

NOON 16



NOON | journal of the short poem

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PART 1

where Penmon lighthouse bell
acknowledges the wind
the cry of a tern
through growing
darkness grows
a subtle phosphorescence

the rain in all these
seaside Brexit towns
goes on into the night

a single taxi
never moving
from the station

the dusty ache of prayer
unheard through gunfire

the distinctive ruins
of tomorrow

in neighbouring fields

they're hammering
these wooden stakes

into the stench
of slaughtered horses

we felt as much
as saw the sickening
lurch of the tank
changing gear
turning towards us
through time's wastes
past recommended restaurants
Medusa's blood
still smeared
across the firmament
our future waiting
stones stacked
in its mouth

Peter Hughes

BREAKFAST ALL DAY
the cereal called *Fear Mongering*
comes with a free toy

Violence in

every

“New World”

i go

bare

foot.

.In the sand—

she
calls

this
universe

the

wing

glass

ing

ice

it

even

is

the
table

this

's
missing
a

moss

that's what that sound is you getting the sand out of a snail shell

listen
ing to
her

*what
might
be*

watch
ing

*a
distant
boat*

THE LOOK OF TRANSITION

This dun unrolling doesn't reflect us.
Seagulls rest secretive
eyes under plastic bones.
A cut-out boat is tissue-thin,
horizon's a bent
cane.

It waits to ping now
into then.

*

Night waves shelve silvers for blacks,
individuate
in rhythms not ours,
and ours.

Alien heartbeats the hours
uncover
in failing bodies
(now flashed with graces
darks allow)

stop dead
in their human tracks.

Each wave sheds silvers
for blacks.

Retreats.

*

The pendulum's swung:
rooks flung over
the pine, back again,
pattern a raucous conversation,
leave a ghost-looping
where questions
stuck.

SILENT GLABBER

i.m. Glen Cavaliero

The carpet of moss on this bank seems to ask
will you listen
to the throb that lies beneath

it's a familiar flank, the boughs overhead
whispering give us your ink-blood

emerald in black the gasp of what's held down
makes a rustle-hum
rippling at the rim of mind

a don who leafs the pages has its spirit
in his shoulder blades

bone and tissue to brain
footstep in sky –
notes etched from the understorey

FASHION STATEMENT

Despite a chilly start, this April
still draws out its pastel flowers;
whitethorn or the cherry, still,
they enliven winded steps of ours

by concrete wall and pavement's grey
(we're making for our rendezvous).
From a corner table, expecting you
on such a nondescript humdrum day,

casually, now, just above street level,
I catch it cross this window frame
in urban drab, direction of travel
eastward past the British Museum,

a slate-toned pigeon come tumbling by
materialised out of our overcast sky.

POLITICS

How the radio knows its business!
'The future's not ours' they play,
Que Sera, Sera by Doris Day
after news of a latest crisis.

the little that matters eventually doesn't it

our leader's heart as capacious as an open-pit mine

demilitarized
the space between
jugglers

Robert Witmer

he said, it's like juggling in the dark
and suddenly the balls become luminous

to the individual mind is fitted exquisitely to the external world is fitted exquisitely

FRAME

the duck
is required
for the
pigs to
make sense

from TAKING INVENTORY

5. THE MIND CUT CLEAN OF SEQUENCE

little bracelets of fact practice *yes, no*
like doubt's upward grasp
longing for release from its graceful confines, the leaf

15. SURRENDER'S SEDUCTIVE ANGLES

tulips changing tense
in the smallest possible corner of your conscience
you can only give people so much

16. GETTING BACK ON TRACK

shame, a balance beam
like the ocean out of sync with the beach
begin with nothing, which is yourself

21. A FALSE SENSE OF ATTACHMENT

like trees imagining they are deer, deer imagining they are safe
or the questions astronauts ask of the stars
faith isn't belief, finally, but the struggle with it

24. HAPPINESS, WITH ITS HORIZON OF PAIN

wet. dry. sea. sky. dead. alive.
against the sure coordinates of self
the heart comes clean, becomes what she cannot

new moon
another turn
in rehab

Christopher Patchel

she practiced
numbness
until it felt
contagious

she rode the bus to see
beautiful beads in polished
hair pulled taut across
competing windows

Sheila E. Murphy

alone at the door holding open the rain

Elmedin Kadric

ESCAPE

“Why do you read
The moment you get home?”
I ask my child, nose in book.

“To escape the horrors
Of the world,” she says.
I nod and we exchange a look.

MERCY KILLING

When I found the tiny scorpion
between book pages

months after returning
from Italy, I envied

that will to live, the calm
to wait for what's coming,

then slammed it shut.

LOVE POEM

Even when we had nothing,
sheep scratched themselves against
our dead car rusting in weeds.

SEEING HER ON THE STREET YEARS LATER

Wind's sudden *thunk* against kite,
surge and uplift into blue.
The string burns through hands.

W. C. WILLIAMS IN HAIKUVILLE

This is just to say:
 fuck the plums,
fuck the damn ice box.
 Just forgive me.

In the X-ray waiting room –
a burst of laughter.

STRIDULATION

On the evening news
the alpha-despot-assholes
are rattling their sabers

but with the sound down
and the windows open
onto the dusky garden

all I hear are the crickets
rubbing their wings in
insectoid harmony.

TEMPLE GARDEN

here

to sit
where

sitting
has been

valid

(voluble bulbul in a cypress tree)

TEMPLE, WORKMEN, CRANE, LARGE ROCK

place

the

rock

overgrown with ancient mosses

so that

it has been

here

for ever

THERE IS a place
where strawberry plants gleam in the grass
and sugar peas wind around strings
saying that
times are more peaceful now
Consider the deep
blindness that shaped
the plants, and those
who dig the earth

SOMEWHERE in father's body
past autumn-coloured alveoli
in among pink membranes
stretching down towards hollows
above pale organs
through the vascular paths
that branch amongst tight
quiet musculature
there is a small glen
where animals graze

YOU, child
What song will you hear
so the road ahead
does not fall apart
on your tongue

ONE DAY I shall fetch the child
out of the empty house
See, we are going
a long way far out into the marshes
The law changes
with each step

UNQUENCHABLE

for Andrew Schelling

One moment a child
the next
belly full
the stink of death
threw me to
money
mockery and sin
a dog
craving truth
I died for nothing
in the blink of
an eye

John Phillips

in the boneyard of your story a crow splinters marrow

soft rain in the belly of a cello

Tiffany Shaw-Diaz

the open lids of grand pianos sailing a sun-struck wall

Jo Balistreri

At CBC

Glenn Gould! Glenn Gould!
Rip off your gloves and play!
It's thirty degrees in Toronto today!

THE DISTRIBUTION OF DATA BETWEEN FIELDS
IS AN INDEXING ACTION

every stutter and quip
bits of noise
and enchantment

Chris Beckett

belly-to-earth
my velocity in G-flat

how
i'd
like

to
die
with

bare
feet
touching

nibbling
flesh
from

the
wishbone
the

dancers
close
their
eyes

his
eyes
of
light

his
eyes

his
eyes

his
eyes
of
light

on
the sea

the sea
in
his
eyes

of
light

of
light

the sea
in
his
eyes

of
light

his
eyes

of
light

on
the
sea

of
light

his
eyes

his
sea

MAJURO TANKA

Here on the island,
time is faster, more cruel.
Ceilings rot. Knives rust.
My belt hangs green, sheathed with mold.
Sure, I'm next. Then this tanka.

A MONTH BEFORE LEAVING MAJURO

Our days here dwindling,
we speed into the lagoon.
Our boat's shadow skims
the sea floor with eagle rays.
So have I moved through these days.

LAKESIDE

They keep hooking the same big bass
from the lake. It has flopped so many times

on the dock, by the women's feet,

that the women who each caught and threw it
back now hear it slap in the dark

as they wake next to their sleeping lovers

who toss in the sheets, as if white water splashed
and something broke surface, the body

of man or woman reeled through stars.

MARIA NUDE

at the edges of light
where thought
yields
to the visible
your body
there
in itself
nothing more
nothing less
an aperture
to the tides of being

THE REACH

Almost as if I
had picked up
a shell from that

long walk along
the beach we
never took, I hear

your voice as a
sighing tide inside
my inner ear.

DECONSTRUCTING DICKENS

It was the best of
times – all the big-
name philosophers
were in the room.

It was the worst
of times – he didn't
understand a word
they were saying.

WHAT A STRANGE THING TO SAY

She, with a hairstyle from another era
but with a gaze that was modern
if not postmodern,
said she always found the word *peculiar*
peculiar as any word imaginable
and I, who hadn't spoken in a solid week
as opposed to a rumoured week,
who had refused to say any word
peculiar included
said, *what a strange thing to say*,
and we both laughed
as one of us opened a dictionary
and the other threatened to turn into
the largest or smallest person imaginable.

THE RIGHT WORD

In finding it, I realize
Something is wrong –
Though wrong may not
Be the right word

FREQUENT FLYER

If I could only get miles
For the flights inside me

Loren Goodman

AIR TRAFFIC

We're at Logan Airport
where the legacy is deep
and the guys up in the tower
doing 14 hour shifts
can't find a seam in the traffic
for a planeload of frozen chicken
bound for a market near you.
These boys got to get that plane
in the air.

I want you to know
they will find a way.

SPAN

Park by the friendship bridge
linking campus and the hospital.
Watch the figures crossing it.

last time I heard you became dusk

biography a new source of neoplasms

glaucous gull
querulous as the sun
breaks the horizon

PERSPECTIVE

(after a photograph by John Levy)

Small birds throw sound
where the clutter
is still kind. A captive
rhino feigns interest
in a flock of tourists.
At what angle does
the threat disappear?
Those rumpled
brown paper bag lips seem
to say *catch me, weigh me.*

Marianne Moore begins

her poem "The Monkeys" with the words
"winked too much" that I somehow read

as "wished too much." Moore went to the zoo
with Elizabeth Bishop. In front of an elephant,

Bishop said, "Look, its skin is like fog."

Moore replied, "Oh, I like that.
I want that." Bishop gave it to her.

In "The Monkeys" Moore writes,
"the elephants with their fog-colored skin . . ."

Bishop could've joked, "monkey hear, monkey steal."
Instead, Bishop enjoyed telling this story, a story

about elephants, fog, skin, friendship,
poetry.

hanging

where nothing
is hanging, on the wall

that was demolished

four years ago, that
had been in the front hall

in Phoenix where I grew up

are paintings

AUTOBIOGRAPHY FOR MY DAUGHTER, CHAPTER 21

I went to military school in Minneapolis in first and second grade. Often, on the school bus ride (which lasted at least 30 minutes) I dreamed about visiting a penny factory, seeing from above giant vats of bright molten copper being poured into small penny molds. The bus passed the Mississippi River, usually gray and gleaming. At the school I marched to and from class, stood at attention, carried a pretend rifle, and loved the small black shining lava rocks with their holes and warped shapes; they covered the oval running track.

John Levy

INAUGURATION DAY, 2017

On the footpaths,

a few

late leaves – winter

marshalling outside

the statehouse walls.

a man in fatigues
dumpster dives . . .
suburban dusk

mid-winter death
far from where it belongs
a shopping cart

Peter Newton

All Saints' Day ...
standing in line to buy
next season's baseball tickets

Edward J. Rielly

so many
purchased bookmarks
on a shelf
again I use
a crumpled receipt

PART 2

are you sure you
want to commit
this to paper

ten years staring up at the same

insulation

I cannot but
cannot but embrace
ephemerality

civilisation tugging us onanonanon

higgs boson
my eyelids
feel so heavy

SLEEP

Her abeyance: whole sweep
of all the lawns, with their
mucky goldfish ponds. Pressing,
hard, forearms against high
windows – “So much silliness
out there. But nothing’s
funny. First he
took my money; then
he took my afternoon naps.”

compose microbeads
heat-printed into our dreams
as roost, coat, and bone

my tires
treadless
on dirt roads
under spring rains
pitch
I see you speak

from VIA SETTEMBRE

7

chickens in a low sun
broken Italian
blood rise tide
& wine

hand me down

pass up today &
tomorrow take out sulphates
swallows & full moon
pull & you

10

broken into other dialects
the heavens open
strand line treasures

a mermaids purse & whelk case cluster
trained movements bend coastal
to meet mountains & roads home

THE FIRST SUMMER

the first summer, we found cuttlefish bones on the beach

the second summer, a pirate's bounty of silver sea stones

the third summer, white cats in a basket, a mother's prayer

the fourth summer, a cask of winds: *vorinós, meltémi,*
*capellátos, kareklás**

soon after came the rain and the fasts

I lost my hat

turned up at a crossroads

at the center

of the center of the island town

(*Greek names for Cycladic island winds: the latter two are humorous – *hat* wind; *chair* wind)

crab along a sunken keyboard z to numlock

x masks the spot

from *After Heraclitus*
(zimZalla, 2019)

(frag. LXVI)

the living bow
& pulled back string
dies when the arrow
strikes something.

(frag. CXXII)

when death takes us

we shall see

what no priest tells us,

nor poet says will be.

(frag. XCVIII)

beautiful? wise?

but to the eyes

of the gods we're clueless apes,

mere jackanapes.

(frags. CXXIV—CXXVII)

they crash, strut, boom

flutter flutes all night and consume

wine till they spew and fall:

to honor some foolish god, they engage in a brawl.

CONSEQUENCES

Hard to allow

satisfaction

after starting to sense it

deep in
setbacks' and defeats'

aftermath

which pass equally into inconsequentiality

In seminars and salons they no longer
speak of Mercurialis the Younger.
Perhaps they never did, or not much.
Or else grown old he's gone out of touch.

of which there are several variants such as

Nowadays in seminars and salons I am
rarely mentioned. My name's Epigram.
Martial loved me too well. J.V.Cunningham
revived me but I'll end where I began,
in the graveyard, a trite In Memoriam.

from ANAGRAMMATON

I'll buy time a wastrel:
me, a silly rube. Aw, tilt
at law – limit yer blues.

I'm wily as a brute. Tell
me at least I will bury
a bullet i' my law's rite.

Ritual was belly-time –
literally bum-waste. I
rail, but I'm sweet ally.

I tumble a satyr. Well, I,
liar, will stem beauty.
True, I will last – maybe.

[William Butler Yeats]

my death haiku not quite in time

all the Perseids fallen crickets

Jim Kacian

morning mist ...
the kids step out
to vape

every snowflake looks the same:
they troll my left-wing posts

MEME

joy lies dead
on the linoleum floor
a clown's prayer

Roland Packer

These poems are constructed from the January 2017 issue of *Family Circle Magazine*, an American home magazine that recently stopped publication after 87 years. Line breaks were determined by adhering to the phrasing established by the multi-column format of the magazine. Capitalization and punctuation are unaltered from the original text.

1.

Look for Your Luck

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water
to test anything and everything,
10 minutes twice a week.

2.

Good Karma is
in your bag with a clean towel.

3.

Keep in Mind That You're

a clear path for

a victim of circumstance. He
can be physically active or

pearl-infused

every time you open
the doors.

4.

A
S
K

with a toothpick if it looks like it will unroll
endless procrastination.

5.

Make It a Habit

begin to get a sense of each

Blurring

6.

skip everything if
you can save someone's
dust bunnies across the floor.

on the wrong side of
my futon
the Pacific Ocean

I
want / don't want
to be
alone. / with you. / alone with you. / .

under reundecompartmentalization until further notice

Warren Decker

fallastrainowhere

resurrectionicescape

LeRoy Gorman

somewhere
the god of categories
counting π

skimming the river
of unseen waves . . .
dragonfly

holloway
walking beyond
the here and now

oak bark
crawling
with dawn

Michael Baeyens

AT THE WINDOW

bare twigs conduct to

branches

branches

conduct to sky on

one black branch, two black

birds conduct

to one another

all the while

a pale sky pales

NOW AND THEN

Now and then a fleeting atmosphere
supercedes the mundane to give lift,
so hold it close, but not enough to stifle,
let it filter slowly into quiet observation.

A money spider
a small grey bird
a last yellow rose.

I gather windfalls along paths
once cut through summer grasses
now under winter's quiet contraception.

IT'S DECEMBER SO LONG

Every poem I begin, begins
It is snowing. Then I stop
looking out the window. I know
a fox, its coat vermillion and thick
with winter could be crossing
the now snow-covered field.
I will not see it,
so I write that down,
every time.

I LOOK UP

I look up *fall*
and come upon *fallow*.
I follow as if that
is where I was always
meant to go.

It fills the mind
that lay in wait.
It is the mind not
knowing it is waiting
that makes it so.

MONDAY EVENING IN THE SUMMER

That I can't know this for the first time
panics me, the elliptical breeze,

curtains, opal twilight, far-off sound.
One more layer of experience.

I don't need as much as I did, but
still some: some naïve little pieces.

INTO THE LABYRINTH

Soon I too will carry my string
into the wilderness without

any useful language or hand-
some shadow behind me. I know

change is never easy, but in
this case it will not be easy.

My body makes space around it
to live in, to leave from. When I

get back to the terror, I hope

that song you used to sing when you
thought I wasn't listening still

has the old stardusted magic.

do not let
this spring day
deceive you into
thinking everything
is just fine

John Vieira

war memories –
the embalmed dusk
in refugees' veins

WHAT SHE REMEMBERS

A skullcap
torn from a boy's head
is flung all the way
across Poland.

OUT WALKING

You trail behind
a weightlessness
too heavy to carry.
On Exeter,
the masked face
in the traffic light
could be your own.
Pitted red moon
in the hard rain.

my shadow

the fantail

brushes

a headstone

on a fruiting branch

without a name

surfs the wind

dark sky
viewing

*the world
our oyster*

I gulp
small holes

*and an awful
emptiness*

in the silence

*words no longer
conceal*

PALE INSCRIPTION

Sometimes you land
In a place not settled

By pale inscription
Filling up with dusk

from SCORPION LETTERS

How quickly do our bodies fill with night
After afternoon's bright sheen?

Is children's wild, impatient laughter
Hidden in birds' crooked flight?

If you traced the moon's course
Through dead, inky branches

Could you find your way back
To the source of the light –

To abandonment's hunger
Which scratches our eyes out

& Lays waste our breath
In predatory delight?

dusk between the fragments of a prehistoric bird I recognize my
mother's beak

Réka Nyitrai

from a hollow
of the broken field
a hermit thrush calls

TERRA INCOGNITA

A brown iron
vein,

blue under
the skin, mined

and slaked
into a paint

the color of
mud, mind.

Mark Harris

Water holds itself, “a figure for the time still present.” I have nothing to say to the world outside of my death.

I’m thinking of the soft, absurd action of the rain. Of the plunder of branches, and the world turned down in morning.

Steven Salmoni

come dusk
: the answer
before the ask

branches settling
for their crows

midges scribbling in the morning light write me

Michele Root-Bernstein

Fresh swept cell
the fish pond
brims.

John Slater

HIMALAYAS

In the Land of the Gods,
the anchorite
edits his past,

wakes with a start
to the laughter
of the coffee-drinkers . . .

Alan Ireland

autumn mist the sommelier tastes it

rib cage opens bleeds weeds

desert insects but in a forgotten language

ghost brother the answer to every question

Stephen Toft

in the night
the phone number
my parents had

lost in the math
an ocean wave changes
on the rocks

Gary Hotham

battling cancer –
in the crisp cold air
wet-nosed buffalo

Adrian Bouter

gap in the fence
I poke my head into
a world of sheep

Sandra Simpson

cool August morning –
hummingbird at the feeder
darts into brilliance

Wally Swist

IN OCTOBER

Through stripes of chilled shadow
and cordial touch of sun
I carry my axe to the woodpile.

Thonk! An alder chunk
parts cleanly as a fresh halibut.
From the banked fires of a maple

a handful of crows startles up.
They taper like buckshot over the valley.
And our canvas deepens.

Mike Dillon

PECH MERLE

It was not the paintings
of spotted horses
bison, mammoths
the ochre reindeer
that remain with me
but a woman's handprint
the footprints of children
as they waited out
the winter
there

Sue Leigh

TOWNSHIP OF PEVELY

in the limestone church,
the dairymen's cold-cracked hands
bleed as they warm up

Dana Delibovi

winter rain
the holes between
small bones

refusing to conceptualize winter stars

Caroline Skanne

1+1 = 11
cold sun

after
entertaining great thoughts

stewed prunes

the silence
of a live crab

picked apart
by a seagull

Victor Ortiz

collecting

the last of
the light

available
the white

of the gull

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