



P E R S I M M O N S

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# P E R S I M M O N S

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*fall 2012*

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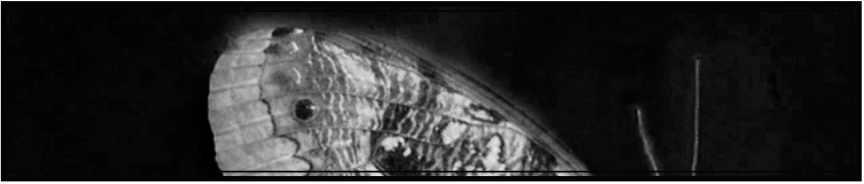
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*When I Was A Boy* — Luke Hodges

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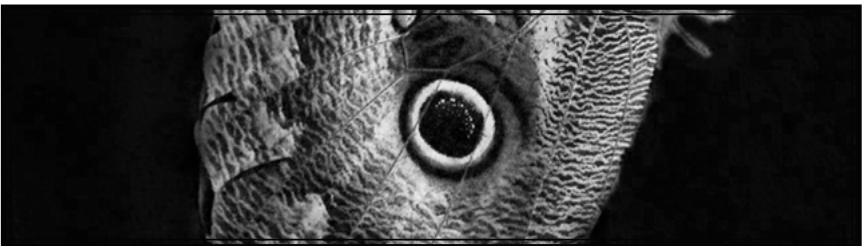
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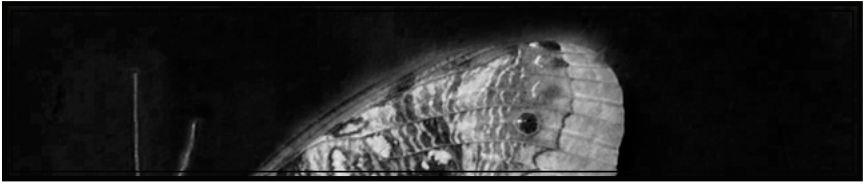
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photo credit: claudia pepe

# *Creationism*

---

LINDA MULLIN

The words swirl into being like  
stardust becomes the swirling Milky Way.

Crystallized, they trickle down,  
catch and tug on nerves,  
a snag in spider silk revealing  
pale blue sky.

Fingers curl around the pen and  
guide themselves in a practiced dance—  
the ink becomes a prayer.

# *I Am the Flesh of the Full Moon*

---

NATALIE WARDLAW

*written in response to Kiki Smith's piece  
Europa*

I am the flesh of the full moon  
that stands out two soft breasts  
of pale mortal complexion  
glowing in the iridescent sheen  
of the night.

I am the flesh of the full moon  
that wandered lonely through  
Pastures, limp flowers dangling  
from entwined fingers  
reaching out for something firm to hold.

I am the flesh of the full moon  
that when broken open  
spills the sweet nectar of  
suckling life, creating the  
hope of new worlds.

I am the flesh of the full moon  
that held fast to the back  
of the star white bull  
who charged madly into  
the water that swallowed us whole.

I am the flesh of the full moon  
silhouetted against the craggy  
forms of an island now  
my home, where beast revealed  
himself as man, as god.

I am the flesh of the full moon  
that stains red blood against white linens  
as fingernails scratch and  
the illusion of immortality  
is shattered in the cries of a new born.

I am the flesh of the full moon  
that stands rigid in the  
absence of her king who  
never really inhabited this  
world longer than a tide.

I am the flesh of the full moon  
that holds child against bosom  
wrapped tightly in a blanket of  
empty promises that say  
one day he will be king.

I am the flesh of the full moon  
who looks always skyward  
to the cold blackness where  
the bull gazes commemoratively  
down, studded in apologetic stars.

I am the flesh of the full moon  
who wanes into disconnect  
once treasured but soon  
discarded, smooth skin now  
crinkled into ash.

# *Bath*

---

GABRIELLA ALZIARI

at night i  
lower my body towards  
the bathwater

wrinkle my fingers,  
slip into weightlessness,  
peel my skin and  
spread  
my toes



THE GATE · Luke Hodges



## *“Psalm 82”*

---

NATHANIEL LOTZE

It's not fair, she said, to have something you love taken away  
from you  
Happening with abrupt intensity like a lightning strike on the  
prairie, turning into  
Fire on the ground before anyone can do anything  
In minutes the thick, black, choking smoke rises  
Some great tribute to destruction  
And when it is all over the charred Earth rests in silence.

But, he said, sometimes it leaves gradually, moves away  
slowly though  
Still too fast to be stopped and that is when it hurts the most  
When hope goes away with the lights of some far off  
Desert town, flickering out when the conquistador that  
Is daybreak comes flooding over the stacked mesas to the east  
And the night sky drains into some other world.

It is not good, they say, to be partial to the wicked or  
To deprive the innocent of justice but so much just escapes us  
these days  
Some people grasp, clutch, strain in empty spaces  
Motivated by desperate nostalgia, pleading for rescue  
Others turn their backs as their eyes cloud and heads shift ever  
So slightly downward, necks holding more than they can bear.

# H.M.S. Patroclus

---

ROBERT ANGELL

*The deck of the H.M.S. Patroclus during the Napoleonic Wars. The crew of the ship is represented by standing wooden figures, almost like higher-quality cardboard cutouts. The figures are barely discernible in the near total darkness. Center stage, under a spotlight, ABLE SEAMAN JAMES TENNANT is tied to the mast and being flogged by the BOSUN with a cat o' nine tails. Tennant tries his best not to change his expression, but he is gritting his teeth. The Bosun counts each lash.*

BOSUN

Two 'undred forty-five. Two 'undred forty-six.

*Lights up on ABLE SEAMAN JACK PIPER, stage left. He is among the crowd of wooden sailors. He remains completely still. He faces out to the audience and addresses them directly. The Bosun and Tennant cannot hear what he says. His face is stoic, but there is emotion in his voice. The Bosun continues to flog Tennant.*

PIPER

Should be me up there.

*(Pause)*

I's in on it, too. James won' be tellin' 'em none, though. Not the type o' bloke James is, it ain't.

BOSUN

Two 'undred forty-eight. Two 'undred forty-nine.

TENNANT

Aaugh!

*The Bosun holds.*

BOSUN

What's this? 'As our nut finally cracked?

*Tennant's fists clench and his arms twist within the confines of the rope, but he stays silent. The Bosun resumes. Piper's expression remains stoic, but worry creeps into his voice.*

PIPER

'E's lucky, 'e is. Could be much worse, they knew anythin'. Could be 'angin'.

BOSUN

Two 'undred fifty-one.

PIPER

Oi, where's the surgeon? Ain't 'e gawn stop it? I ain't seen no man flogged o'er two 'undred fifty lashes.

*As he speaks, lights up on one of the wooden cutouts. It's the surgeon, a bloodthirsty look on his face. Lights down on the surgeon.*

PIPER

Then again, ain't seen no man flogged fer sedition none.

*(Pause)*

'E won't tell 'em.

BOSUN

Two 'undred fifty-five.

TENNANT

Augh! Blast!

*The Bosun holds up.*

BOSUN

'Ad enough, Seaman? Got some names, eh?

*Tennant looks back at the Bosun, grits his teeth, and growls, turning back around. The Bosun continues whipping. Tennant's strength slowly begins to fail him.*

BOSUN

Two 'undred fifty-six.

PIPER

Bloody fool. Coulda saved 'imself there, 'e could. Ain't me fault if 'e bleeds out all o'er the Atlantic.

BOSUN

Two 'undred fifty-eight. Two 'undred fifty-nine. Two 'undred sixty.

PIPER

Aow, what 'e did ain't that wrong, innit? Captain Barrowman ain't no Nelson, 'e ain't. There's plenty o' men what'd see 'im keel'auled, they would.

BOSUN

Two 'undred sixty-five.

*Tennant is starting to lose consciousness. His head turns to Piper. Piper feels the gaze and looks at Tennant.*

TENNANT

*(Whispered)* Jack...

*Tennant's head droops.*

BOSUN

Two 'undred sixty-eight.

*Piper pulls away from the wooden cutouts.*

PIPER

Oi! Stop it! 'E's 'ad enough! Look at 'im! 'Is 'ead's saggin'! We've learned our lesson! 'E's learned 'is lesson! We won' doubt Captain Barrowman no more!

*The Bosun does not pay attention to Piper. He continues beating Tennant.*

PIPER

*(Incredibly emotional)* You're killin' 'im!

*Pause. Piper looks out at the audience, guilt, shame, and fear covering his face.*

PIPER

That's what I want to do.

*He slides back to his place with the wooden cutouts.*

PIPER

I ain't gawn do it, though. I ain't strong like Jamie. I wouldn' last twelve lashes. I'm frozen. Like the fish Father'd bring up. Starin' at me, eyes not blinkin'. Gaspin' at the air like drownin' men. Couldn' kill 'em then, they 'spect me to kill Frogs an' Dagos now.

BOSUN

Two 'undred seventy-seven.

*By now, Tennant's back is bloody, his body limp. He does not appear to be breathing. The Bosun unties him, and he falls to the deck, a dead weight. Pause.*

PIPER

Well, 'ell no! 'E ain't the only one what wrote that paper! Jamie won't die in vain. *(shouting)* I'm guilty, too! They flogged 'im, now they can flog me!

*Piper closes his mouth. The lights come up a little. He steps forward and opens his mouth, but is cut off by the Bosun.*

BOSUN

Let that be a lesson to you boys!

*He walks off stage right. The noises of a ship come back: the wind, the waves, the creak*

*of wood, indistinct orders and cries shouted by men. The wooden cutouts recede offstage as Piper tentatively walks over to Tennant.*

PIPER

James?

*He kneels beside the body.*

PIPER

Jamie?

*He looks around, then quickly takes Tennant's face in his hands and kisses him on the mouth. He spends a quiet moment looking at Tennant before the Bosun re-enters.*

BOSUN

Oi! Seaman!

*Piper stands straight at attention.*

PIPER

Bosun!

BOSUN

Don' just stand there! 'Elp me wit' the body.

*The Bosun begins to lift Tennant's legs. Piper stands still.*

BOSUN

Well, come on!

*Beat.*

PIPER

Ain't 'e gawn 'ave a proper burial?

BOSUN

This 'ere's too proper fer a traitor.

*Beat. The Bosun drops Tennant and reaches for his cat o' nine tails. Piper hurries to get Tennant's head, much more tenderly than the Bosun grabs his legs. They carry Tennant to the edge of the stage, then throw him off. After a pause, there is the sound of a splash. The Bosun grunts and exits. Piper stands over the edge, watching the place where he threw Tennant's body overboard. He looks up, clearly hurt and conflicted. The lights dim again, like when we were in his head. He is holding back tears.*

PIPER

Should I've...?

*He looks down again.*

## *A Probable Constantino Cavafis at Age 19*

---

OLIVIA LOTT

*A translation of Raúl Gómez Jattin's poem "Un probable Constantino Cavafis a los 19"*

Tonight he'll go to three dangerous ceremonies  
The love between men  
To smoke marijuana  
And to write poems

Tomorrow he'll get up past noon  
He'll have broken lips  
Red eyes  
and another paper enemy

His lips will hurt from having kissed so much  
And his eyes will burn like lit cigarette stubs  
And that poem won't express his tears

## Colorado Facts

---

TIM JURNEY

This is a fact:  
the first mechanic hearts  
were strung by a man who  
built puppets  
who found the starts and stops  
easy like wooden dummies, hung his  
cardiac mannequins in bodies  
sang arias from the ventricles  
like a ventriloquist does.

This is also a fact:  
there are two people in a theatre  
of a lot of people and  
his heart beat like her heart and  
sometimes they beat at the same time  
but they never know when of course  
and then, both awash with salt and  
blood and tides, the strings between  
them pull taught,  
he throws himself onto her,  
shakes awhile as shells wash over him.

This is true:  
when he lays across her lap  
his eyes look like glass to her  
jaw slack, torso collapsed, strings cut.

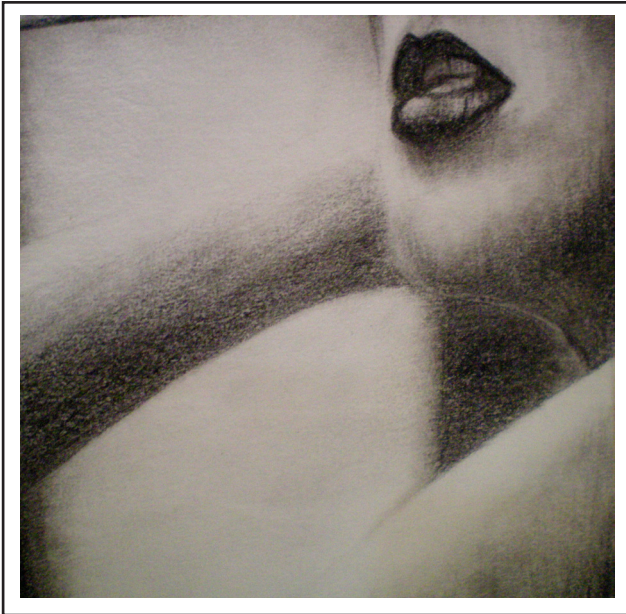
This is also true:  
when he needs something  
artificial to pump his blood  
all she has is her screaming so she  
throws her voice, plays the ventriloquist  
and screams, wonders aloud,  
*who let automatic valves  
become automatic weapons.*

# Rheumatism

---

DANIEL KIPP

blooz man's; all up in the fingers like wind in a flute,  
jazzed out on hot air and cold fronts, the stuff  
of relations; phone numbers, notebooks filled with  
Greek, Hendrix, Shakespeare, an index  
of storms; your words cracked knuckles to rumble  
crowds. I remember. Even as you tried to hide  
secrets of; stuck somewhere without thought, ever  
connected, ephemerally ethereal; weird, how  
while, a; makes back when, but. All's left is a haiku  
to infuse with kung-fu – a favorite of  
yours; steeped in pedagogy and hindsight, *duende*,  
roots, pathos – swell, swell, oh bruised moon



FEMME FATALE (*charcoal*) · Avery Myers-Regulinski



## *Fragment 31*

---

JORDI ALONSO

*A translation of Sappho*

There appears to me (again) a sort of goddess.  
The girl who faced you and had intensely listened  
to your voices nodding and spilling  
your laugh out—your sweet laugh out  
to tumble across the empty air  
into a wave like warm honey  
stops my heart, pressing it to my chest.

And now, seeing you for a second, my tongue  
turns into lead and I can't speak,  
my tongue dries up into a slab of clay  
and capillaries of fire spread beneath my sweating skin.  
I cannot see, and what I hear repeatedly  
is you, your voice repeating all you ever said.

I sweat over the sun  
and I shiver-shrivel like thirsty grass,  
still green, my thoughts go  
and I get closer to death.  
And yet  
    I suffer  
    I endure.

# Overture

---

ANDREW EBNER

I.

it desires  
a small walk to the horizon, as  
the blue, flat on sea,  
wraps like a loving body  
by the waist; a personal formation  
of being by the edge of  
sea, as rocks  
climb gallantly  
the shore, along a space  
of a wave that time has stood static,  
time pensive in empathy for standing stock still;

it ponders its position,  
sea covering legs linking  
covered shores, blue depth darkens  
so feet are unreachable and inconsolable  
lost alone inside many waters;  
so long legs stand balanced as reassurance,  
it looks for the boundary of horizons,  
stares and starts forward to imagine moved to an  
end like the sea stepped past as though a  
small stone walked over was left  
in a responding wake.

II.

anticipation's broad shoulders look over your arm at  
a small spot sit still, along a storm front  
anticipation rolls over head, and up back, shivers the length  
making pen hand shake while thunder eats the  
slow, and a silent lip  
frowns that sounds imperceptible;  
hand takes time in the minute,  
fastens fingernail under the splintered desk  
and in impact the lightning  
sets down both there and alongside your quivering,  
moments to go with the thunder crumbling through

III.

on the airline taking time to  
look up lines for exit lanes the light  
brightens up along the cabin front and so opens  
the door and passenger arises with package  
and takes seat and time fills rest of cabin  
you watch wandering in mind at suits and cream-colored blouses  
resting heavy-hearted on the airline and you've forgotten  
how you got here as the cabin is set off above the ocean  
and your heart is heavy too you  
have your baggage in hand and it is a smallness  
and a quiet calm and you clutch it close  
the only holding thing left to see besides  
outside the window your figure stepping slowly  
across the waters clutching the lightning  
in its trembling fist with a distant triumph threatening  
as though a remembered dream awakening  
that holds the heart as heavy it was once before  
and warms its walls with a thick breath settling  
the heavy as distant worry and written memory;  
and so you journey, homeward going, again.



CELLO · Kelsey Rice

A pretty girl  
Moans on the phone. A slim suitcase  
Rests at her feet. Many are rushing past—one man  
Spots an empty seat,

And sits. He is out of place—  
He has no bags, and is wearing a tux.  
Next to the girl, he is not yet whole.  
The girl moans—“But what is love?”  
She moans. The man stares at the girl’s question mark.  
Suddenly, he grabs her arm:  
“We share a similar wonder.”

He removes his hand. He places his wrist  
On top of the arriving flight, curling  
His fingers to block the cabin’s view of clouds  
And ants. “That’s impossible,”

The girl moans.  
“Yes,” the man says to her.  
“Why?” she moans.  
“One must delay darkness,” he says,

Finally whole.

# *Beloved*

---

DAVID MILLER

## *On Donatello's David*

he is lithe he is small he is imperfect  
so inescapably a starless twin of bronze—  
marble incarnations speak of his conceit—  
but here his expression is bland  
his right leg tasteless

beneath his metal shell the little noises resonate  
he freezes and sees shadows  
creep over tile from right to left—  
uncertain how to save himself  
from extinction he stares at Myth's own mottled skin  
and feels himself a model of the split  
between two moments—

he wants us to feel  
the hammer against our skin—  
calloused hands smooth his face  
brush the dust from his eyes  
run a rag along his back—  
his head may outlast the one between his feet—  
and he feels he could become  
more Goliath than his patterned mold—

*“You could build a table on it/ And when  
you did the blues would come to visit”*

---

ELIZABETH FRIEDMAN

It's the discussion about the molecular mass  
of a sponge's absorption,  
a minute detail so pointless  
compared to the frightful spring sunshine of  
the fifteenth that it becomes poignant;

funny how these effortless threads of detail  
shimmer among the drained emotions of  
a tile-under-swift-moving-feet kind of day,  
a tear-streaking, path-leaving,  
how-can-I-change-this-memory  
kind of day.

And as much as I would love to turn those  
radio frequencies that frequent my mind  
completely off so that  
silence effortlessly calms the wake of my  
world,

the 15th arrives,  
and the threads of a how-can-I-change-this-memory  
kind of day  
unravel the spools of my thoughts  
once again.

*\*title from Lynn Emanuel's poem, "Frying Trout While Drunk"*

# *The Best Part of Bedford*

---

DANIEL KIPP

A peanut butter and mushroom sandwich sticks in  
my mouth, like memories of tree stumps, sifting purple funk  
above the skyline, where ice lightning  
thunders from across the man-made frozen  
to our ears, open for interpretation. A slug  
of OJ and our eyes see through the snow, past  
the toxic and tiles to where tendrils  
and duck-muck mark old-style Baptist revivals  
like door frames and lead lines measure out time.

We sit on moon rock, a fossilized  
dino turd, scattered with  
laughter and roaches – most ours,  
though we don't claim to own 'em.  
At night, we shoulder close and hear  
the night slapped cold by a defiant tail,  
distorting the stars. Times like these  
it's no wonder how we talk,  
as if our minds touched, met  
somewhere between floorboards  
and book spines, each bending  
to reach the other.



WEARY ADVENTURER · Noah Johnson



# *Inverted Sugar Syrup*

---

REAGAN NEVISKA

I

My shoes are blue  
ocean blue beaches  
and footprints  
plastered in tin foil.  
I am alone  
with a bone tail  
connecting  
breath mints to swivel chairs.

II

Trying not to inhale  
I run into a girl  
that is a boy  
that looks like you—  
——It hurts.

III

Ants converge  
on the 3rd day.  
Cemetery battlements  
and classroom witnesses  
play games on iron fences  
and yellow-green chemical baths.

IV

It's 1809  
and I am reciting French Idioms  
to a plastic tree.

Humming the words of a song  
you played on your knees,  
plastic bones covered  
in grass.

V

Rachel, dear, wife of Douglass,  
and I move back tires  
to reveal my heart.  
You can kiss angels here,  
leaning against pillars  
like a finger painting  
of the dappled afterlife.

VI

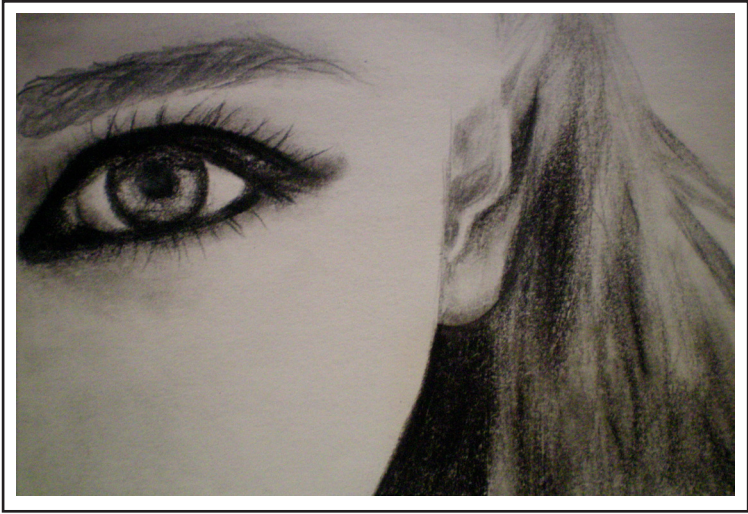
But then again.

# *Tomb Raider*

WILLIAM PLASCHKE

Trousers   Heart   Integrity   Jesus   Coffee   Poem   Dick

The day you leave for good is like  
The day my \_\_\_\_\_ will fall into a tomb.  
I'll need tons of knights to fetch it,  
And no runts, only big-bearded men  
Of this mold: they flip pans with eggs  
When no one is watching, not even  
Wives or kids or God. With a thud,  
They refuse rum. They drink air. A ton  
Of them will do. But who will show up  
Specifically? Alexander of Rogé? Clement  
Of Aquitaine? I wish  
A knight would show up to fetch my \_\_\_\_\_;  
If I don't have my \_\_\_\_\_, I can't  
Survive the cold.



HER EYES (*charcoal and graphite*) · Avery Myers-Regulinski

## *Clown*

---

LUCAS ROPEK

the Imp speaks to him like  
spirits at a  
Pentecostal birthday party

firefly eyes and jack-o-lantern light  
spilling out of teeth and messy untempered  
sometimes cruel  
laughter

## 23 *Views on the Utah Cliffs*

---

ANDREW EBNER

1.

my mind before was with the lily of the valley  
a delicacy with trouble thinking when consumed  
and now  
it is so dry here  
this is no place for me  
it is too quiet and honest

2.

it asks to feel the weight of the world  
with each event obstreperous  
when the morning has its light  
fallen above the eastern mountain  
the subsequent sun comes  
to plunge into the soft shadow of noon  
and try to eat the shade that creeps over crevices

3.

impermanence of  
mountain  
once there was  
a campfire here  
it must have lifted away

4.

a strong shrug and there is  
nothing necessary  
some wish for stairs  
and a waterless shrub

5.

at the top of the cliff  
it will become  
hard to breathe  
with words languid and serene  
silence eats into the chest

6.

bleeding pomegranate seeds behind the footprints  
soft step along steep shot at top climb  
red fists and fingers clenched hidden  
and with fingernails embedded begging bedding from warmth  
and cracking skin side to side and from top below

there is the terror of an inward wave of warmth  
there is an inimitable enrapture wrapping around

7.

there was a time when the top was seen  
and desired for climbing  
now here is the movement  
and the climb that demands  
steady peace and patience  
you do not argue with a rope  
it is not good at arguments

8.

a lizard belly  
burnt beyond recollection  
and welded into the stone

9.

as the rocks grew  
in time knowing better their  
height like an old friend returning  
with a warmth felt intensely  
my bones grew too though slowly  
and needing coaxing  
if I were like a mountain I could hope  
to match its red suit  
and matchless manner

10.

a rock plummet  
it is now not  
the mountain  
it is a hill  
and easy to scale

11.

the bridge leans  
from the left to the right  
as though tired  
from touching a cloud  
when once the world were low-hanging  
you could pluck one  
and eat it  
snack on cumulus  
and save some for supper  
and a few for breakfast  
and a few for safe keeping

12.  
there are no more handholds  
a bird passes by

13.  
blue sky  
sly and looking  
mighty fine

14.  
a howl;  
wind and  
nothing  
more

15.  
at the top of one  
better see another  
if this is climbed  
so too must the other

16.  
weary of sun  
it crawls under crevice  
and rests

17.  
to move a mountain  
one must begin by  
touching stones

18.  
the bird lifted the cliff on its wings  
under the right wing was the world  
on the left was possibility  
it settled down and threaded the cliffs through its nest

19.  
the cold visits  
without its mask  
so I would not  
forget its face  
with its torment

20.  
though far away  
the rock stops  
trying to be  
and so belongs again  
to the sea

21.  
with a lift  
the scene settles  
with a settle  
the lift liberates  
the cliff passes by  
in its perambulations  
it forgets why it came  
it rests for a while

22.  
a car spreads dust  
through two monuments  
that look into the car window  
them leaned over a wide shadow  
of their own doing with  
the wide weight of curiosity pulling

23.  
the sunset lasted  
as though the day  
thought it was still morning  
day left lifting itself quiet  
and slow  
turning around  
to put its slippers on  
like having slept in the time was gone  
twisted back and quick to another night  
the day was stock still in hurt quiet  
wondering when the time began to go  
for to settle in and know of  
an evergoing waking was once  
a full feeling when warmed at first by morning  
but now in its quiet pain  
it told itself it would have to walk this way again

# *A Translation (admittedly guided)*

---

RACHEL GORSKY

*Si vero me amauisses, meum mundum passus esses*

If

truly

really

actually?

literally (no)

you loved    had loved

had fallen for

me,

Then you

would have

should have (yes)

endured    been patient with?

suffered through

my world (implies madness)

my life (no)

my love (ugh)

me.



PLANE AND TRACTOR, WYNKOOP AIRPORT · Ariana Chomitz



# *He Who Never Understood*

---

OLIVIA LOTT

*a translation of Raúl Gómez Jattin's poem, "El que no entendió nunca"*

You were a weak witness  
Didn't understand  
Didn't help the victim

You were an accomplice of betrayal and ignorance  
You tactically accepted  
that *that* man wasn't worth it

When they brought him to the slaughterhouse  
you were close to him  
and only bestowed hostile glances

When they asked you  
if that friend in his poems was you  
you denied it furiously

Now that you live amongst everyday things  
do you forget that illustrious time  
when you had poetry at your feet?

# *Slave Revolt Poems*

---

TIM JURNEY

## *I. Victorious Anne*

I am the unnamed  
slave boat captain  
whose white hand  
shoved the slaves  
down into the hold  
and I am the open  
black mouth of the  
hold but also I am  
the open red mouth  
of a white man in the  
black shadow of a tiger  
leaping with the  
strength of 500  
mouths deep  
in the black  
mutinous hold  
and as the tiger leaps  
my cries are heard only  
by other doomed men  
and also in the history  
books that white boys  
read 500 years later  
and shudder quietly  
in one more failed  
attempt of skin  
refusing to shed.

## *II. Misericordia*

As a child I counted with my fingers to eleven incessantly

*one*

On the Gambia River

*two*

as his father fought the White men

*three*

he (whose name I wish to know)

*four*

sat counting his fingers

*five*  
and when the Captain Estevao Carreiro  
*switch*  
*hands*  
(whose name I do not wish to know)  
*six*  
saw that all was lost  
*seven*  
he did the most cowardly thing  
*eight*  
and blew up the ship  
*nine*  
and the he (whose name I wish to know)  
*ten*  
only got to  
switch hands

*eleven*

### III. *Two Friends*

The captain logged  
*lost the best of what we had*  
and didn't know he was  
referring to himself.

### IV. *Perfect*

The crew dead,  
they slipped back  
to kingdoms  
and serfdom  
and selfdom  
and most of them  
got there and  
that makes those  
who didn't all the  
more tragic and it doesn't  
make me feel better  
that the hands  
that snatched  
back the unlucky were  
black because it only means we  
all are descended from  
some kind of  
slaveowner.

# *Whiskey and Other Spirits*

---

MELISSA NIGRO

The place hadn't changed much. It had the same tacky lighting and androgynous bartenders—even the drinks hadn't increased in price, despite the sinking economy. Michael sat at the bar, uncomfortable in his baggy black sweater and wishing he had brought a book so that he didn't look so alone. He didn't recognize any of the people around him. Everyone looked younger, and hipper, and the middle-aged couples he had spotted before were nowhere to be seen. He ordered a whiskey and coke and stared out the window, silently tearing a cocktail napkin to pieces. He was on his third drink when someone spoke to him.

"You forgot your glasses."

It had been over five years, but he recognized the voice. He turned and saw the redhead in the blue dress, sitting next to him, regarding him over her folded hands.

"I—" he said, astounded that she remembered him, or that he remembered her.

"Last time you were here you wore glasses. What happened?" She tilted her head. Same blue eyes, he thought. Or gray. And what was wrong with her dress...?

"I stopped wearing them. When I was looking for—I thought that the glasses would be an obstacle, or something. It was stupid." Michael took several large gulps of his whiskey and coke. He noticed the empty space in front of her and signaled at the bartender. "Let me buy you a drink."

"Michael Field," she said, looking at him, smiling. "The first man to discover spiritual resonance. I should be buying you a drink. How long has it been since I last saw you in this bar? Five years?" She leaned forward, and raised her eyebrows. "Have you been hunting for ghosts all that time?"

Michael stared at her for a second. Then he raised his glass, downed the rest of the whiskey, and slammed it on the counter. "Sure, buy me a drink," he said, "I'm the man of the hour, the fool of the year, the idiot of the century. I'm the man who can't handle his own research. I'm a hero for scientists everywhere!" It was then that the alcohol started to hit him hard. He hadn't had anything to drink in weeks.

Michael leaned on the bar, swaying towards the woman, taking in the way her hair curled around her collarbone, the silver glint of her earrings. "I bet you've had an encounter. I bet you've felt the chill, tasted the bitterness, felt like you were having a drink—I mean—dream—" he stopped abruptly, closed his eyes, and put his head on the counter.

"Nope," she said softly, almost under her breath. "Just the opposite."

"Thing is," Michael slurred, head still on the bar, "it's impossible to give anyone an answer. 'Are they souls?' the Christians ask me. 'Are they aliens?' asks the President. Are they dangerous, should we avoid them, I don't know, I don't know, I don't know."

He raised his head, eyes unfocused. "Is this what Darwin felt like? All of evolution unfolding in front of him, everyone's questions and doubts and

expectations, and he's responsible for all of them? They asked him for his answers, and he gave them, but they were wrong, and I'm going to be wrong, I know it, because I can't even experience my own goddamned discovery!"

The woman sighed and rested her head on one hand, letting her hair brush the scarred surface of the counter. Michael traced one finger in the condensation left by the glasses on the bar, making loops and swirls with the water. "Just the one true line of thought," he muttered, "and that's as far as he got. Everything else—" he swiped his hands at the water, smearing it into a puddle. "Bullshit."

Silence fell. Then the woman spoke.

"You know, I was religious." She prodded the ice in his glass with a stir stick. "Before this whole SR thing."

Michael pushed himself upright. "Oh. I'm sorry."

"No, it isn't your fault. But just knowing that there are souls—" she raised a finger as Michael opened his mouth, "I know you don't know if they're souls, just go with it for a second—knowing that there are souls just hanging around, nothing to do but throw some gawkers for a trip... what kind of afterlife is that?"

"So you don't think they..." Michael made a motion with his hand. "Go on?"

She gave him a look. "I think it's like this. I guess we have souls, right? So when we die, they're trapped in this SR field, as you've proven. And since our living souls don't register in the field, the really active SR spots must be the accumulation of millions and millions of dead ones. Which means that no one goes." She leaned forward on the counter, rubbing her shoulders. "They just gather, like dust."

Another silence. Michael didn't recognize the song playing in the background, but he could hear the thump of the bass.

The woman chewed on her lip. Swirled her drink. "Why does it still worry you so much? You're off the project. Let it go."

Michael breathed out. He looked down at the counter, scratching the surface. When he spoke, he spoke slowly, hesitantly. "When I detected the first SR, when I first realized what all this meant, I had this thought. If they are souls, like, the individual souls of people who had died, then I could— I could find my mom. But then I spent five years visiting all the hotspots in the country, trying to feel something, anything, and..." he tapped his fingers on his glass. "I'm starting to think they don't exist. I—I don't believe in my own discovery."

The woman's eyebrows knit together. "So you don't think that these spirits are actually souls."

Michael gave a weak laugh. "I don't think these 'spirits' are actually anything. Honestly, I think—" he swallowed. "I think I picked up on some thermal fluctuation or something, and people let their imaginations do the rest."

He fell silent, eyes fixed on his drink. The woman tapped her temple, thinking. "Well," she said, "it's probably time you tried looking for something else."

Michael gave a dry laugh. "Yeah. Yeah. It's just all I can think about, that's all." He lifted his glass to down the contents and discovered that there was nothing but ice left.

The woman shrugged, then smiled. "Is it really?"

Michael looked at her, then. Really looked. Took in her eyes, the glow of her skin.

“No, I guess not,” he said, softly. He gestured at the bartender. “Let me pay for your drink.”

She stood, collecting her purse. “If you must.”

Michael paid the bill and followed her out the door without realizing that the four whiskey and cokes he had paid for were all his own.

“So, I’m sorry if this seems forward, but would you like me to walk you home?” Michael asked, outside the bar. The woman had her back to a streetlamp, and Michael couldn’t make out her face in the glow of gold light around her.

“No, I don’t think I’m going back tonight,” she said.

Michael shuffled his feet. “Well, it was nice talking to you—” Before he could finish his sentence she stood on tiptoe and kissed him.

Michael didn’t feel her lips. Cold shot through him, and the hair on the back of his neck rose. It was the smell of dead leaves and bitter coffee and falling asleep, all rolled into one. He understood. When he opened his eyes, she was gone.

Michael touched his lips, and took a shaky breath. He looked up and down the street. Behind him, a pair of men staggered out of the bar, laughing about something, but he couldn’t understand what it was. He waited until the sounds of their shouts had faded away, then shoved his hands in his pockets and started walking. The lights of the city winked at him like stars, and at that moment he couldn’t have told you which was which.



ANGULAR MOMENTUM · Melissa Nigro

## *What is Lost*

---

NATALIE WARDLAW

Supposedly, all statues used to have eyes,  
painted in tempera, pupils and irises  
looking back at their human counterparts,  
but time is cruel to those things not  
carved in stone, so as Greek ideals  
faded and the Roman Empire fell  
the eyes of their heroes washed out  
into grey voids that no longer gazed  
back, but looked nowhere,  
and fingers crumbled and arms  
broke off and noses chipped  
until human resemblance was handed  
entirely back to the imagination  
and people forgot about pupils and  
they stopped hoping for irises  
and began accepting the absence  
of a soul in stone.

# *Postcard Poems*

---

HANNAH SAIZ

I.

This is a postcard poem  
a composition without  
discernible meaning, but  
of some import to a  
faceless writer, hidden  
in a neverland she's  
always longed to escape.

II.

This is a postcard poem  
that was purposefully  
misaddressed so I can tell  
you, instead of him, just  
how much I miss you  
because it's been far too  
long already and I'd  
still cross the world by  
foot for you - for him.

III.

This is a postcard poem  
in memory of the Lamp  
Guy who goes from dorm  
room to dorm room to  
steal lightbulbs that  
have gone bad, to replace  
them with good bulbs  
so that all the students  
can study - thanks, man.

IV.

This is a postcard poem  
to warn you about the  
ice outside, and to  
suggest ice cheats  
because it's still  
raining, and we're  
due for more slippery-  
slidy until the whole  
world is encased.

V.

This is a postcard poem  
about how damn much  
I enjoyed your bits of  
past, captured for the  
world to see, and  
recall in collective  
memory, like I had been  
there, had known the people,  
had really lived.

VI.

This is a postcard poem  
in awe of experience  
and bravery, of power  
and independence, of  
promise - both kept and  
made with intent-  
of the beauty contained  
within and the people with  
the ability to see it.



VII.

This is a postcard poem  
written to tell you that I  
know what it feels like  
to fail on purpose, and  
still be mad at yourself  
afterwards, and yeah,  
it sucks but every  
moment you can learn from,  
take the chance - improve.

VIII.

This is a postcard poem  
to recapture the warmth  
of a friendly hand on  
your shoulder and the  
gentle voice that says  
“You’re better than that”  
but I’m beginning to wonder  
if that’s a warning or  
if it’s a promise.

IX.

This is a postcard poem  
to tell you how lovely you  
looked in the cafeteria  
that afternoon, standing  
and staring into the crowd,  
looking for friends  
and right before you  
turned to leave, I wished I  
had the courage to tell you.

X.

This is a postcard poem  
addressed to a missing  
soul, someone I once knew,  
who never knew I knew  
everything important -  
it’s okay, I promise  
and things won’t go wrong,  
just let the world happen  
to you - try to be free.

## *Autumn Day*

---

CAROLIN HAHNEMANN

*a translation of Rainer Maria Rilke's poem, "Herbsttag"*

Lord, it is time. Summer was large indeed.  
Conceal the sundails beneath your shadow,  
and on the meadows let the winds roam free.

Command the lingering fruits to be fulfilled;  
grant them another two or three warm days,  
press them toward completion and instill  
the final sweetness in the heady grapes.

Who's got no house will not start building now.

Who's on his own now will be for some time,  
will read, write letter, lie awake at night  
and in the park under the quivering boughs  
walk to and fro restlessly as the leaves blow by.

*-ingland*

---

DAVID MILLER

the cliffs are beyond me  
    spaces where no one  
    would build are slipping  
    away across the ocean  
if i let the water wrap around my ankles  
have i made contact?  
can i hope that through osmosis  
    it pervades  
    me swimming through my blood  
    rising through me  
    urging me to be  
can i no longer conceive of  
    the small island  
    catching the infinite  
    ocean spreading toward  
    me grounding me  
i hear no waves  
except through the spare  
    scribbling in a pocket notebook  
and then i wish i could  
    set fire to a map of the world



UNTITLED · Claudia Pepe

## *The Flypaper*

---

PAUL HOEHN

*a translation of Robert Musil's work, "Das Fliegenpapier"*

Tangle-Foot flypaper is about thirty-six centimeters long and twenty-one centimeters wide; it is coated with a yellow, poisonous paste and comes from Canada. Whenever a fly settles on it—not especially eagerly, more out of convention, because so many others are already there—they adhere at first just with the peripheral, buckled segments of their tiny legs. A quite muted, disconcerting feeling, like when we walk in darkness and step with naked soles on something that is nothing but a soft, warm, disconcerting resistance, floods into gradual, horrific humanity when we recognize it as a hand that somehow lies there and holds us fast with five fingers, becoming ever more noticeable. Then they stand, forced upright like victims of nervous disorders that do not want to make themselves known, or like decrepit old military men (and with their legs somewhat in the shape of an O, like when one stands on a sharp ridge). They gather their composure, strength, and thoughts. After a few seconds they are resolute and begin what they are capable of doing, buzzing and raising their bodies. They engage in this furious behavior until exhaustion forces them to adhere.

A pause for breath and a new attempt follow. But the intervals become ever longer. They stand there and I feel how puzzled they are. Bewildering hazes climb

from beneath. Their tongues grope forth like little mallets. Their heads are brown and hairy like they are made from a coconut, like anthropomorphic African idols. They lean back and forth on their little tied-up legs, bend their knees and lift themselves up like humans, trying in any way to lift a heavy load; more tragically than workers they do it, truer in athletic expression of extreme strain than Laocoön. And then comes the always identical moment when the desires of a present second triumphs over all more permanent feelings of existence. It is the moment when a climber willingly loosens the grip of his hands because of the pains in his fingers, when one who is lost lays in the snow like a child, when one who is followed stands still with burning flanks. No more do they lift themselves up with all their strength from below; they sink in a little and are at this moment fully human. Immediately they are gripped in a place higher up on the leg or on the back of their torsos or at the end of a wing.

When they have overcome the mental exhaustion and, after a little surge, take up the battle for their lives again, they are fixed in an awkward position and their movements become unnatural. Then they lie on extended back legs with their knees akimbo and try to lift themselves up. Or they sit on the ground, reared up with outstretched arms, like women who try in vain to pull their hands from the fist of a man. Or they lie on their stomach with head and arms forward, like they have fallen while running, and hold only their faces high. But always the enemy is merely passive and wins easily in these frantic, confused moments. A nothing, a something pulls them in. So slowly that one is hardly capable of following it and mostly with an abrupt acceleration at the end, when the last internal collapse comes over them. They suddenly let themselves fall forward onto their faces and over their legs, or sideways with all of their legs extended, often also onto their sides with their legs rowing backwards. They lie there like this. Like overturned airplanes with one wing towering into the air. Or like dead horses. Or with endless gestures of despair. Or as if asleep. Even on the next day, one will sometimes wake up and tap a while with a leg or whirr with a wing. Sometimes such a movement will go over the whole field and all of them sink a little bit more into their death. And only on the side of the body close to the leg joint do they have a small, flickering organ that lives much longer. It opens and closes, one cannot describe it without a magnifying glass, it looks like a miniscule human eye that opens and closes ceaselessly.

# *Unbounded Flight*

---

CLAIRE WEIBEL

She is a bird, her white skirt fluttering in the wind.  
Her golden hair dances as she flies,  
Her sun-kissed cheeks full of spirit and life.  
She possesses a freedom we only dream of,  
A grace we can't imagine,  
A beauty of inexpressible awe.  
She will not stay.  
She is not bound.

She comes and goes like autumn leaves  
In a cool evening breeze.  
She floats among the stars  
While we are rooted.  
She extends a piece of herself for all,  
Free for the taking.  
We keep the piece long after she leaves,  
Long after she is free.  
We stay rooted.  
She stays free.



SC DRAGONFLY · Elizabeth Friedman

## *The I That is You*

---

RIM YOSEPH

In defining something of myself,  
I am,  
in effect, making it myself.  
But it is not really I.  
It is the idea, the perception of  
I.  
In defining I,  
I have internalized their opinion  
that is not true,  
thereby creating a  
false me  
that I am expected to live by  
and believe.  
But I am not this false I.  
I am Me.

## Heirlooms (a sestina)

---

EMILY GRAF

I was born the day grandpa started chemo—he listened to Minuets until the end. Tubes wound like cursive letters from his wife eighteen years later. She wheezed “*don’t be rude*” before impatience tricked me out the door. I’m prone to blush German-red, unknowing inheritor of

turquoise, short fuses and alcoholism, of cake recipes and guilt. Details were lost in the mix, meaning: I listened

to Lakota-wishful-thinking, wound up dark enough, and at year’s end I want to get down on my knees in the dirt before smoking gods and pull hard, ugly beets prone

and purple from the earth. Nineteen years of wiping the white from my face. Of lying half naked begging for cancer from a crass sun. *Before I met him hours spent themselves without me.* Yesterday I listened to our couples’ photos eating dust to quiet my wounds. Underneath armored words I am prone

to painstaking love, like my mother. Grandma’s geraniums quavered tiny as freckles—in all her years she never once apologized. Still, the wound ear of a shell where I listened for answers is enough to warrant forgiveness. Before

winter sweeps it blind, before cold nights draw bright lines from sky to prairie, I’m prone to dream Minnesota’s scrub and moonlight listened for our homecoming footfalls, but we were too late. Years fall between me and the rusted bathtub. *Of course, I will fail to apologize the way he wants me to.* Wounded



boys make for bad passersby. Wound  
tight as pale geraniums before  
spring, my grandfather and my father fished for  
gleaming hazel trout in Forest City, for creatures prone  
to love our homelessness. *I've spent years  
pretending not to regret empty afternoons.* I should have listened  
to my grandmother and her tubes.

## *Muddy Rivers (a rap)*

---

AVERY ANDERSON

I feel a chill across my back, sending shivers down my spine  
I wonder where I'm at, muddy rivers intertwine  
Wash away the blood, and wash away the dirt  
Let this flood take away, all the pain and all the hurt  
I sit beneath these stars, talking to myself  
Wondering what it is that's ours, as I tear down this shelf  
I fell into that field, shaking legs and faking smiles  
Forgetting how to yield, I fell victim to the miles  
The truth is cold, and the sky is dark  
Alone I rest my mind, tryna find an answer to  
The question mark, the undefined  
But my voice is spent, and silence bought  
My feet are stuck in the cement, head trapped in thought  
My nervous system fails, as I'm lost in the air  
Wind tries to fill my sails, but I'm not going anywhere  
So I stare up above, blindly looking for a chance  
To regain hope and love, in the stars as they dance

## *Ode to Bread*

---

JORDI ALONSO

From the creaking  
of the kitchen drawer  
as the stainless steel  
vessels that are your  
caretakers wake  
in the afternoon marigold  
light reflecting on the  
maple molded mica countertop,  
from the willful kiss of wheat  
flour as it meets the egg white  
and yolk that once fit in a cream-colored  
crust as smooth as yours is:  
crafted carefully to keep  
whatever mie the moment calls for  
moist and filling—  
you are made for the dark day your baker  
needs your warmth to gorge on;  
you bow and become black bread  
as the rye strengthens you,  
warm hands guiding,  
punching, kneading, forming, reshaping you  
into rugbrød  
baked strong and cut thick,  
for salmon or caviar;  
to the general diner,  
transubstantiation  
from black bread to biscuit  
seems unlikely, and yet  
as tears turn to dimples,  
sourdough sweetens.

## *One Drink and the Southbound Train*

---

RACHEL GORSKY

It was in the way you looked at me  
how you took my hand  
and though I knew  
in my mind  
in your eyes  
in the half drunk glass beside me  
that you were joking.

It was in the pinch of your cheeks  
how your teeth did peek  
their way into my sight  
no malice  
no lie  
no trickster's gleam  
just mirth, pure and simple.

It wasn't a fault of yours  
Only mine  
for forgetting  
momentarily  
how to laugh.

## *Intersection*

---

HANNAH SAIZ

The crossroads came to a point. A wooden sign waited in the middle. The gods stood there, just looking.

“End?” Jenna inquired.

There was no one around to answer.

“End?”

The woods echoed back, like they were laughing.

“End.”

Maybe no one could hear them.

The intersection point was empty when the gods found their bearings to start again.

# In This Issue

A V D E R S O N

J O R D O I

R O B E L T

G A B A R I E L L A

A R I A N A

A N D R E W

E L I Z A B E T H

E M I L Y

R A C H E L

C H A R O L I N

L H U D K E S

P H O E B L

N O A H S O N

J U R N E Y

D A N I E L

O L L I V I A

N A T H A N I E L

D A V I D

L I M U L L I N

m y e r s - r e g u l i n s k i

R E A G A N

M E L I S S A

W I L L I A M

C L A U D I A

K E R I S E Y

L U C A S

H A N N A H

N A T A L I E

C L A I R E

y R O S E P H

I am going to be victorious  
because a large persimmon has fallen  
into my hands

Ⓣ Ⓞ Ⓚ Ⓤ ⓖ ⓐ Ⓦ ⓐ Ⓡ Ⓛ Ⓨ ⓐ Ⓢ Ⓤ