



OSIRIS 96

FIFTY-ONE YEARS 1972-2023

english anglais greek greco french français italian italien norwegian norvège



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CINQUANTE ET UN ANS 1972-2023



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JON THOMPSON

A QUESTION OF HOW FAR BACK YOU WANT TO GO

Like the names of ancestors rain-plowed
 into slate as if they ever had a body as if
someone somewhere remembered someone else crying
 out to them in a scene where the urgency was like
the weather itself
 it's awful to think that
it calls out to no one that it's self-sufficient
 in its big-sky theatricality
in tall fields you can see asters and amaranth "love
 lies bleeding" with their chili-red strangled flowers dangling
down when I arrange my tongue
 to make the sounds my name seems
even strange to me
 like something I've borrowed and have to return

JON THOMPSON

HAVING THOUGHT OF IT AS THE EDGE OF THE EARTH

Through fields of wheat the road descends
 here the wind's visible as the stalks bow
first in one direction and then in another
 under the thick light of summer they exude
a secret ease and luxuriousness
 and the road runs like a presumption through them
as it switchbacks down searching for
 a sign of where to go
in that country the mountains that look down
 upon the afternoon shine are larger and grander than belief
and it's not just the imagination of the sky that seizes you
 it's the sky and the mountains
the bare fact of them
 as if it was something other
than chance that brought you here
 that made each individual rock and stone
complete in itself
 a question not of fate which is easier to believe in
but of openness everywhere
 sheer openness--

ÉTUDE 2 I

so we spoke, well into the night, of selves
mingling, meetings held in the mind, trying
to find a way through the words, to where
there were none, no one for what there was
to say: the blackberry, say, bearing the weight
of a poem, the distant fruit of forgetting,
the bare facts of being there, remember, your hand
reaching in to the bramble, the arch of thorns,
for the taste to come, and the trace that
lingered, long after the dark, of parting,
the stain fading: the light goes, the lack
remains, the music merely repeats itself,
my ear to it, but no more mine than the ear
that first heard it, reached up to it,
to draw it down to the touch, to the fingers
writing it, gently now, the promise between them:
we met, so the words say, somewhere,
in search of memory, the mind's freight
dragged through the tract of days: we spoke:
of selves enduring the night's silence

STEPHEN KESSLER

THE SMILE IN THE EYES OF THE MASKED FARMER

The smile in the eyes of the masked farmer
on a sunny Saturday morning in October
out at the edge of town not far from the tent-dwellers
alongside the highway amid scatterings of miscellaneous trash
is anomalous in light of all the systems cracking
under the burdens of broken countries cities people
lost in the chaos of collapse as those friendly eyes signal relief
along with the sweet red peppers of the season
the last traces of summer stretching autumnal in the warm rays
before the atmospheric rivers arrive to wash the scorched hillsides
across roads where disbelieving drivers
are lucky not to be buried in their cars
even as the peppers are chopped in some little kitchen
and slipped sizzling into a skillet for a solo scramble
small consolation but something to move the day
toward night where insomniacs mine their anxieties for some gleam
of sweetness of redeemed becoming when nothing remains
but blank pages seeming to beg for caresses
of the right words to make the sufferings less wrong
and bring on the yawns and the promise of dreams

PETER KING

CONSTANT FOLLOWER

In every photograph I take
my shadow's there, distracting,
breaking into frame.

No matter where the sun is
– whether at my back or in my eyes –
the darkness spreads before me,
sometimes falling on a face
or flower,
ruining the shot;

at other times it simply
hovers
at the bottom of the picture,
tugging at the viewer's gaze.

Giving up my camera
I begin to paint,
and once again, through subtle blending
of the colours,
there's my shadow, cast across the canvas,
throwing off the composition,
twisting my design.

Even picking up a pen
to capture what I want in words

is useless;
look, it's here —
my shadow's chill
is sprawled across the lines.

PETER KING

ORNAMENTAL BIRDS

wind through hollow bones
and melody is flung into a deep-blue
cloudless sky
sweet feathered quavers
flutter-tongued
the mordant trills drop
slowly floating
on the thickening air

*

the sun is interrupted
by a ragged wing
casting a chill shadow
as it slides and turns
spiralling down as the air cools
shrilling cries like barbs in the eardrum
seeking murder
somewhere in the West

*

white-vented death
a tacit spectre in the haunted skies
glimpsed at their end
by shaken victims
Tyto non angeli sed alba
as the new moon glistens
on rime-limed twigs



NIANTIC BAY SHORE
CONNECTICUT 2023

Andrea Moorhead

MICHÈLE MOISAN

AUTO-PORTRAITS EN MINIATURE

La chaleur marque 37 degrés
sous mon épiderme
s'achève le travail des tissus

au premier sursaut du cœur
le feu s'injecte dans mes veines

je fuse de la mer
comme un geyser dans la nuit

Voici ma tête
lune fidèle au rendez-vous

mon corps avec ses chutes
ses os truqués

des dents qui calquent les Rocheuses
leurs contreforts de crème glacée



Mes vêtements sur la rive une solitude
que j'abandonne

à mes poignets les ondes
font de grands bracelets frissonnants

des jupons d'eau corrigent ma forme

je flotte toutes frontières disparues

la paix des calculs
je ne pèse qu'un gramme de ciel

Lorsque le soir à pas de loup
mes vertèbres rangées

la neige veille longtemps je
recouvre le territoire de ma peau



La signature du gel sur ma joue
mon corps scellé de poudrerie
prude volcan
chaos qui respire

je me terre dans des pelages
ongles secs cheveux éteints
bottes tachées de tous les lieux j'ai froid
jusqu'à la racine du sexe

Adossée à la montagne
immobile comme un sac de riz
je médite

le *big freeze* de l'univers
avant le grand déchirement

l'infini qui embrasse
mes bêtises ma candeur
diaphanes

THIRD DAY

Only you: you have to bless. In the trunk of the wild olive tree there is no when. We have been pruned. Marionnette! Our juices inside it without reclamations. Who did not hold his hand, with the other one, the free one, so as not to turn against him? Who, following the wellspring, did not see a priest's mouth in the gold and in his eyes a dog that had overcome rabies? Peace? I don't want it. Whatever irrationally—hammer, nail—fastens need, it's the girl with a dress in the wood.

She collects the smoldering embers.

Early in the morning, she is burning again

Τρίτη ημέρα

Μόνο εσύ· να ευλογήσεις. Στον κορμό της αγριελιάς δεν υπάρχει το πότε. Μας έχουν κλαδέψει. Νευρόσπαστο! Οι χυμοί μας μέσα του δίχως διεκδικήσεις. Ποιός δεν κράτησε το χέρι του, με τ' άλλο, το ελεύθερο, να μην στραφεί ενάντια στον ίδιο; Ποιός ακολουθώντας την πηγή δεν είδε στο χρυσάφι στόμα παπά και στα μάτια σκύλο που τη λύσσα έχει νικήσει; Ειρήνη; Δεν τη θέλω. Ό,τι παράλογα –σφυρί, καρφί– δένει με την ανάγκη, είναι το κορίτσι με φόρεμα στο δάσος.

Μαζεύει τα αποκαΐδια.

Ξημέρωμα, καίγεται πάλι

—from *Cappadocians* (Koukkida Editions 2020)

AND YET

And yet I had not refused the moonlight
while creating shapes with shadows.
And yet the look restricted the future
to fluttering above you until it reached
the snowy slope

The bats under the bridges
They start crying
the poison reaches the fence
and there is nothing but an ear of corn
and tightly tied ropes

Κι όμως

Κι όμως δεν είχα αρνηθεί τὸ φεγγαρόφωτο
πλάθοντας με την σκιά σχήματα.

Κι όμως το βλέμμα όρισε τὸ μέλλον
να φτερουγίζει πάνω σου μέχρι νὰ φτάσει
έως τὸ χιόνι πλαγιάς

Οι νυχτερίδες κάτω από τις γέφυρες
Αρχίζουν το κλάμα
φτάνει το δηλητήριο στον φράκτη
και δεν υπάρχει τίποτα πέρα από στάχυ
και σχοινιά σφικτά δεμένα

—from *Cappadocians* (Koukkida Editions 2020)

PAUL B. ROTH

A CENTER'S MIDDLE

Not wishing
to live
any longer
than he has to

he lets
his open door
roll room
after room
around him

as if
he was ever
offered
the choice

of having to live
inside
his own shadow

or falling through
a bottomless
floor
full of moonlight

PAUL B. ROTH

A FULL MOON LAKE EFFECT SNOWSTORM

Whoever
leads
his shadow
through falling
snow

without a trace
without
ever breaking
silence

will not only
have a hidden moon
to show him how
lost he is

but how
each snowflake
fallen
along the way

will offer
little in trade
for his useless prayers

beyond
the immensity
of everything contained
in their emptiness
forever

PAUL B. ROTH

ENTERTAINING POSSIBILITIES

Every room I enter disappears.

Reaching out to its absence, my vision's never needed to be so cauterized.

A single waterdrop's squashed before it can become a rainbow coated bubble on the slippery surface of a warped board washed ashore.

The endless sway of shore grasses first this way then that in the wind and submerged along the water's edge gets harder to keep pace with.

As if every quick shadow that barn swallows weave in and out of my body could stitch a lightning cracked sky back together in mid-flight.

Could flatten my eyes out over the expanse of this opaque grey lake at dusk.

Have this smear of sunlight on shore remain as long as it takes one wave after another to pull the last of my breaths away with it.

PAUL B. ROTH

POETICS

Late
as it is
at all times

he never
hurries himself
to sleep

nor minds
picking up
that one last

unattended word
in hopes
of finding for it

a solitary place
among so few
well-suited others

DA: BESTIARIO (MITIGATO) DELLA VITA

bozzetti e studi per il guernica

sempre sono risorti

tutto qui ebbe inizio e continua,
su questo suolo vecchio di millenni
di secoli e scontri di bellezza
vecchio di mesi e giorni e in tutto,
ogni mattina, questo rinascere
fresco, luminoso e mai stanco
per lasciarsi andare a nuova vita

per questo voi moriste
per tornare in vita ad ogni sguardo
in ogni respiro che a noi riporta
la sillabazione dei vostri nomi
per riconoscerci la volontà
di lasciarvi consumare, inutili,
avvertendo così la vostra assenza

ancora [e ancora]
per dare un senso al torto
della vostra resurrezione
ottusa per sempre irrinunciabile

lèggere macerie

non solo con gli occhi
ma con la forma e le lingue

leggere nel cielo come in terra
[e nei corpi] le tracce [loro e le mie]
nell'acqua anche nell'acqua le scie

e

affoga di macerie fin che sono continuano la vita

a (d)esistere anche crollate
 anche se rigettate

non esiste (as)soluzione
per questo non esiste resurrezione
solo (r)esiste l'assenza

che percorre (dis)correndo

e (com)prende le verità piccine
e ri(com)pone dai frammenti

STANZE

Parole délivrée
à hauteur de soleil

le jour croît
reflet d'or aux lisières

Du dehors au dedans
nul autre abîme

à même la paroi
baignée de silence

L'empreinte palpite
d'un simple effleurement

dans les rais de la nuit
demeure le tracé à vif

Il n'a d'autre nom
que l'attente

nudité de la main
qui porte l'ocre

Ce qui s'écrit
resplendit dans le noir

voué au dehors
à l'échéance des pas

Assoiffé d'inconnu
tu découvres le passage

trouée muette
la blessure est sans nom

La parole entre les signes
elle-même est silence

il reste à creuser
la mémoire du temps

Si le vent ne souffle
qu'au désert

l'éloquence des pierres
abreuve le chemin

Jaillissement du trait
en quête de clarté

avec l'infinie patience
tu es au bord du vide

Au plus près du calame
s'aiguise le regard

là où gît le signe
un cœur bat

Au revers du talus
une pierre témoigne

de l'épuisement du vent
que rien n'apaise

Sur la page dépliée
un peu de cendre

feu ravi à l'étincelle
silex contre silex

Nuit propice
il y a une fine lueur

soleil sur le seuil
dans le demi-jour

D'un geste le souffle
devenu lisible

dans l'entaille
attise la flamme sûre

Lumière jetée
à l'aplomb des herbes

l'incendie gagne
les rives du ciel

MATT DUGGAN

RETURNING TO ITHAKI

Come lose me in echo of falling apples—where I search taverna, smell of warm olives,
saganaki, only here; where green mountains cover like monsters from ancient myths
I will rest my final elegy like soft murmuration above sea. sitting at a bay,
same sea that stretched eyes—retained sleek idols in turquoise blue
for kindness becomes cruelty for uncertain strangers who stand next to blue stones
If you may imagine—down alleyways of graffiti in Poseidon's forked tongue
full Albanian dress—a man emulates Lord Byron including his pencil lined moustache
walks a promenade at night wheels a heart shaped ruby coloured pram
where metal crows faced east—we reimagined—from ruins once palaces
for what paused interruption; will be torn away breath; we channelled today.

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

We watch the view, as the light slowly changes and the tide reveals more and more sand. Through these picture windows all is silent, not a breath of breeze, just the scratch of this pen, blue on white as the paper fills with light, as the ideas take shape in the sky reflected in blue water, and the ink adds to the beauty of these calm thoughts, meditating their way out of nowhere into this new somewhere of shapes forming gradually into ideas on the page, filling with a language no one can yet understand, least of all your writer, who continues the strange exploration and coaxing of one word against another, to see which will follow which, and where they will lead, a somewhere to head for, like Cook on *Endeavour* years ago, watching for signs, hoping for landfall, following his secret instructions from the Admiralty, making the best of the science at his disposal, the skills he had learned in the North Sea and Canada, all so important on this ship filled with 100 men and their livestock, the decks crowded, cramped quarters below, lack of headroom, the constant creaking rhythm of rolling and rocking, salt air and stench of unwashed bodies, their unimaginable heroic work. Yet for those sailors, it was 'Life as Usual', so much better than 'War', and several of the crew had already circumnavigated. They all sailed confidently into the 'Unknown' in their well-managed, well-known world of wood, rigging, and the routines of seacraft.

CLEARING THE AIR

Pohutukawa trees burst into flame, breeze tumbles along the surf in the bright sunlight. The watchers wait, keeping track of the boats. Tall Norfolk pines look on and from out at sea, far off, long ago, sailors knew, seeing them, where settlers were trying to make a living along this shoreline. Cliffs and beaches as far as the eye can see. We walk and walk ever further away, into a distance unknowable by anyone except our very innermost private self, where all hopes and fears ultimately come to rest. So it's all good, so far, so long as you keep moving the nib across these blank pages, weaving your way down through the fresh powder, carving a series of linked turns, in much the same way as when sailing a dinghy, hanging on the wind, or when dancing or painting : the important thing being to keep your speed up, for as soon as you slow, you sink and fall into the deep fresh powder snow under a glorious blue sky like today, when you can still—and always—hear the surf crumble and fold along this long long beach of perfect sand studded with shells: glorious bright patterns glistening. I have no excuse now not to sit down and write, stare at the frightening blank page, this steep couloir of fresh snow between the rocks, daring myself to push off and hold tight for a dozen quick tricky jump-turns, praying to reach the main piste in one piece.

RUPERT LOYDELL

ASSIGNMENT

Sudden thunder prompts
realigned associations
with islands of light
across shadowy creek.

Real time assignation
leads to twilight demise
and slow walk home,
curlews calling out.

It's hard loving here
during winter's grip,
darkness mirroring
resented adoration.

REVOLUTION

Garlic flavoured Bakewell tart,
meaty icing with a cherry on top,
abstract paintings on the wall:
several bold colours of dissent
Gestures and pour become capital
although it wasn't him on the train,
just looked like it from behind.

White sun low over silhouetted hill
(retinal burn if you look direct) and
British Rail snacks as the evening
begins. If you aspire to rebellion
you will be neutered, if you don't
you are as bad as them, maybe worse.
The anarchist poet left a wife behind

as well as his ex-lover, although she
does not wish to offend. Screw this
complicity, this tepid beer, the very
tiredness of being. There must be time
to start the revolution and become
active again; must be cheaper drink
available and a quicker way home.

RAY KEIFETZ

CIRCUS OF ICE

The animals froze as they fell
into the frothing carousel—
lions, wolves,
mammoths, fawns,
tail to tooth, tusk to tail,
wounds
widening in the whirl,
animals we feared,
animals we loved,
beasts riding beasts
on driftwood spears,
beasts riding beasts, tiny beasts
hard as stone we couldn't hold
from the calliope of snow,
till grasping their manes,
vaulting onto their backs,
we turned into children
who don't come back.

RAY KEIFETZ

YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S SUMMER SWEATER

You shied from the sweater,
your size, your shape, your colors,
your grandmother's summer sweater
that warmed her shoulders
through picnics, sunsets, summer night dances,
that walked her down the long cold aisle
from empty kitchen to empty bed—
We pulled that sweater,
the pears
and ruby apples,
patient blameless knitting,
from a black plastic bag.
We never asked you to try it on;
we just held it to the light
to show you where
a moth had nested.



FIGURA OCTOGESIMA III
Robert Moorhead

FROM RETINA (XXIII)

eye of the portrait. the eye is in the painting but the eye veers away from the room. it swoons and touches what you were feeling while it was still there. you watch it. its tragedy wells up and fills the room that enclosed you so gently when you first entered.

the eye's pulling back has left you feeling wary. alone and shivering in front of the painting. its challenge is pointing down on you and you want the eye back in its place, where it was before you so intrusively held your tiny mirror to it.

FROM RETINA (XXVI)

We walk into the forest along a path and dream, or do try to imagine we are
in a forest without paths where figments/fragments of the wilderness appear:
antlers

webs

fronds

dusty regions

and a red spot among the trees

A spot in the wilderness as bright as blood. Infrared. It moves wherever the
eye moves and is beyond our control. Out of balance. Effect on climate.

FROM RETINA (XXVII)

We entered the room one day when there was nothing particular going on. There were little statues in celestial blues. There was the red and green of summer and autumn, and many other things we had forgotten.

We thought about things like worldwide partnerships leaving traces in the room. Traces we couldn't get rid of. But don't whisper now, you'll disturb the dog wheel of fortunate despair, the center of our disarray. Let's put our names down, independently, and wait. Remember the simplicity of mornings, the fertile fragments implanted in our riverbed, the visionary's horizon. Then remember the room as it was to be.

STORE

She opens the door to the innermost part of the cellar, letting in the early summer sunshine; she'd like to take stock. Built up over many winters, her store is arranged in a particular order, to help her remember. She knows exactly what she put where, and almost everything has been left as it was from when she first started, inexperienced and unsure of herself as she was back then. In row upon row of dust-laden jars, sticky sunlight is preserved: honey-yellow plums, apricots with their skins pulled off, gooseberries like molluscs, translucent grey pears swelling in sweet brine. Maybe he misunderstood her lack of confidence then, her enthusiasm? Pickled cucumbers, straight or curved, with sprigs of dill; yellow, almost-red cubes of pumpkin; raspberry jam; blackcurrants and redcurrants – so much more than they could eat! The way the jars are placed makes the past come up close to her, even though there are many gaps. She can remember what was preserved when, in which mellow autumn, whether the summer was wet or cold, or if it was a year marked by separation and sadness; if a child came into the world when the rare blue plums were put up; if it was a time when joy was never far away from them, coming flooding in; if it was that autumn that he became calmer, started talking to her in a different way. Behind glass and fruit, through all of it, she sees his face clearly. And the shifts between good times and hard times catching the light.

FORRÅD

Hun åpner døra til innerste kjeller, slipper forsommerlyset inn, vil gjøre oppstilling. Forrådet for mange vintre satt i en bestemt rekkefølge, til hjelp for hukommelsen. Hun vet nøyaktig hvor hun satte hva, fra den tidligste tida står nesten alt igjen, uøvd som hun var den gang, usikker. I nedstøva glass på rekke og rad er seigt sollys bevart, honninggule plommer, aprikoser med skinnet dratt av, stikkelsbær som bløtdyr, gjennomsiktede gråpærer, svulmende i søt lake. Kanskje misforsto han usikkerheten hennes da, iveren? Agurker rette og krumme med dilldusk, gule, nesten røde gresskarkuber, bringebærsyltetøy, solbær og rips, så mye mer enn de kunne spise! Slik glassene står kommer fortida nær sjøl om det er mange hull. Hun husker hva som ble syltet når, i hvilken moden høst, minnes om sommeren var våt eller kald, om det var et år i adskillelsens eller sorgens tegn, om det kom et barn til verden da de sjeldne blå plommene ble lagt ned, om det var ei tid da gleden var der ofte og fylte dem, om det var den høsten han ble roligere og snakket annerledes med henne. Bak glass og frukt, gjennom alt, ser hun tydelig ansiktet hans. Og de vekslende tidene, de gode så vel som de vanskelige, skinner.

THE SLEEPING HOUSE

She hesitates for a moment in the morning-dim kitchen, looks around before she leaves. On the table is the white bowl from which she had just drunk. It has a pattern of dark purple pear-shapes making a border round the rim. The heavy oak table-top gleams: the effect of several hundred years of being rubbed at with beeswax. Week after week spent keeping it polished. The table and the bench swallow up light and time. Once, long ago, she came into this kitchen – only to turn around, look up and find herself middle-aged. When she wakes up, she is like someone shipwrecked, drifting out of fog. Grey light seeps in through the shutters in the bedroom. She dresses quickly, quiet as a mouse. As she drinks her tea, she warms her face in its fragrant steam. Then she leaves the sleeping house. Every morning she goes out, before the others have so much as turned over in bed. To the market for fish and greens, to the baker's for bread. She slips out, her heart pounding, thumping; as it does whenever she ventures out unseen. She can no longer remember what it was like not to tiptoe out of the house. To get herself into the day, to ground herself, it's good to walk. She steps briskly through the streets, on the paving stones of the broken-down millennium. Her footsteps echo; the sound seems to come from the empty spaces behind the buildings' facades. The world is sinking into poverty, but everyone still keeps talking about progress. By the time she gets as far as the little market where the fishmongers are, and the farmers from the surrounding villages, busy setting up their stalls, she is almost herself again. When she hears the sound of their voices talking to her, addressing her by name, then she is back, fully present. She has to experience this every single day. Performing these errands has nothing to do with duty; they're to keep her afloat.

DET SOVENDE HUSET

Hun nøler en stund i det morgendunkle kjøkkenet, ser seg om før hun går. På bordet står den hvite skåla hun nettopp drakk av. Den har et mønster av mørkelilla pæreomriss i en bord langs kanten. Det skinner i det tunge eikebordet, etter flere hundre års omganger med bivoks. Mange uker har gått med til å pusse det. Bordet og benken sluker lys og tid. Hun gikk inn i dette kjøkkenet en gang for lenge siden, da hun snudde seg og løftet blikket, var hun blitt middelaldrende. Hun våkner som en forlist, drivende fram av tåke. Grått lys siver inn gjennom skoddene i soverommet. Hun kler seg fort og musestille. Når hun drikker te varmer hun ansiktet i den dampende dufta. Så forlater hun det sovende huset. Hver morgen før de andre har rukket å snu seg i senga, går hun ut. Til torget etter fisk og grønt, til bakeren etter brød. Hun smyer seg ut med hamrende hjerte, dunkelyden som har fulgt henne på mangt et hemmelig tokt. Hun kan ikke lenger huske hvordan det var å ikke liste seg i huset. For å komme inn i dagen, finne fast grunn; å gå gjør godt. Hun marsjerer gjennom de brulagte gatene i det falleferdige tusenårsriket. Skrittene gir gjenklang, som om lyden kom fra tomme rom bak fasadene. Verden synker ned i fattigdom mens det stadig tales om framskritt. Når hun kommer så langt som til det lille torget der fiskehandlerne og bøndene fra de omkringliggende landsbyene holder på med å sette opp bodene sine, har hun nesten tatt igjen seg sjøl. Når hun hører stemmene som snakker til henne, de som tiltaler henne ved navn, da er hun tilbake og tilstede. Hun må oppleve det på nytt hver dag. Å utføre disse oppgavene er ingen plikt, men en livbøye.

BEYOND THE NEAR HORIZON

Somehow I forgot your name, slipped on the ice, skinned the light, cracked the clouds, tongue flaming in the wind, it's all absurd and impossible to retrace, but your name has been erased, cut out of the cells, flicked off the minute gap between yes and no, of course and wondering if this transition will lead to disaster, your name is short and hard, easy to pronounce, difficult to forget, but I slipped on the ice, skinned the light, cracked the clouds, tongue flaming and burning hot coals above us and then again perhaps you can recall the name given, the name assigned, the name that carries your weight, your spin, your impossibly melting ice, rampaging currents, and molten core protruding into the white darkness, the solemn oblivion prepared by broken cells and cracked clouds, skinned light, and the flames of speech when I forgot your name, left it behind, could no longer carry to the open grave before.

FOLLOWING THE VOICE

A disconnected voice wandering through the streets. A nightly phenomenon, most intense in the stand of maples in the park. Humming among the spring leaves, rustling in late fall, somewhere along the ground. Intermittent, at times not audible. It takes the form of mauve ripples in the air, not quite shadows, not quite sound patterns. People rarely perceive the presence of a voice. It's disconnected and unpredictable. Never a coherent word, never a clear melody. It doesn't sob or wail, it has none of the characteristics of phantoms' speech. Without the trees, the leaves, the darkness, it would remain lost, disconnected. Sometimes in the afternoon, it wanders through busy streets, passes between people, moves like a bird or a rainbow. A shimmering next to the eyes, incandescent, the color quickly draining. Something soft and slight near the head or the shoulder, sometimes at ground level, and the sudden ascension to the trees, waiting for the sun to go down, and the darkness and the humming and the rustling, and the wonder of leaves.

WEAVING THE RAIN WHITE

She's out in the woods, weaving the rain white, staunching the sap rising too soon, pulling the bark tightly around the trunk, berries shaking from the branches, roots rolling up through the leaf mold, she's out in the wood, weaving the rain white, putting cold compresses on the split skin, the fragile fragmented covering, rain growing in intensity, dark and brown, and she's weaving the rain whiter and whiter, moving the zone farther out, the clear crystalline zone of winter and the trees murmur under the aching weight of snow and the sudden shift in the light.

FROM THE EARTH

Took your eyes with me, burning my clothes, searing the fibers, darting around, wild lizards, birds, fish in the shallow gold water invading my steps into this quick fall, this plunge into the green-gold, iced waters, and took your eyes, freezing my hands, scalding my skin when I tried to set down and free, liberate and restore, took your gold eyes with me, burning the rain, the sun's distant colors, took your eyes on the wind, on the crest of the waves, took your eyes when I could no longer see, when the shadows flickered over me and darkness melded what remained, stepping too quickly into the cold-green and wild, while your eyes and darted around like young falcons, like embers on the north wind, like sleet and hail from some unknown sector of consciousness, took your eyes when I stopped walking, when I left behind and couldn't see the outlines, when I could no longer and your eyes in my hands seared the bone-bared light.

DA: IN ABSENTIA VOCIS

(l'essenza germoglia in parola)

C'è nel dire un lato postumo
selvatico di doni
scavo impietoso che instilla seme nel seme e ancora seme
fino a raggiungere il centro del niente
fino all'inesistente.

*

È lo sguardo che ricorre al semantico
come fa la parola per rimando
così l'incisione avvolge il cappio
nel dialogo muto di crepe
come ritorno agli albori
al primordiale
luogo dove nacque alle origini il mondo
l'innesto vitale
il suo sporco sapore.

*

C'è rispetto e rispetto
anche nel fuoco c'è rispetto
che brucia il manoscritto
ne fa carbone cenere e soffio
che torna al legno alla carta
innesco scintilla e favilla
e quel che anima il foglio
diventa fumo che s'alza leggero
consuma ansie e respiro
li rasserena nel nulla
che siamo
che resteremo.

*

Scrivono bene qui le tue zampette
hanno un assaggio fatato
un tepore incollato alle occhiaie
le scapole alate della fatica
hanno un certo sguardo
fremente di colla
si complicano gradevolmente
la vita accettando la sfida
tra le pieghe dell'oggi e
l'impossibile oltraggio.

*

Fatelo se vi si spezzano gli occhi
se non potete più attendere misericordie
fatelo vostro questo cammino infecondo
ricucite sterili calle
le innumerevoli bocche.

*

La poesia allora era un oggetto nuovo
che osservavo tenendolo a distanza
non meno adesso ch'è compagna
mia da molti anni
non meno adesso che ci sono dentro
come sta un vestito al corpo
un corpo al suo vestito più aderente.

tu te souviens de ce qui te relie aux autres déverrouilles les cachots de tes peurs de
tes hontes et des orages protèges ce qui vacille tu contemples les miracles qui
t'entourent fouilles lorsqu'ils te semblent disparus à jamais tu fais un bouquet de
perséides en hommage à ces poussières dont tu es issue

tu t'ancres dans la respiration de la terre la bienveillance des cycles

lentement tu apprivoises l'incandescence du dépouillement déposes dans le
poème une trouée de lumière pour le rendre habitable

EDITING AN OLD POEM

Lost in a place
where angular words
lodge in my throat,

half-formed thoughts
dust down from their stanzas
into a pile on the page.

A loose thread
of dangling participle
ravels the poem, opening

a door in its wall
where sunlight shifts
over mimosa leaves,

emptying their veins
to the paper.
Patterns of shadow

and light soak in.
I wring out the page,
twist it until magic spills.

Vowels alliterate
from the beaks of doves;
the poem spreads its wings.

GALERI UNO

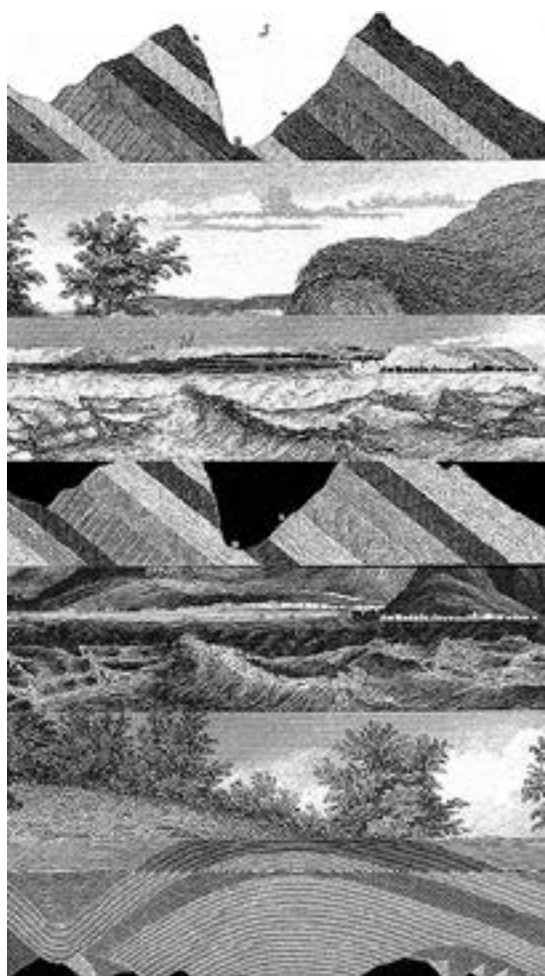
Despite his enormous arrogance
Chakira invited the feathered serpent
to join us at Galeri Uno
for a tasting of the latest mezcal.

He pranced without his walking stick
in front of an ornate mirror
where everyone admired
his reflection of gold & azure wings.

Guests stared blindly at his brazen image
and moved away rapidly,
expecting some dire prediction
to be revealed.

His flamboyance was not without followers
immune to his displays of grandeur
plucking a feather which he discouraged
by raising one black eyebrow with great disdain.

A look meant to wound, but left us smiling.



STRATIFICATION II
Robert Moorhead

MURIÈLE CAMAC

THOUE

Rivière
qui charries des cieux et de l'enfance
arrose mes yeux adultes

baigne-les des anciens rêves
des merveilles

renverse mon réveil
toi qui inverses le monde

CHORÉGRAPHIE

Quand tu dis *Ich liebe dich*, c'est face au mur
tu cries sur l'oreiller
moi aussi
tu dis surtout *Ich*
je te traîne comme un boulet
comme un corps mort
sur fond d'airs d'opéra
dans un bruit de feuilles mortes

des gens nous regardent par les fenêtres
ce sont les autres
ils disent la même histoire que nous
tu t'assieds sur moi tu m'écrases

pourtant j'étais maigre comme tu le voulais
je portais une belle robe comme je le devais
et le vêtement de mes cheveux longs
je savais rire je savais te désirer
toi tu savais me porter
tu étais fort comme je le voulais

ton château est plein de fenêtres
à l'ancienne, en bois, sans double vitrage
elles laissent tout passer
la lumière la chaleur la nuit le froid
le regard des autres moi-même
pendues au mur

les autres viennent danser
sur nos airs d'opéra
dans nos feuilles mortes
moi on ne me voit plus
on voit ce que je porte
qui m'ensevelit

tu me traînes comme un corps mort
comme un gâchis

D'après *Barbe-Blue*, une chorégraphie de Pina Bausch
sur l'opéra de Bela Bartok *Le Château de Barbe-bleu*

LE FEU DES FEUX

à Chafika

I

ado j'ai paniqué aux tremblements de terre
séisme après séisme apprendre jours
d'après
la destruction de villes entières

*quels mots dire
encore?*

tant dans ma nuit noire d'enfance
l'Atlas brûlait plus
que cieux incendiaires !

après tant de dévastations qui ira exhumer
ruches d'outre-tombe ?

II

des décennies après l'impossible
oubli
cœurs et langues
asphyxiés
nous endurons *le feu des feux*
guerre de hauts monts

oliviers brûlés à la racine des siècles!

ô pieux villages
et rochers explosés qui ne l'avaient été
depuis Noé !
cultures vivrières calcinées !
mairies et basses-cours désintégrées
goudron écoles tracteurs puits et
pylônes effondrés
pierres ciments ruines et
forêts carbonisées béton

éperdues populations
fuyant affolées sans sou ni masque

ô femmes enfants
diabétiques
vieillards asthmatiques
courbés par mille et
une tragédies
vos cœurs ont explosé
gosiers asséchés

je m'incline

III

qui maudire ?

quand on ne sait encore combien
de jarres d'huile
de vivres berceaux suspendus
de ceintures argent or
retraites amassées moutons
chevaux hérissons oiseaux
abandonnés dans leurs cages et
tant de fleurs et moulins
silos
réduits en fumées
jusqu'aux zaouïas isolées
leurs cimetières
par des tourbillons de flammes
bondissant de kilomètre en kilomètre
d'oueds en crêtes anéantir tout
l'âme ravagée ne sachant à quel saint
se vouer...

... FEU DE FEUX INCONNU
des bijoutiers des conteuses des potiers
des ferronniers

feux barbares

IV

ah, si les nuages pouvaient crever !

plus d'habitat que pâturages de cendres!
au milieu de carcasses d'animaux...

[hommes des cavernes avez-vous tant subi ? ...]

pour le reste des vieux plateaux de céréales steppes sebkhas
et oasis caniculaires
ce ne sont plus que gorges amères
exil et ventres nauséeux
âmes recouvertes autant que les victimes
de cloques goût ferraille aux dents

un désespoir à remonter
l'océan
à recoudre doigts à doigts
des années lumière de câbles haute tension à terre

ô ciel sans cigognes
quelles interrogations ?
quelle patience ?
et me dire :
des gorgées d'eau goutte à goutte
en miel
doivent de suite rendre un brin de sourire
à l'enfance
parents
et cerveaux des plantes tétanisées...

Sahel algérois

HANNE BRAMNESS, poet, editor and translator. Translations of her poetry into English have been published by Shearsman Press, most recently *Weight of Light*, translated by Frances Presley. Nordsjoforlaget published a bilingual edition of a collection for young people, *Winter Kitchens / Vinterkjøkken*, with translations by Anna Reckin.

MURIÈLE CAMAC a publié cinq recueils, dont le plus récent est *Une femme c'est un Indien* (Éditions Exopotamie, 2022). Également *En direction de l'ouest* (éditions Le Citron Gare, 2019) et *Regarder vivre* (éditions N&B, 2016), qui a obtenu le prix Poésie française 2017 de la revue *Nunc*.

VERONIKI DALAKOURA, born in Athens in 1952, is one of the leading poets of her generation and an active literary critic. John Taylor's essay about Dalakoura, "Eros and Other Spiritual Adventures," is included in his book *Into the Heart of European Poetry* (Transaction Publishers, 2008).

ABDERRAHMANE DJELFAOUI, auteur de plusieurs recueils de poèmes, dont *La mer vineuse*. Photographe et cinéaste. Son blog "Le sel de la terre" offre des poèmes, des photos et des reportages. <http://djelfalger.blogspot.com>

MATT DUGGAN's poems have been included in *The Potomac Review*, *The Poetry Review*, *Poetry Scotland*, *Poetry Wales*, *Lighthouse Literary Journal*. He is working on a new collection entitled *Elegies From Cities We No longer Recognise*.

ALAIN FABRE-CATALAN, membre du comité de rédaction de la *Revue Alsacienne de Littérature* et de la revue *Les Carnets d'Eucharis*. Auteur de plusieurs recueils de poésie, dont *Vertiges* (Les Lieux-Dits éditions, 2013) et *Matière de nuit*, cycle de poèmes en version française et italienne (Rhombes, 2017).

CHARLES HADFIELD has lived in Aotearoa New Zealand for two decades. He is currently working on a long series of poem fragments blended with extracts from the logs and journals mapping the 'first contacts' between Europeans and Polynesians.

RAY KEIFETZ, author of *Night Farming in Bosnia*, winner of the Bitter Oleander Library of Poetry Award, and *Museum Beasts*, forthcoming from Broadstone Books. His stories and poems have appeared in many journals and have received three Pushcart Prize nominations.

STEPHEN KESSLER's most recent book of poems is *Last Call* (Black Widow Press). He lives in Santa Cruz, California, where his op-ed column appears weekly in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel*.

PETER KING, widely published in journals and anthologies. His latest collection is *Ghost Webs* (The Calliope Script). Translator of poetry from Greek (with Andrea Christofidou) and German. <https://wisdomsbottompess.wordpress.com/peter-j-king/>

RUPERT LOYDELL, Senior Lecturer in English with Creative Writing at Falmouth University, the editor of *Stride* magazine, and a contributing editor to *International Times*. His books are published by Shearsman Books and Knives, Forks and Spoons Press.

RAY MALONE, Irish writer and artist living in Berlin, working on a series of projects, of which *Études* is the latest, exploring the lyric potential of minimal forms based on various musical and / or literary models.

PANSY MAURER-ALVAREZ, born in Puerto Rico, grew up in Pennsylvania, and studied at universities in the US, Switzerland, and Spain, settling permanently in France. She is the author of six collections of poetry, including *Oranges in January* (KFS Press) and *In a Form of Suspension* (corrupt press).

MICHÈLE MOISAN, native de Québec, est formée en sciences de l'environnement. En parallèle, la poésie fait depuis longtemps partie de son univers. Elle est lauréate du Prix Piché de poésie 2021 et a publié plusieurs textes en revue. La suite primée intitulée *Comme je suis* a été publiée en recueil collectif.

ANDREA MOORHEAD's collections include *À l'ombre de ta voix* (Noroît), *The Carver's Dream* (Red Dragonfly Press), and *Tracing the Distance* (The Bitter Oleander Press). In 2024, MadHat Press will publish *The Magician's Tales*.

ROBERT MOORHEAD sells his paintings online and continues to expand his graphic design consulting. His most recent book design is *Deconstructing Stone Buildings: A Journey Through New England* (Robert S Barnett).

Sylvie Poisson a publié deux recueils de poésie : *Les clartés offertes* (2013) et *Les rives accordées* (2018) et d'autres poèmes dans quelques revues et volumes collectifs. Elle participe régulièrement à différents événements poétiques dont le Festival international de la poésie de Trois-Rivières.

PATTY DICKSON PIECZKA's *Beyond the Moon's White Claw* won the 2018 David Martinson-Meadowhawk Prize from Red Dragonfly Press. She collaborated with Silvia Scheibli on a collection of poems entitled, *Gathering Sunlight* (The Bitter Oleander Press, 2023).

ANNA RECKIN, a poet and translator based in the UK. Shearsman published her first two collections, *Three Reds* and *Line to Curve*. Her translation of Hanne Bramness's *Water Glass* sequence appeared in *Long Poem Magazine*, Autumn 2021.

PAUL B. ROTH, editor and publisher of The Bitter Oleander Press since 1974. Author of seven collections of poetry, including *Long Way Back to the End* (Rain Mountain Press, 2014), *Owasco: Passage of Lake Poems* (Finishing Line Press, 2018), *Weightless Earth* (Bitter Oleander Press, 2022) and *Moments in Place* (Rain Mountain Press, 2023).

SILVIA SCHEIBLI's recent publications include *Conversations with Athena at Mieza* (Finishing Line Press, 2022) and *In the House of Rain* (Concrete Mist Press, 2022). She collaborated with Patty Dickson Pieczka on a collection of poems entitled, *Gathering Sunlight* (The Bitter Oleander Press, 2023).

LOREDANA SEMANTICA, vive e lavora a Siracusa. Scrive da molti anni racconti, recensioni, soprattutto poesia. Le sue sillogi *L'informe amniotico*, Limina Mentis Editore, 2015; *In absentia vocis*, inedita e segnalata speciale al Premio Montano 2022; *TITANIO*, Edizioni Terra d'Ulivi, 2023. Collabora con la rivista di cultura poetica e letteraria *Menabonline*. Gestisce il sito <https://liminamundi.com>.

JOHN TAYLOR, born in Des Moines in 1952, has lived in France since 1977. Especially known as a translator of French and Italian poetry, he also translates from modern Greek. In 2020, Cycladic Press published his memoir *Harsh out of Tenderness: The Greek Poet and Urban Folklorist Elias Petropoulos*.

JON THOMPSON's most recent collection is *Notebook of Last Things* (Shearsman Books, 2019). He is also the editor of the poetry series Free Verse Editions and Illuminations: A Series on American Poetics. More on him can be found at www.jon-thompson.com

MASSIMO VIGANÒ, vive in Toscana. Traduttore e Technical writer, coltiva da sempre la passione per il teatro e la poesia. Sue poesie hanno ricevuto riconoscimenti e sono state pubblicate su riviste e antologie. Nel 2010 ha pubblicato la raccolta di poesie "*Tra(s)duzioni*" (Edizioni della Meridiana), vincitrice del Premio Sandro Penna 2009.





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