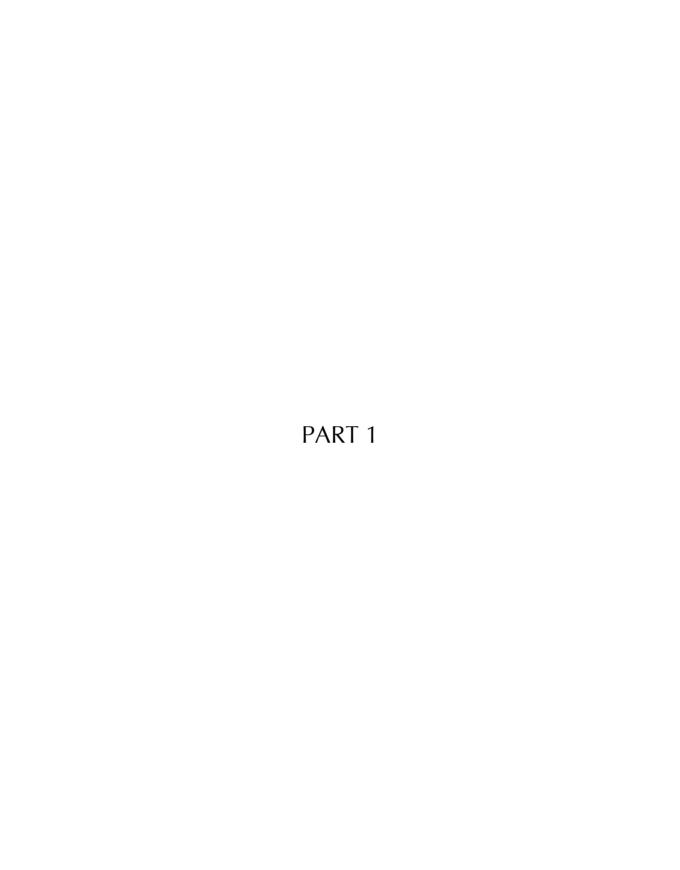
NOON 16



NOON | journal of the short poem

ISSUE 16 February 2020



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

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

Violence in *every*

"New World" i go bare

 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.



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

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

ind is fitted etallistick to the individual mind is fitted etallistick to be party si plaom leuron period to the eather than the contract of t

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 she practiced numbness until it felt contagious she rode the bus to see beautiful beads in polished hair pulled taut across competing windows



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

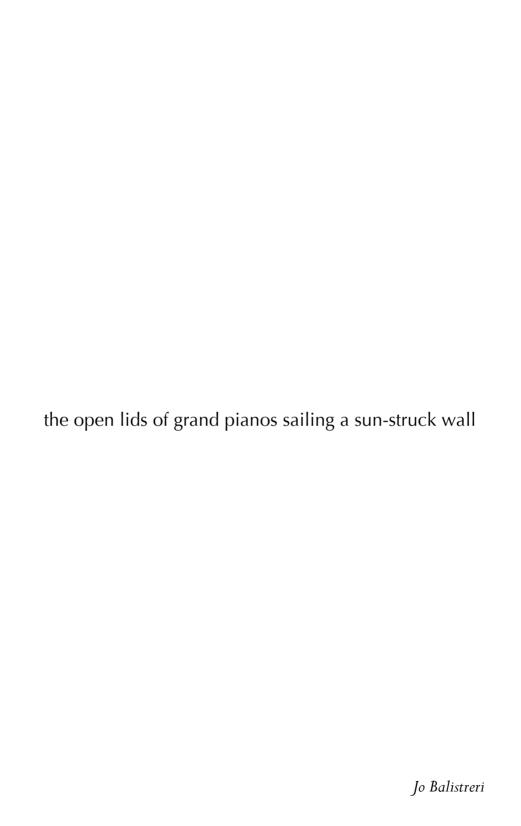
UNQUENCHABLE

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



soft rain in the belly of a cello



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 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	the sea in his	his eyes
of light	eyes	of light
his	of	O
eyes	light	on the
his	of	sea
eyes	light	
		of
his	the sea	light
eyes	in	
of	his	his
light	eyes	eyes
on	of	his
the sea	light	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 bigname 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

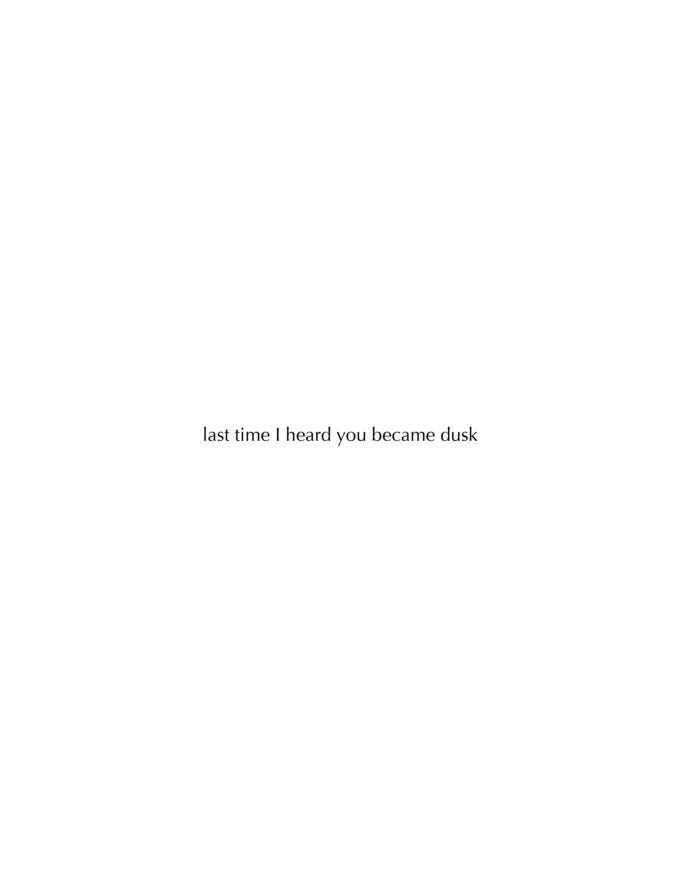
AIR TRAFFIC

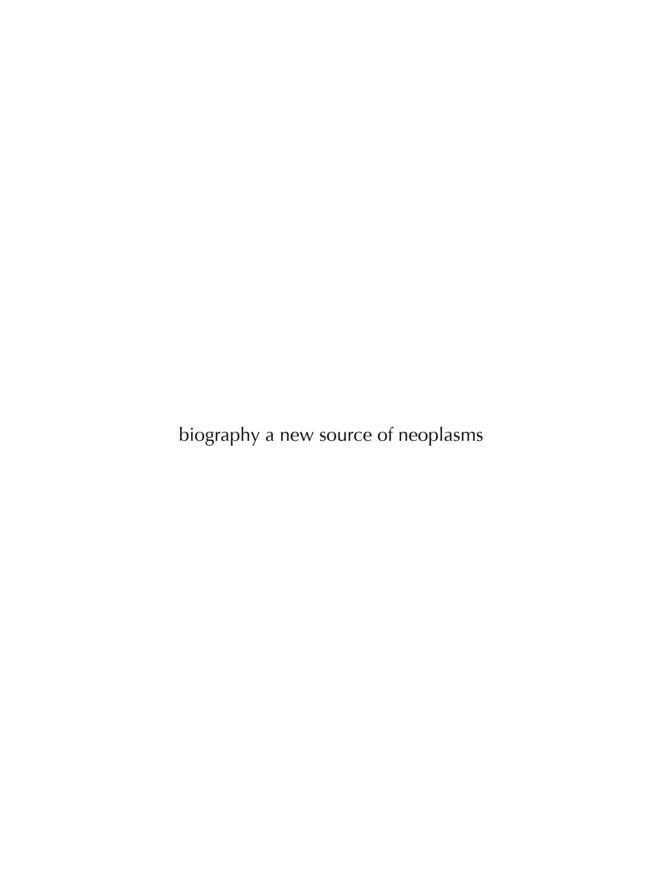
We're at Logan Airport where the legacy is deep and the guys up in the tower doing 14 hour shifts can't find a seam in the traffic for a planeload of frozen chicken bound for a market near you. These boys got to get that plane in the air.

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.





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.

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

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

morning mist . . . the kids step out to vape

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



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

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.

А

S

K

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

5.

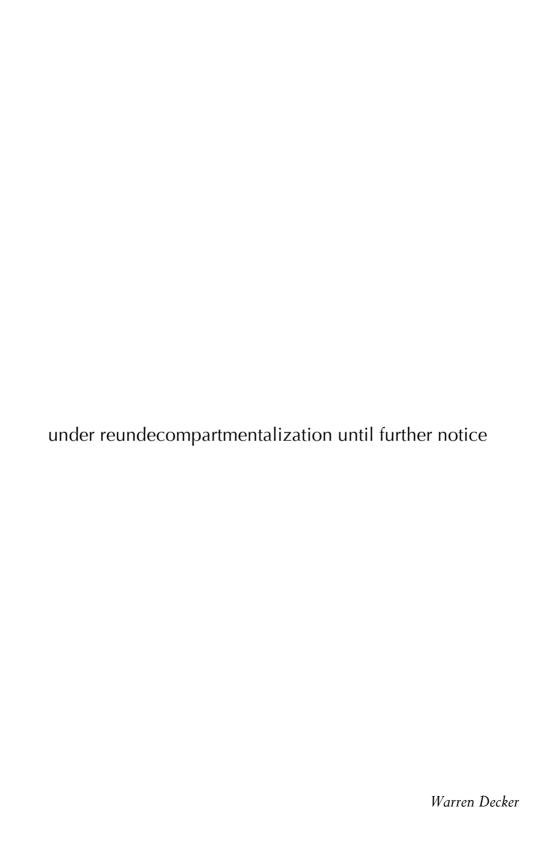
Make It a Habit

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



fallastrainowhere

resurrectionicescape

 $\begin{array}{c} \text{somewhere} \\ \text{the god of categories} \\ \text{counting } \pi \end{array}$

skimming the river of unseen waves ... dragonfly

holloway walking beyond the here and now

oak bark crawling with dawn

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 handsome 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 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.

Water holds itself, "a figure for the time still present." I have nothing to say to the world outside of my death.				
'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 duskthe answerbefore the ask

branches settling for their crows

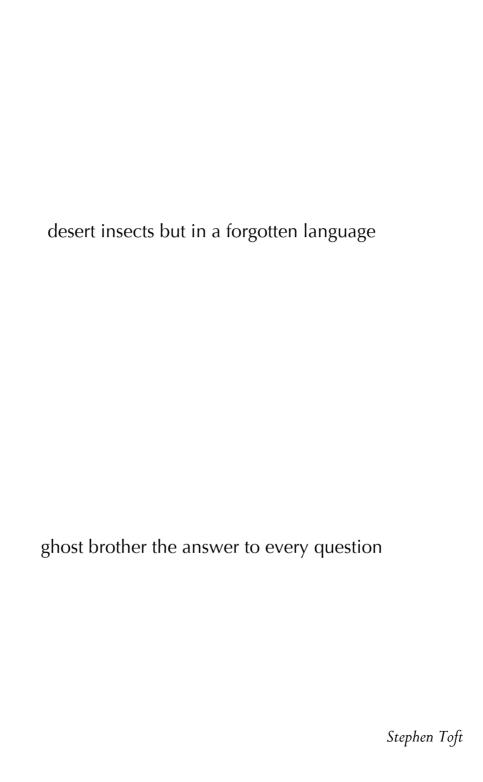


Fresh swept cell the fish pond brims.

HIMALAYAS

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

wakes with a start to the laughter of the coffee-drinkers . . . autumn mist the sommelier tastes it rib cage opens bleeds weeds



in the night the phone number my parents had lost in the math an ocean wave changes on the rocks

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

gap in the fence I poke my head into a world of sheep cool August morning – hummingbird at the feeder darts into brilliance

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.

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

TOWNSHIP OF PEVELY

in the limestone church, the dairymen's cold-cracked hands bleed as they warm up winter rain the holes between small bones refusing to conceptualize winter stars

1+1 = 11
cold sun

after entertaining great thoughts

stewed prunes

the silence of a live crab

picked apart by a seagull collecting

the last of the light

available the white

of the gull

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