unlikely can.

Your voice is velvety.

Watch out.

I have inspected my restored order and find it wanting, insipid even.

I’m getting drowsy, a good sign.

Yesterday was different.

I tried to convince myself that passion was not a gyre of dust swirling about my feet.

Would you like a biscuit?

I lived in a lukewarm province until it became unbearable.

I touched everything.

It didn’t help.

The room insists.

My categorical imperative is falling in love.
I saw a ship dancing on waves.

kicked up its heels.

It heeled over.

That ship will never sink alone,

without a captain.

Scientific aspirations, curiously inaccurate,

unrolled before the innocents.

The subject had arisen.

Something

like happiness had long since lost my other.

Dark eyes staring into

ice-blue ones.

I do not want to know how old the stars are.

I do not want to know how long they have left on their astral death row.

as

if they really existed, like gods.

What’s their point?

It was very quiet in the Faculty Club as, outside, the firing squad took aim.

Lightning’s alphabet.

Little circles, sightless, float down the river to the sky.
Freezing Rain

James Galvin

Restraint and shame are pretty much the same, unless restraint is shameless cowardice, which doesn't count.

We're cruelest to those we love the most, who don't expect it.

Don't let on how much you have forsaken.

Freezing rain says, face the music.

Freezing rain says, I mean it.

Think of a pretty girl in a black bath.

Oh, she's sitting pretty in her black bath.

Theories advocating incapacity snake through art.

Through and through until they're through.

How do I start over now, having been wrong about everything?

Being has no beginning, so leave me alone.

Winds are muscles,
aren't they.

Face the music.

Don't let on about what made us want to live.

Let freezing rain bear witness for a change.
Putting Down the Night

James Galvin

The whole night sky went bad in the knees,
Nothing to pin it up but stars.
I held the whole night sky pinned up with stars
On a short tether and pulled the trigger.
All but a few stars fell in streaks like sudden rain.
That wasn't supposed to happen, but then,
What is?
So now the night sky is part of everything.
I did that.
Small and coincidental,
I was still recognizable on my wave of ruin.
The stars that were left I named the constellation, Halter,
And I carried it in my left hand.
Don't get me wrong.
That wasn't the only night.
There is no end to nights of stars—
Northern light nights, nights skewbald and bay.
And what did all the other nights think
When I led mine away into the woods
Where our footfalls on dry pine needles crackled,
A self-fulfilling prophecy
Of Hell just before it's lit.
I'd like a rainy night right about now.
I'd like a whole remuda of rainy nights
And snowy nights, nights with more stars
Than spaces between stars,
All pressed together against the black gate,
Eyes on the woods,
Where I disappeared with my night sky on her tether.
I'd like to know what they thought,
If nights have thoughts,
When I came out of the woods alone,
Smelling of gunpowder,
A loose halter of stars in my hand
That I hung on a nail
For rain to wash the blood away—
The rain that never rains,
The rain I remember like the long streaks of her forelock
Down over her moss-agate eyes.
Because, you know,
Either you’re going
To do it or
You’re not.
Slight as light
Reflected from the stream
Onto the wavering
Willow leaves,
Eternal love
Doesn’t need
Eternity, see?
A cyclone of Sand
Hill Cranes
Rises from the corn
Slathering the
Ephemeral work.
Let’s don’t worry.
Let’s don’t ask.
Our institutions
Are standing by.
But I keep thinking
How easy it is
To get lost in the sky
With nothing holy
To defend.
Stella’s Fifty

Karen Garthe

I’d like to remove my redcoat, A-da
jingles along for
cuddles out of pocket
A-da...a pad for a picture to make a mark (not make a mark)
Not now
(no more and coast, seconding itself and
the bones in her furs
collapse

The ferry boat of old hay Blanche sleeps on exquisitely
taking cold for moisture, stupefied
Burgundy stupefied Stupefied

Largesse
and

worry about worry, A-da, The Palindrome

novelty’s high trick of sight

tank of a better

Purity
A-da, Her premature and clemency the Tragic Romantic evolved

Task of wandering to a plain destination,

the Otherworld's thickening whoop!

WhOOP! A-da,

are notions lying on the table

the notions are allured and petting adorn
The Fecundity

Michele Glazer

Showing nothing of what it hid invited the women to enter.

Part the leaves, tuck through the branches.

Under/inside the weeping beech was a wraith of limbs.

The women saw where it touched the ground it rooted.

Where it touched itself it cleaved.

That it could make an unbroken circle of a single thick branch—

This was architecture!

One woman uttered grotesque (“Oh the monstrosity of self-generation!”)

The other reveled in the monstrosity (“Oh the fecundity of grief!”)

It turned out the inside

was nothing like the outside &

it turned out that the truth was thrilling & what was thrilling

also was vegetable.
Translucencies, her death

Michele Glazer

I couldn’t imagine it so I couldn’t believe it.

That ragging absence. The thing inside her.
No, thinner,
a fragility.

Stroking her hair, thick & coarse, gray & red.
Her face dusted with perspiration & the thick gargling sound
of mucous in her lungs welling out, air drawing in.
Inside her body shutting down her organs parting from their tasks
& my urgent whispering

"it's not your turn,
there is a lake to walk to, there is water to walk along.

Describing the lake we’d walk to.

So inside herself she has no knowing does she

I think of an insect——that fly——trapped inside the stained
globe of *darlingtonia*, its spotted translucency,
light entering from so many angles & none of them true
For six months since the aneurysm she has been up & down &
I have deliberately not charted it, not kept track of the progress
of my visits & what I saw because I did not want to be
charting her dying

That sick—I think you will die first.

But I could have an accident
Your death—
imminent, understood,
so imposing that

as long as I can die first
I can insist on the distance

between your dying
& your death.

*Easy for me to say*

Her eyes were open, she was following me with her sticky eyes.
I asked the nurse to clean them, afraid if I touched her I’d hurt her.
I stroked her forehead, played with her hair.
And I said to her, “Shirley, I’m playing with your hair.”

There is that sweet smell
at your bed that makes me leave
the imprint of my teeth
in the flesh of my hand.

Afraid in touching her my finger
would break through her skin.
I had to look. Even from where I stood in the hall outside her door the skin was wrong. Someone said something about the body.

Then someone said something about changing the sheets

I stared I could not believe it that she could be that dead I could not put that person with the person I knew I could not see how they were related.

Vulnerable, with no vanity, no Shirley left in her, utterly other, utterly not here anymore & so she is invulnerable.

passed away

Strangeness arranges itself around her. A pair of glasses on the bedside table.

At night you visit, slack-jawed gaunt impaled on my imagination

You would have hated being remembered this way

Her death as if she owned it

She wouldn’t let go until someone said to her you can let go now,
Now I understand well up, how
if I touch it with my mind, my eyes—

She met her death as if it were a thing outside her coming toward her, arm extended & she took it, she took the thing inside her self & it was hers. Became her

It wasn’t—pretty, they didn’t make her look pretty. Didn’t close her mouth or comb her hair or tuck the covers up to hide how thin she was. She was put to rest

How strange it is how swiftly she retreats

And this is what happens when I try to say how death is—how it settles on the lips, enters the shining mouth
Leonard Gontarek

The

light gives &

fills each leaf,

cool, other shadow.

Breaks only as it

falls, or night pierces

it, just above the heart.

Never ceases to drop

us to our knees, demonstrate

how alike we are.

Bones are God.

Flesh, the light's.

Not the sound
the wind makes, today,
memorizes, sticks
swirling down the drain.

Communion, coffee.
Buddah Fired Me

Leonard Gontarek

Rain falls on lake, hot hood of car.

One-sided coins. Slants in the afterlife.

Last night the dark was an elixir.

I drank too much. The cars eaten by rust,

great spaces between them, compacted like sonnets at the dump.

Last saturday in march. People going, with leaflets, from door
to door to door.
Evening

Leonard Gontarek

I sit in the window with a gorilla mask. Evening.

The elevated. Sometimes I sit with the mask in my lap.

Steak scent seeps into walls, stays for years.

Dusk & red ants descend on plum. The wallpaper, cats & leaves.

Here & there, a tropical fish where it has peeled.

Sometimes I sit with the mask draped on my hand.
Look here: downhill walking the orange peel light  
the fallen pomegranate  
Wasp willowing in the limbs third year of the seven year drought

Another Saturday suburban hike with my father through the  
empty dusty-bottomed river  
An exact shadow on the dawn concrete— pink the tongue’s  
bitter

The lemonwater canteen the haze  
the pour in the rhino roar of the freeway O you scene,  
You (not a dying species there)

Beneath the bridge, the deep shudder of brakes  
For years the cars crossed in thick traffic  
the mudswallow looped out of the belly of the underpass

Look here: amassing sweat through a wall black-of-the-moon  
the murmur parents wakened  
Front door firm in the pitch Father left “whatever”

I forgot the stolen things the boiled-over water  
what was powder the blood fill  
What he says syringe says now loaded

Up(down) he had the hurtful (. ) was  
Why the audience watched every week no matter  
no water in the canal

The parts plant smoldered across the vacant lot  
we chewed our sandwiches  
We listened to these cars

It was a zone— advocate I love you
asymmetry

Patricia Hartnett

The opposite of beauty, shadow line wavering, television signal reflected in the window, mediated as are none of the events.

"I'm praying like never before," I overhear on the street from a woman of ordinary appearance; and, like in a novel, tears spring to my eyes. I find myself crying out in the open now. I believe in this as I would a tenet.

Also, an old couple in 30's tailored jackets holding hands at the corner over the din and exempt in their envelope at the foot of the on ramp. Bruises my heart back in place.

I can hear above the roar a bunched silence brand new and already fed up. Falling like warm satin around people in doorways.

Just the yellow white of my mother's wedding dress, as she stood at the crest of the hill before the war.
flutter through the air’s unlikely practices
with me at the curb wondering how seriously to take myself,
if I’ve already flubbed it with an intro of abstraction
or if what first came to mind is passable.
I promise to get concrete real quick.
The beer truck propels gutter dust up and around it,
my hair a crisp site of paranoia, these shirt sleeves
delегates to a foundry’s inane reunion.
My city is being torn apart. Orange
painted onto the sidewalk warns against digging
but the men dig anyway, jacking the street to life.
Black pipes susurrate as if moving
something along, within themselves.
I cannot cross, there is nowhere to cross
the street because here there is no street.
The pear trees were pulled last week.
I would have wished for a storm to rip through
and shear the trees from their perches,
but that yields nothing but a Tonka truck
rusting into the driveway. I would buy that truck
but my wallet is empty and I cannot fit it in
my pocket or under my chin
despite the extra flesh come lately.
I would say No sweat, but I’d be a lying bastard.
I would say May I please Forget the price Take pity
on me I need something like pity you see
but the energy such words require eludes me,
and I’ve convinced myself of the merits of poverty.
As the city, my city, is being stripped
of places to escape the sun for a spell.
Pariah

Brian Henry

As if the shudder you call a breath could keep you
on top of the currents crossing your house
from the back and the garden side

where the perforated cow
cooking over briquets and propane
moves you to close the window

and you lose your mastery of the atmosphere
and you lose the atmosphere
grape-shinned and flagrant

despite your offer to be opened
for vivisection by the neighborhood
vet and displayed as a pro bono wonder …

Forget the direction the ceiling fan takes
as it works on your skin

the shadows it slices across your face
while you lie on the floor for sleep

the door mat a rough pillow
allowing you your accomplishment for the day:

making due with what a room has given you.
Oral History of a Desert Guide

Cathy Park Hong

... ghouls,
chewas of corpse in gear...see dis?
Scar from paratroopa pistol whip
me 'til I saw me dead madder wave from da putti pink
skies...want some tea? Some pelehuu?

...plum blossoms float in hair...cicada
ring...Gumnamro swelled wid broomsweepas
contractas, Koh's wife who work da tok-guk stand and pop
Koh's zits in front everyone...Nation swelled widdout AP...
...sticka Hop? Exotic as sticka Wrigley...

like lady liberty from Tinny-man, I was mascot
cause me bald head, me haole eyes...a dark cantata rose
gereed cockchafas stood in alarum...you 'fraid
what I say? Good...I led da cantata...da chant I did yes.
I was mascot...

...whistles, a flute rust of oil pool and arms,
arms!...Sah say stand on pedestal to inspire da crowd.
I saw naw. Want to join crowd pie...before pie spit on me
cause me winebig oysta eyes an me bald head...now me fes in
all da postas...know me nation biggest export of
human hair wig?...haha

...tea? Some pelehuu? Whistle a flute rust of oil
pool and arms raised...me throat rust...
I said to dim, you louse, beat it, I despise da flunkies of order
evil gri, mites of a petty monk...stool of a flea-bitten
donkey...screamed til me throat rust while banners
'roun me waved like kites...we

hailin an railin, we hailin and railin....

...Centipede of batons irrigated da crowd,
leaving a blood marsh...volt shields pool...me
arm flat da floor da feet...tied back wid wire...
me fes down smelling jellied fluid...Dam bladdabags
blew...
An da blood marsh spread...'tho we faitim
an faitim...da blood marsh spread...
Hop? Desert’s finest...

Spread into grotto bone...ran into da amperage church
where da pink-eyed cowlies shooed and tinctured
.....before, I sang for a choir of wine bottles,
for pocket won an a lay, haha....

...Metall scrolled ova stores, nudding open...
ran inside bus as centipede lashed ova gumnamro...
...an arms, da flute rust arms, da blood marsh...stamen up heliotropes
shot dead...seismic flute shrilled for da citron tanked throng...
arms....Sah burn in da gri corona....
as da magnum dom

arms,
me light der color of bokum...arms,
Sah da last...I held da last thong.

Notes:

This historian’s addendum to the referred event: a high-pitched voice wailed out in the seventh night of unrest. It was dead of night, weary night, a night when everyone was too terrified to sleep. I jolted awake and walked out to my balcony. It was silent and there was one female voice that rang out through a megaphone. The voice was on the edge of hysteria. The voice rang out for fifteen minutes before a thunderous dom.

About the language: Desert creole, hapa haole, miscellaneous.
—Desert creolization has extended beyond the function of trade or exploration and is in the process of relexification.
—It is often assumed that a European language furnishes the pidgin vocabulary, while the native language supplies the pidgin grammatical structure. This notion is inexact.

Chronology of the Desert Guide—
1960: born in Kwangju, Korea
1964: eyes turn a startling blue. Nicknamed Jang-nim
1966: all of her hair falls out. Scorned in school. Later diagnosed with alopecia.
1972: discovers singing
1978: attends Chongnam University to study political science. Becomes involved with SPC leader Yoon Sah.
1980: involved in Kwangju uprising. Appointed mascot. One of the few who survived a five month imprisonment.
1981: moves to Waikiki
1986: works as a casino black jack dealer
1997: attains a visa to move to the desert
2000: lives in a cantilevered tent and conducts hotel tours.

Says of the desert: “I dreamed only for da lightning rod pyramid and da dunes which form and disappear like da machinations of human digestion.
In this grove there is only one patient. His heart like a berry bleeds an aura onto ice-white sheets, his eyes glassy, his chest cold. Even his tongue is cold.

He has eaten so much meat the beasts feel an affinity and lick him where his heart is spilling. His eyes are lifted.

Nobody knows she is following him but he has left the light on for her. She follows the imprint of his womanly feet.

Homeless he depends on his own arm to cover him with his coat by closing it. Outside the wind chill has brought the temperature down below zero.

His sisters wait at the night gate. One has eaten raspberries from the patient’s mouth. The other is drinking the milky air. “I was looking for you in some arcades.”

The sky is merciful—a Virgin Universe. He has a thorn on his brow as if he’s a unicorn or Cain the woundable one.

Handbells ring: “Whose voice is this who laid to rest the fear of being abandoned.” He opens his johnny to show her the evidence.

How does she know it is him when his throat and lips exist somewhere else. He might as well be a sleeping drunk in a war lobby or bar.

Up above, all is calm, all is clear. “It came upon a midnight clear.” The sound of one voice speaking into some holes and coated wire.

“Oh shouts of stony light across the desert!” A donkey’s nostrils blow white air.

One hand freezing, one hand open, all her senses coiled around the telephone. “I want to call someone please.” She is informed the line is free.

Now she can hear his laughter echo through the plastic handset or is it a hand banging a stone against a tongueless Celtic bell?
Economics of Allure

Paula Koneazny

How to skin and eviscerate
snare that intimate quality
only her remembrance of movies to guide her.

Makeshift gear for inflicting arbitrage
when she rips up her clothing
to anchor their hats to their heads.

Precise skin tones switch their hips
boys in the audience spliced together for warmth
placeless people askance at the anguish.

As a prelude several thousand collapse
immense structure of steering wheels and sinew.
(Another ending involves civil disturbance.)

Someone is calling her every time
discount entertainment (nice, oh yeah
very very nice) modulating the ardor.

One razor blade doesn’t finish the job.
She has a heavy suitcase of books but prefers to use her teeth.
(They say something else in the Bronx; she read it in DeLillo.)

We’re either waiting for the bombs to start falling or
relieved because the threat of bombs is receding.
All the women agree: narcotics can’t be delivered late.

Certain perceptual habits assassinated along with the glamour.
(“You may as well ask what Charlie Parker means.”)
It’s all pure fantasy getting used to her weapons.
Day to Start on the Floorboards, Rain to the South, Any View a Machine

David Lau

Negative, chalk (how I first saw your sign) reads like smoke signals. Has an extensive collection of glasses. On this side of the earth, no sides: where we practice our marksmanship, like soldiers in the city square, on corpses, no matter many beetles in the grass. Find it. Obstinately refuse to grasp. The spades, today valiantly shouldered, submerge in the unprofitable patch. Beetles are to be back-up plan zero, the if I were you thing inside the water container, which is too blind to trust with the wheel, to leave alone, even if in for the eve. The wounds we gave ourselves have just begun us, irreligious, and are the deterrents, as escarpments, of else but warlike heads.

Go get your own aquarium, each fin becoming coiled beneath the bus, cruising along. There you’ll find the nasal passage. Ask the operator for extreme commitment from the lamp shade to the table, all reflected in the unwashed window. Table of omens. Flotation devices murmured and murdered. The shutters of thunder are forlorn like the song of the sound of my own voice: a different tattooed country. Nationalism. At the rally, everybody’s grin gives away two bags. All are watered, her body slipping out from under the dripping awning, effortlessly.
Oil Trees

David Lau

Start in the snow.
Had to promise to endure.
Had to hold
the dome’s cobalt exterior
beneath the faucet. Tearing heated water.
Had jettisoned the bucket.
Then on the snow, silhouette of two men,
a thrifty stretcher. Had already.

There were flashes of reservoir,
flashes nearly inflatable, and rosewood
for the cutthroat guitar.
The cold air stuck like leather to lungs.
Being in to reinvigorate the horde.
Stole the visage, levee of—
I poured
into the serving plate.

There were many
beneath these diamonds to climb on,
coding their arms, their knees.
From cilantro stalks
in the resistant sink,
go. A thousandth, near.
Large lentils through the hole I give you.
Dear ms. grieving,
artificial turf in the rain gutters:
Anamnesis. Fifth century jutlands pinched just a little,
our probity at least, the paint flaked
on the worst part of the feeling:

out here a superconductor,
scores of bridal whores.
At eve bells bring out the blue.
Our knowledge, a phage with the napkin, the rainbow trout.
Sponsor or ponder us,
faded like bewilderment from the mare encounter.
The static is plastic to the touch.
Distrain my heart,
soft hatchet. Seal me over with coals.
Brushing your hair is the zipper’s invention.
David? You must
believe if only to give up on the welcoming road, jonesing.
New Year's Roses

Anna Lewis

a man gives a woman roses. he gives her yellow and red to frame
the limitation of those colors. as if
to meet her
at the presser
and stain.
beneath the awning is
the half of all good times.
he says, "I don't see why we can't live everything like an affair." it's January
that half undoes her for a kiss
and how disgusting
indifference is on her lips
tightened for opening
a tightened line angry
the kind of taught protection felt,
that sex wore love in disguise
and yet she pressed him on her like black mascara
because the night-lovers are romance. two making a complete absence in the word "abyss"
until yellow rises to illuminate his love,

Red again
while still the roses close abstemiously

and still she attenuates to become the stem,

hung...

once or twice, I’ve dried those deaths
Overcast

Timothy Liu

He says he feels more and more like the wife, meaning more like furniture. An arrangement left on the coffee table to keep appearances up. Perhaps we all can feel the silence she feels smothered by—laughter's good weather suffused with bloom, the streets but part of a siren song lovers walk without alarm. Like gold that's sunk to the ocean floor—childhood's heavy gold sinking even now as voices huddle outside the bedroom door—our children as yet un kissed by dawn's advancing call.
Our stillness and the flaking stillness of that forest floor have mouldered from the ear, but this you will remember: in the brief reversing red of falling late November leaves a volt of color startled from the brake: a fuse laid into vanishing: a fox. Your hands aquiver with a like escape, you caught the near branch hanging there and through the shaking branch we saw it— not a fox—a small coyote, running with its sandy coat lit up in all the forging dense of sunset then that caught us up in motion into motion—

here, here snow slips off the roof its pulverizing wing. The weather keeps my letters from the post. The light drops through the wood at evening, but I can't recross the still-dissolving threshold of our second sight: I only see, descending on the hill, coyotes—feral dogs—ourselves.

I would have brushed by lamplight foxes from your hair, it has that red.
Sarajevo, Staccato

Susan Maxwell

I.

There in the strings, thatch on fire and a wind

willing into each mouth. Did you see

the famous picture, a man cut in half

on the railing here, they're selling the stuff now

in a shape called transfix the machine-cold

hectoring of the place we had been placed in and then did not.

Burek! Anything you want. Coiled and flaking

on warm trays, more cream, my cousin

lived in that building he said, oh
I said its so elegant, no he said, he leapt
in that building, oh I said, no he said
he leapt from that building

II.

and the clustered bites of a perfectly spherical and leaden
mouth in the walls we call the gatherers of action,
of tiny iterative slams whizzing through an emptied face of air.

if the world is an obstruction to something only the bullet sees
III.

Slow arpeggio, curl fingers
around handle, and the jolt (quick scrim)
of the ball leaving its pocked socket
in the shoulder as it lifts
the suitcase, electric wind shirring
and tossing some thought, some no
this would never and the weight
of the case lifting, diffusing into the boned array
of a walking body (buzzing ear) this quick
brined flight this tiered and stubbled
field in the acres after like acid
poured over a cold plate

IV.

To ring the smallest granule of voice around the rolls and the children darting in and out, asking for a pen for the tousled doll and we hear Mierko, a shower of pebbles against the canvas wall. Hoarse grunts. What you learn, not a scream but the thing before and one morning I scrape the damp stones out of his palm and hold him to me until I realize I would like to suffocate him.

V.

To say I open the suitcase, silky lining rotted,
doubleclick and drifts of must, to say I kept
quiet as I did not want to hear the cries
of a woman as survival is a trick you learn
by never failing it or convex god, streaming
god, bright god, entering the ear of god,
pitiful god, still god, revolving god, world the weight
of a hush on the ruffle of god and how will you say
no the god is not very angry, was never angry
or occasionally now when beef is thrown
into the skillet the smell makes me lurch.

VI.

Boys from the makeshift
kindergarten run to me
with their jumpropes
and as I fail to stop
them they rope
my wrists a throated
blue to absolute
rest in winter the squeak
of snow underneath
your boots, wind
sweeping insects
up curves of the blown
mountain, ski lift toppled
and the sound of powder
pressed against powder
a false crash
into which my life
refused to give
way and the boys
revolving even this way
even that.

VII.

Spider mum and aster spilling from water and a bolt of voices beginning
in the translucence of a target swallowed, spoken through soft like the word vanish
meaning ligament hardening into day meaning thread of flesh too visible now to be seen.
VIII.
Without any point (field unstopped at skin)

at which (smeared) any point at which

one stops and bends down to the grasses

they are bent at angles too right

for the wind and the syllables half sucked

and half drowned, a certain seam

worried until it gives (seam called comfort

called the thing behind a stitch inedible and black

as what would have been her grave/to sit quietly

and stuff my mouth full of ground/I am alive because

I went to the store that morning) until it gives

and the seam a joinery of waters, the word

becoming useful as it becomes clear and unneeded and look

they say, holding her face down, at the law curving to zero,

how it encompasses all dispersal though it is not,

at that moment, there.
Lament

Rachel Morgan

1. Awful mountains, spine a spine a misshapen spine like my sister's, like something straight curving in a current. Like my sister. On the loneliest road in America even sometimes there is a curve there is even a tree a tree.

2. A friend of mine, not an old man, died in a parking lot on Saturday. To induce a liking for; I said something curvy. I was born once, but waited until the rain ceased.

3. The road runs beside and below the mountains.

4. A rain storm drops noise, long long spirits, outside the door and wall of an even longer room, also down the mountains. Of my sorrows, I do not trust myself to write.

5. Back brace, lawn chair, tree house, vacant clothes on the line

6. in the mountains. My sister is beautiful, a crease of flesh curving behind her jaw line as she worries the pages of a magazine.

7. Our house on the road, below the mountains, our friend gone four days. The rain is standing, worrying the yard.
“My mojito in La Bodeguita. My daiquiri in El Floridita.” A postcard of fidelity shaking hands with earnest money. Lost in the streets of Havana, gasping for breath como un pez sin agua. As hot as it is, as black as can be, as dark as this combustible star. Sí, hace calor, pero only turistas wear big brims or ultraviolet lenses. You hot? You thirsty? You buy us mojitos? You bring your yanqui dolor. We show our splendid squalor. Milk for baby, you give me dollar. You black, we black. See my scar from the war in Angola. Still working for a Cuba libre. Tropicola’s sweeter than Coke. Mix rum and sugar with sweat of a slave. We work for pesos and beg for your stinking dollar. I’ll show you where Hemingway wrote, the bar where he sipped his swizzle. You’ll owe me a mojito. Que se vayan los gusanos. Crush with a pestle. Add rumba. Stir briskly with a drop of African blood.
Percussion Is My Gang Name

Jason Park

I'm on the toilet having a strange hunger.  
Don't look at me. 
I sleep two people.

I pull out the hairs around my nipple.  
Watch my eyes blur.  
You kiss yourself at the foot of the bed.

Take away the sun—our flags have exhausted it.  
The planning stage worn down to four leather straps.  
I'm not a very big man.

I chafe the possessives,  
put all sorts in my mouth.  
Porridge makes an incredible pillow.
I put my penis in a cup of water.
In a chalice I held a lark.
Chalk chalk. Whatever.
She’s vomiting medallions.
I ate shitakes out of her hand.
I ate hands.
Do exactly what you like, Mr Ribs, she said.
I was the man tanning with the moon ray.
Everyone I asked dipped their bread in it.

She wasn’t a morning person so I wrote aubades.
In French everything is.
A dove’s retina, dew-thickened,
marshals her perfect lot of clouds; acid flakes on my tongue.
The power grid goes down, all the way.
For a year it drizzles chloroform.

What cry does your finger make?
Your purse stuffed with hooves.
I bent the flint-coins. I put them under meats.

Scrape the other beating thing across your chest.
Keep crossing me.
I want to hide an inviolable instant
in your turquoise eyes.
Or butcher a fistful.
Bring it.
Floss you with a chain of eyelashes.
Pumping some vague balloon
that with each step the sky
—from such a height the sun
gathering into a valley: a fire
my always, my heart that even now
can't hold back, stomping through
what must be ancient water
splashed and dried together
sure its reddish tint will clear

before the next footfall, the promised
side to side as if the sky
knows forever its half way
will make the turn in my hand

—what I hold in my hand
was never a beginning: the sun
come back and my leaving.

Simon Perchik

*
twice-sliced daisies to crane the vase
drawling liver giblets clod ten and one for the gardener
a painted acre of saddened ash family plots and the like
blank gramophone dinged the carriage
asleep whispered spindled ringlets he couldn’t tell from railheads
flung thudding in one clean stroke
payment pursuant to forefingered woodwork
a touch of clap spellingbee-obedient
took up his quarreling keys
praised his peerless pastureland
(all very fine dining indeed)
viceregal postcard pruning
on every word as though it were his first
“the world ends not with a bang but”
Burial Practice

Srikanth Reddy

Then the pulse.
Then a pause.
Then twilight in a box.
Dusk underfoot.
Then generations.

*

Then the same war by a different name.
Wine splashing in a bucket.
The erection, the era.
Then exit Reason.
Then sadness without reason.
Then the removal of the ceiling by hand.

*

Then pages & pages of numbers.
Then the page with the faint green stain.
Then the page on which Prince Theodore, gravely wounded, is thrown onto a wagon.
Then the page on which Masha weds somebody else.
Then the page that turns to the story of somebody else.
Then the page scribbled in dactyls.
Then the page which begins Exit Angel.
Then the page wrapped around a dead fish.
Then the page where the serfs reach the ocean.
Then a nap.
Then the peg.
Then the page with the curious helmet.
Then the page on which millet is ground.
Then the death of Ursula.
Then the stone page they raised over her head.
Then the page made of grass which goes on.

*

Exit Beauty.
Then the page someone folded to mark her place.
Then the page on which nothing happens.
The page after this page.

* 

Then the transcript.
Knocking within.

Interpretation, then harvest.

* 

*Exit Want.*
Then a love story.

Then a trip to the ruins.
Then & only then the violet agenda.

Then hope without reason.
Then the construction of an underground passage between us.
A Story About Chairs

Elizabeth Robinson

i.
You are going away and you sit in the chair.
It holds one body, then stretches to hold two,
so your partner sits down beside you. When
the chair holds two bodies, it develops mechanisms for
movement. It will take you both away to marry you.
It goes to the middle of the country for marriage, and
this is appropriate.

ii.
People refer to “the heart of the country” or “the seat
of the country” which terms are not as odd as they first
seem.

There’s a place right under your nose where the skin meets in a seam
and this proves that things join in the middle.

iii.
You stop in your daily errands, stop building boats, fixing cars,
and start seeing a series of pictures flash before you.
What is transportation? It’s sitting still and watching still
pictures thrown together. It appears to be motion.

That’s what a chair is, a boat, a movie is, and everything outside
the list stops short and fuses. It all becomes unified.

iv.
See this chair? It’s a place where you may sit.
See this wood chair? It’s a thing for you to dismantle
and transform, perhaps, into a fishing rod.

It’s not a chair. It’s a piece of wood to be carved into a steering wheel.
See this? This is your durable wooden map.

It’s not what you caught; it’s a flying fish.
v.
If a frame is missing, it looks as though the action
made a logical leap. If a frame is missing
the chair gives way.

You're sitting on the ground and the earth is orbiting,
but not obviously. Once people believed that the earth
was the center of the universe. Now it just circles in its accustomed route.
The loop itself has no beginning or end.

vi.
A chair is a list of things. A series of chairs
scattered around a house. We are empty chairs
aping the shape of a body. We are disimilar.

The chairs converge around the loopy heart of the table.
We are plates we whisk clean.
We are the motion of turning continually back on ourselves for nourishment.

viii.
In a chair you place the body of the one who concerns you most.
Chairs no longer exist.

You remove your loving arms to the chair. Dismantle the chair.
Your legs. This is the new anatomy of motion.
The remains

Martha Ronk

There's no way around it.
People will be talking.
The stone won't stay a stone
while in the room surrounded by plastic plants
they whisper what no one has seen
in the same voice he answers himself.
It was 11:30 to prove it
and the car was videotaped
for all the world to see
and the clock brought the news
replaced every so often by someone
who recalled phrases about the city
where they placed the last remains
the date when St. Francis tore off his clothes.
Acting

Martha Ronk

It's a way of making more or less of this procedure by which it is the only way in as I see it. Otherwise one is caught in diffusions of blond brilliance as she leans over the parapet and either waves wildly or not and in order to avoid the obvious inarticulation of either elects to underhandedly or by sleight of hand take on a manner of not exactly staying fixed in her position or entering from the wings in a burst of applause through one does wish to capture the tentativeness of approach by rush and withhold, by placing one's finger exactly so on the keyboard.
Nostalgia

Spencer Selby

He must be carried back
to thoughts of home

Swollen behind his gaze
statue falls whose face
he can't make out

Names lose patience
Waves crash with high-tech
and arguments where
the sky used to be

To stop the war
half-naked on shore
lost feeling for
the land of his birth

How strange cliché prevails
beauty torn from branches
rule of law contrived
unconscious

Mind's material must obey
this logic from a past
he can't resolve

Because the father lied
and children run away

Heat seeks flesh
in jealous light

Scatter psyche
night after night

He wakes with a start
A knock comes at the door
The fire spreads
but doesn't reach
its target again.
there is no metaphor inherent in the ocean: empty your bags. nor the sky; perhaps the inconceivable distance—and to cut and paste an attainable meaning in an abstraction of moonlight moving in swells waves traveling across

otherworldly light—when here is the moon ascending amongst crickets filling in the spaces of the maple with its presence—but the overwhelming strain the honest sweat of such involvement—where they will not be there to retain you when you arrive (without definition); kick off your shoes and yet you remain with them in agreeable acquiescence; passing the salad dressing inside the hum of a motorized city—

freedom flits across

their eyes in the apparition of you; some part you left behind—where your name fits nicely in so many mouths—

can this sustain you? what allowances will you make for posterity, for reminiscence?

pass the salt, please; we’re lending our smiles to comfortable beauty—

but what can you retain? in an ideological structure, the knowledge of a name; complacent defilement—

outside later and the moon so quickly departed and still we appear in picture windows; a dinner of standards, and yet without expectation—

the comic profanity of maintaining such formality—
Edward Smallfield
Valerie Coulton

to cross

as in
districts of fog
and lamplight

the invention of erasure:
this afternoon the steam from underneath the earth
across Gayley Road

you blue
and yellow corner

Gradual blindness isn't a tragedy.
It's a mid-summer twilight.

translated from the Spanish
the verb:
to wave
and this ode to imperfection

or that motion
watery hands
add and subtract

shoreline
salt
rust

bracelet
necklace

spilled ash
and spilled semen

redder
lips
all the trees

have lost their
petals
Then walking outside in air like a muscle inside and outside the random sprinkling of full-grown dandelions near the river, the life just above the ankle, not eternity, some of the dandelions spraying their yellow into their biggest fullest overflow and after this no place left to go fuller which is still their most excruciated, unrecalcitrant to the limits to the exact precipice stepping off after which is not dandelion, I find myself being lavished, almost as air, all out in my glance over these dandelions and through the wind in the air near the river blowing out from its circumference though I can’t discern where its center is — All over the withering of the dandelion centers’ unsolemn flamboyant dropping — point after point after fullness — after italics — I am not in love — after the moving yellow
drains off from the center which

I see isn’t rigid — Lavished out upon its dry pale taupe tongue’s blowing away radius of spikes with an ex-
tremity very like feathers’ susceptible vulnerability to

air changes, away
from and into this

river already exceeding some limits it has grown throughout air and throughout water where it’s been

melting its firmaments (upside-down) in the mountains in the cavities, in heavy lava

& mineral breath

where this river beneath this air (of world and its anvil beard of gravit) has been

inscribing its

bed in the shape of its over-

flow — And even into

air rising into me in bigger gulps was I lavished saying dandelion, butterfly to flesh out the feel of the words to see how much more gets into the mouth and my words when I say

them — And into where the air seems to

covet the lungs — Or when I said air

cannot be overflow because there is no remaining place with-
to this sudden supple yellow modern monarch fluttering against the window

here and beyond to where I turn to the amber in the green river, dandelions

overflowing

in their yellow overflowing into their white-dying heads with the wind in them like old hair

scattering its

shreds along

though the air doesn’t stir. Doesn’t seem to be a government. Doesn’t seem to choose — Makes

no shape out of or around

itself neither imperial nor victim — Doesn’t seem to be in shambles — It is morning

to which I’m

devoted though I have

here little fear — Morning

air as always continuing and not seeming to shed

itself in order to continue sinking into all sinkholes and points between my fingers where
I pointed

or forgot to point, or sometimes

altogether forgot my fingers — This is because

flowing out of our-

selves, we over-

flow — This is because air is not a fabric, not a hurdle, accommodating, accommodating,

not ever seeming to

accord, while continuing

the roller coaster motions my hand is making fresh

through this sea of air making its bed

around the

mountain and the ochre house the lilac bush is

flowering inbetween, then the stranger

approaching over him then around my brown arm

on the left raising it-

self to inquire, around the aspens flickered with sunlight shunting its whitest
scored points onto their chartreuse-limed, deliciously wind-

disheveled leaves becoming an (almost) blinding question because so much

light

just got reflected back out through

a so far lack of paradigms

my machine-made shades the eyes

(sometimes) slip against without a company of details into which

looking could get absorbed, more

lavished

into, all of us are finding ourselves to be

bed for you

air and this stranger closing in

closer in your more looseness but taut with

no lesions I can feel) grip — Why should
air

or eternity stop flooding in? *(Over here, says eternity; over here says air like a large run-off)* — What more in me is empty you should have been spilling yourself into? What more in him? Why shouldn’t I call any one of us *overflow*? Because there must have been a place without air for which air penetrates? There must’ve been a place such as altitude, or a question for which air, or eternity ignites and bursts itself further in? —
Looking for you tends to give me Modigliani eyes — the kind that try to disappear beneath a skirt, part of the position of the world which shows its glory not apart from bees and twirls your ripenether aspects underneath my petticoats in a peach-like upraising bees come to — They tremble after you have left, as much unknown to me visible as invisible, hating that you keep me staring straight out into the air I’ve felt I come from, in part, plucking at the wide hair loops about your eyelids — Bees don’t disappear except at night because they defend the future it grows — Why not stay? I notice you don’t have Modigliani eyes yourself — Have I told you the bees appear with a humour fishhooking itself into the eyes I’m getting from the sea, so much looking out at the sea throughout all the edges of my eyes that’s how they defend themselves? Modigliani himself had eyes which thought they stared straight into the bees but had aimed themselves instead into the belly of the air still almost as much unknown to us visible as invisible, thinking it a hive — Not unreasonable given that religion is having relationships with real unknown ones in you my senses want to be involved so I won’t be inclined to uncreate the beginning of my body an opus trying to pay its bills in a departure from usual figuring — Why not stay? Bees aren’t sorry for the bride even on her slow days, not sorry for the fishermen.
I know how deftly like a puzzle our accounting has been done - if someone has been commanding you to vanish as the smoke of my father's cigars made tobacco wrapped around itself disappear at the same time it was burning air, I invoke her or him to stop it with the painful detail which figures out creative ways to pay its bills — you think I'm more visible here in my insistance than in my life? Eye for an eye I'm going to tantalize and excruciate you with asking then let it disappear low over the brown terrain. Before it gets to the sea interrupted with bees watching, among the taupe tree limbs twisting almost like punctuation marks but not yet like you, an exclamation point of sorts. I see like an eyebrow no horizon. Which registers better dappling the very bee-shade — who know how deftly like a puzzle our accounting has been done — if someone has been commanding you to vanish as the smoke of my father's cigars made tobacco wrapped around.
who know how deftly like a puzzle our accounting has been done — If someone has been command-ing you to vanish as the smoke of my father’s cigars made tobacco wrapped around

itself disappear at the same time it was burning
air, I invoke her or him to stop it with the painful detail which figures out

creative ways to pay its bills — You think I’m more visible here in my insistence than in my life? Eye for an eye I’m going to tantalize and excruciate you with ask-
ing then let it disappear low over the brown ter-

rain before it gets to the sea interrupted with bees watching, among the taupe tree limbs twisting all

over the land almost like punctuation marks but not yet like you, an exclamation point of sorts, a code of sorts I see like an eyebrow no horizon which registers better dappling the very bee-shade —
Meet Me in the Mess Hall

Laura Solomon

These eyes prove vacuous, unfit for fiat or surrender,
Panoraming the scene for predicament, scoping meal & prey.
A gobble-gobble fugue lifts spirits eyebrows skirts
As both pensive and panicky assume a bacchanalian tempo.

Dangerous music we decide
We don't care (too much so much too little).
Too late—for the taffy pull from stasis is too enticing.
I am enticed you are enticed. We: enticed.

Yet not surprised at these enamored eyelashes, blinking
& blushing at the mention of etymology, ecstasy—
Particularly ecstasy, particularly ecstasy's etymology.
A masked stranger shouted & they did.

The landscape committee was perturbed, as was the funding
Which was lost on the way to the present
Gala which is unlike other galas which is superior to other galas
As “We Now Have Pool Tables!” graces the hallway in all its laminated glory.

This turns you on immensely. Already you are biting
My neck in the bathroom. Faucet probing my back.
Some feet propped on marble—mine, I believe.
& there is no occasion for this behavior, none for which I will apologize.

Not even to the panels of lines ahead as they contract & constrict
Growing darker with shade & cross-hatch, to form what looks like
A geometrical tunnel. We enter. Dull-eyed with belly-ache.
Perhaps you are embarrassed & I, being somewhat considerate,

Offer to as you, as to move you from literal to figurative,
As to as you, as I as you & as you, as I as you hard
As you as me harder, as I as you & as you harder & harder
Until you cry like uncle, call me cannibalesque.
Meredith Stricker

what are the letters

of trees? their writing

numerous and fragrant

in casts leaves and white roots

something like quickened silence,
you said, turning

heat carries

far in to the grasses

and the grasses

lean together in to the irvis ion of water

and together we lean into the shiny

blue their shadows make
Arbor Day

Chris Stroffolino

It's more likely I'll plant flowers than trees.
They fit between the rooks, between upended forks,
The sapless stalks of previous owners
Amidst the cement chunks and plastic for their pool,
Cardboard and wrappers, beachballs filthy because airless,
A dead rat or two, unmentionables.
It's a close kin to the buffet table:
A flower as a bowtie, a tree a commitment of years,
A graceful pact with human standards,
A knowledge of autumn's color beneath the green business suit,
Yet not at all feeling stuck in the cubicle of the surface.

The trees come anyway, from the roots of the neighbors.
No cause for a turf war, and taken too far
I'll never get round to harvesting.
For planting is still my way of snubbing
With my fingers and opposable thumb
The nose of risible, rinsable, bitterness,
Rubbing down the meanings till sugar forms
On the saleable surface, a wash-and-wear tux of nothingness
Society looks as good in as an individual ribbed by division,
Too naughty for any nightgown. Then the sky spills
Its oil around the stars of iceberg lettuce
That has grounded the animals again.

Let the trees come as they must through the cement
And rock the very foundations.
I dare them like I dare fireworks
To form a police line around me.
Enough winged numerals swish their tails loudly
In the whiskeyed-up water for me to trade in
The best oral sex in the world for a Ural of genitals
On opening night covered with roses no one had to plant
And thoughts (feelings) that can't be harvested
Until they become feelings (thoughts)
And the flowers form my fence.
If there is a problem, there is a root.
But just because there’s a root
Doesn’t mean there’s a problem
Especially when every other city seems
Closer than the one in which I live,
The one that almost succeeded in silencing me
(or won the battle to lose the war)
By becoming synonymous with the self
As I swam beneath the surface of its schemes
With oxygen running out like money
Or the kind of love that won enough primaries
In the 60s now smothered by soft-money...

Once upon a time, we were presented with a choice.
Abandon all hopes, or smuggle them
Inside the expectation custom allows.
Maturity seemed to creep up & we knew
Our erstwhile friends were going mental
When we saw them use the middle of streets as sidewalks,
While we, like principals at the prom, remained
Moral as wallflowers unable to content ourselves
There’d be no streets without sidewalks,
Or admire the way cars make feet
As the temptation to justify the pedestrian
Borrowed a loudspeaker to drown
The cuddly truthful thief of imagination
That doesn’t have to remember
What it’s like to be a child.

If a particular image seized us
Like a memory starring ourselves as children,
We’d be more likely to see things from our parents’ side
Than give our own children more permission.
Benched by the side of the mental veggie avenues
As much as by the meat streets, how we flattered ourselves
As if we were born under the kind of stop sign
Only war-machines refuse to heed,
Beached, but with no time to swish
The water of thought around our mouths
Before shuffling it off to the greedy unreflective stomach
Of the streets sold us as the only livable society
To fool us into feeling
We weren’t condescending
By the desperate urgency of (discount) need
Which could cause others to steal our hearts
Until a song with no words allowed us
To hear ourselves thinking in words
More easily than a song with words did.

Then the most barren desert
Reveals a place of central power
So the senators who call themselves the woods
And the representatives who call themselves the farms
Can no longer invoke the privilege of nature
In the argument that seems to make
The world go round when I catch myself wondering
If I’m taking the anti-money of love for granted.

How long can it stay in exile, like Timon
Digging for roots but finding more inedible gold?
But it cannot be Timon
Nor Houdini trying unsuccessfully
To find a hole in the ice.
It, and I, cannot be reduced to being underwater.
We flop up on land, and eventually our fins are feet.
We’re only vulnerable to the extent we’re perceived,
So we stop perceiving ourselves
And begin to perceive each other.

Love, I say, what’s a nice dump like you
Doing in a me like this (but I might as well
be eulogizing her after my death).
We leave the dump together
But when I get to her place
I know my clothes reek of it,
“Why does he get to be called visionary?”
They scream. I try to cover them up
By taking them off, and that’s how I got
To this moving bus where cells
Are forbidden, and the sex
Is no more left out of it
Than the argument is
And the love is more than
The lethargic rubber buffer
Between metal and metal
More than the green light given the pedestrian
Who flips the eagle at money (with sense)
As if baseball season doesn’t have to step up to the plate.

It’s splendid when the palace becomes a private pub
So I choose my friends
As a conductor dresses up like a sideman
To choose his band without having
To wear a walkman to make an old, remembered connection
Where cells are forbidden
Like a cop who rhymes with go
Or the “close and play” we feel below
The official face of an average schmo
To become one with the red lights
Never arrested for their prostitution or speeding
Where play and labor meet in work, and fast
To prove hope hell, the moral soap
That made the skin break out in rash.

But there are other soaps besides
One life to live, you better shop around.
Not better but different, and we don’t have to prove
The Beatles ugly, Dylan dysfunctional,
The velvet underground to know
The beauty we are, but if we don’t
Some settling may occur, some stammering
So that even the strictest Freudian
May find a viewing of commercials,
A replaying of one hit wonders,
From the analysand’s early childhood
Do more to unlock the primal scene
Than any account of being taught
How to ride a bike by a dad who couldn’t.

But just because parents were less of a presence
Than musicians on the radio
That didn’t have to become sterile
To become a stereo, doesn’t mean
The songs themselves, their posters of stars,
Were not already shrinks.
Such moments become monuments
Unless the only love I’m always in is lust, the only cat
Killed by curiosity the one with nine lives
& this makes me feel like my muscles
Being used, our democracy & sweetness,
The cleanliness of filth, determined
To be free for an emergency
Without which there can be no emergence
Of an elf or continental shelf
Even if fictive as the sea
Or the blues that can drown
The business in the techno R&B
In synch with the city as boring as its baseball
Team that always (thinks it) wins

If not, alas, the designated hitter,
Of the pentagon stepping to the plate
Without having to play the field,
That wages war on its behalf
Juggle

Cole Swensen

The sky is the constant, and against it slides a planet
is anything that moves
across
will look all arc.
(I practice each trick
behind a curtain where it’s warm
eye : hand hand : calibration through
a practiced “We
tend to forget what the hand cannot do without.” “I see
each move clearly in my mind,
and it’s fine.” Look away. Carry
the brimming teacup across the crowded station. Watch
my hands. Said the multitude: Memory
is every muscle’s sovereignty; eternity is a thumb.
The Hand in Fresco

Cole Swensen

Behind the glass-block wall there walks

Put roses behind the glass block window red ones it’s hard to tell exactly what’s going on. There are saints coming down. And tribes that turn to chalk when the photograph strikes. He put up his hand to protect his face and the hand remained

You can make the face into a wall. All these colors into pale into whisper: “Wilt silt,

wilt sift.

Sieve.
You can see through me. I’m the one wearing ice. I have crossed
Jonathan Thirkield

#nine

dear that is above
me, dear waste
disruption of this
this:
please lie underneath
handle that you
soften, that you let
go and become
atmospherics, mass
it is a house you
hold, a woman—I
believe
so much in our
shapes, patterns, rings

#ten

the ring that blues
in nearing a sea,
our sums: human, eroding
she mapped sharp
rings against the dust
in ‘I’ in ‘you’
in
trajectory, I give
eye ascend, I give
lots laid bare on
maps
we land
like thousands near lights
plotted by proximity
Nothing can be found...

Nothing can be found, she says, 
beyond the eye's knowing. 
There is no halo in the darkness –

Yet there is something real and gold, 
ecstatic and delightful north of California:

A border is eliminated 
and all that squiggles manages to converge: 
someone paints a green hexagon

to enclose a heart and then another. 
We have not talked in a long time.
Ocean on both sides...

Ocean on both sides
Our island within

Three inverted canoes
The beach:
Five paddles make it serious

The shape of her – an olive hourglass –
when she flips at each turn

The heart that does not leap
is a mistake of the first order

The slightly dark mole
at the edge of your lip.
Spring...

Spring. He said *no limits*
I will write my way through the trees.

Heaven is an Irish woman far away and given.
What crosses the pillow is a sewn image

woven to the heart – high or low we are wed to that –
a charitable sweetness matched with lust:

When you are blessed, you are really blessed.
Ascend and dive...

Ascend and dive
and don’t tell me a thing
I’ve got a good love on the loose

A wet madrone, skin pealing, its bone bare trunk

Never stop for thought,
especially when the going’s good

She’s inside me, then out,
tactile as a banana or something to munch

Spasms spring tender illuminations
mauve and pink –

I am a young man now and a young man then:
Live live live
Cold War

Shannon Welch

We stand on the ice in white coats, white caps
Waving white flags, waiting for the spacecraft
To re-enter the atmosphere through the hole

In the ozone. Near the pole but the pole
Looks just like all the other ice.
When our compass starts going crazy

We know where we are. We know space is hard
On the human body. But the moon bulges.
And therefore light pours out. Overflows.

We feel so much, like, kinship
To the man and the moon.
The force of his face fills arenas.

Take your cap off.
Right hand over your heart. It’s time to pledge.
Ridiculously large rainbow. Unreal rainbow.

Large arc that dwarfs the whole continent.
And in that shrunken grid, I live,
Work. Sleep. I’m beginning to get used to this.

My kids fill garbage sacks with gasoline.
They lift the mouths of the bags
To their lips. Inhale.

They play *war* by the machine shed.
Climb the town watertower.
Pin each other.


When one falls, the other
Cups his hands around his mouth.
Calls out: *Don’t be dead.*
Don’t be dead.
I had to teach them everything.
Not a launching pad—a landing pad.
Sounds like...had. Sounds like...?

Night falls and then falls again.
The blanket: cloud cover, sea and sky
Sheathed in darkness and darkling

I had nothing left to sell.
Faithless and perverse generation
Valuation, world of value.
I want it back.
Often

Sam White

I am often close.
Beneath the circling flock,
I am often a boy —

a whirlpool in its first revolution,
its last and twisted dot —
the face at the bottom of the well

irises out to a nightscape of clouds.
The sea flies in its boundless pile,
an open boat grows,

cupped and pitching,
the sun holds every birdlike nothing.
Is your breath on my cheek

a figment of land?
I am often a boy
absent the island.
how on this earth, this
good place, did I see
light in its crankshaft
descend to understatement.
I was younger, the last
of us. In a canoe I was younger,
broader, a place of my own.

Good waste. Good curtains.
A pool in the old light. The light
that drinks itself as it passes
the key. Drinks itself
as it falls in the long hands
of dusk. O specificity,
I was younger. There were
places. I had heard of them.
Fingering an old bullwhip smile like a toothless rat and I favored her evil.

During hours we smoked pot and talked Artaud and auditions and fucking sometimes. She drank peroxide and gin. Pertinis. Thighs open like clam.

I handed her my wrist; she taught it to snap. I am not a tree today.

It was dim as a theater and shitty in there but no more than outside. I grew to like the smell of jelly and rubbing alcohol and smoke over smoke not a hardy stink. When it rains you smell the wallpaper.

There's a banker who always comes on Wednesdays but not in bad weather or April and she rides him like an ass around to all the girls with a bit and spurs which he supplies.

Tired of shouldering they would lay down their arms or pick them up. Among the Spartoi coins were heavy to discourage trade. Garlic hung on their bedposts. Give me that man who is not passion's fool. Give me that man.

I always got the Hasids this was the diamond district who would come during lunch and lay paper towels over their stomach and thighs and mouth words I could never siphon. I didn't mind them for the most part gentle men.

The skin listens. The whip is a mother singing.

I wasn't fooled by his beak. Masks only work in certain fantasias.

We waited all morning breathing through straws. The astrologer came at noon surprised to find us still in bed. Mars is in the house of darkened rooms.

He wanted anonymity and raw ankles. Capes are back this fall and that's some solace. The table is impersonal yet braced with bruises. There's much to see as a permanent tourist.

Personal exile is a private joke. Some are empty when the meat trucks barrel in from the turnpike. I could scout my veins but I know where they lead.

This is a deadly polka but ah! the twirling. There's bitters in this, Ginger. Lay all your sadness there.
green jerseys swarm over girls in the grass, bloody, busy;  
cup a nosetang of their powder, and that too, roll it with strands of music,  
of soccer blue and lick it shut.

we panted  
after victorian porn/fucking off on pillow-books/on flouting  
god&amerika/mercy high/the barbarously sad plaid  
to our knees/morning mass,  
stained light soaking the sacristy,  
Father Richard’s nailpolish  
sparking  
like new pennies.

into the trees behind the splashy grass, the paintwhite  
fading like remember a September, roses glorious  
in your neighbor’s gardens, nobody noticed us,  
two small people, swallows in the secretive  
coda of trees  
and we are spike-eared, fizzing  
with listening for that crack of twigs, that resolution  
into terror,  
but fear forwent and fearing forgotten,  
the afternoon grew arms around us,  
and the light,  
it took us without telling  
into a place where we became the things we dream we are,  
wild, ancient, unified, already lived and already dead,  
calling the trees and mossy rocks into, into, into,  
and when the trees stopped suddenly,  
and the sky dropped in, suddenly  
splendid on the matted necks of grasses,  
ourselves on the brim of a field and  
the field was an elusive hymn  
unfolding over a hill, was huge, pretty and plain,  
no fieldflowers, no larkspur, but was pleasure enough,  
and grew around a house, abandoned, quite beautiful in the late afternoon,  
now very gold, now longing and drawing us closer, urgently, to come  
inside.
Angela Ball
Dan Beachy-Quick
Rachel Beck
Lucie Brock-Broido
Sandy Brown
Amy Catanzano
Joshua Clover
Joshua Corey
Valerie Coulton
John Cross
Greg Darms
Christopher Davis
Timothy Donnelly
Ahna Fender
Katie Ford
James Galvin
Karen Garthe
Michele Glazer
Leonard Gontarek
Richard Greenfield
Patricia Hartnett
Brian Henry
Cathy Park Hong
Fanny Howe
Paula Koneazny
David Lau
Anna Lewis
Timothy Liu
Jerome Luc Martin
Susan Maxwell
Rachel Morgan
Harryette Mullen
Jason Park
Simon Perchik
Chris Pusateri
Srikanth Reddy
Elizabeth Robinson
Martha Ronk
Matt Shears
Spencer Selby
Edward Smallfield
‘Annah Sobelman
Laura Solomon
Marti Stephen
Meredith Stricker
Chris Stroffolino
Cole Swenson
Jonathan Thirkield
Stephen Vincent
Shannon Welch
Sam White
Nicole Zdeb

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