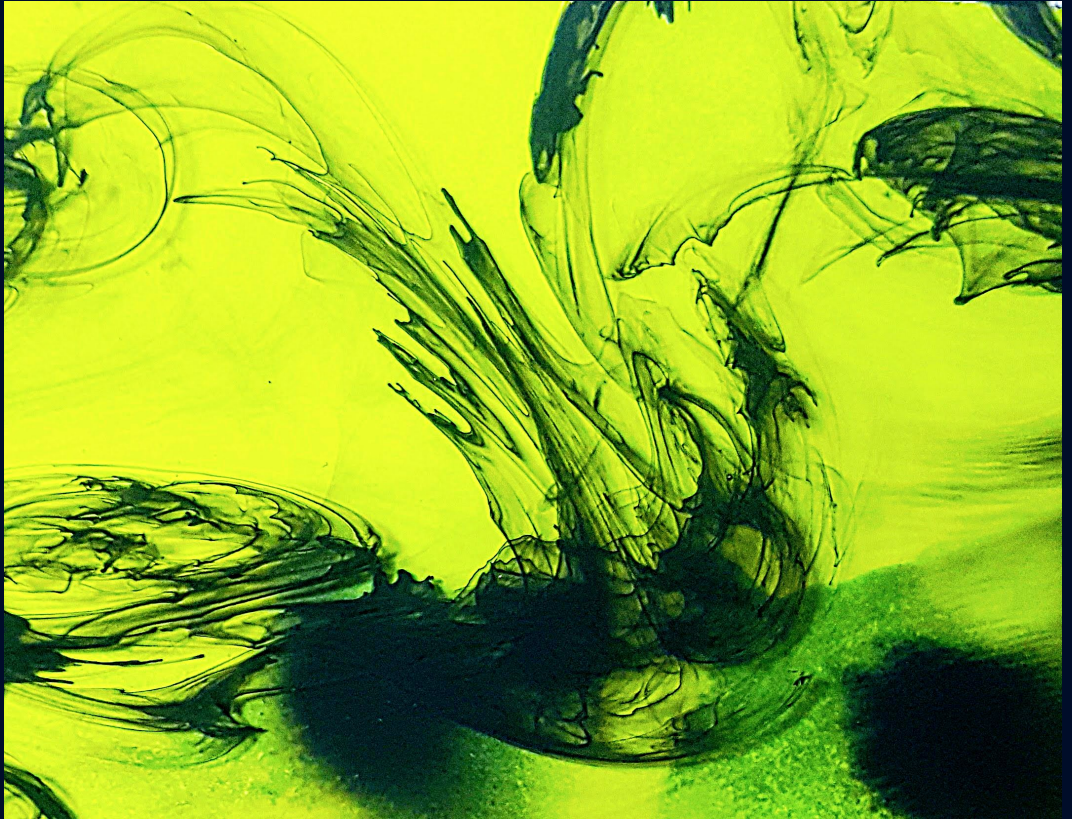


NOON 27



NOON:
Journal of the Short Poem

Issue 27

April 2025

pawing snow at the cave mouth till sky

Bill Cooper

an
alpha

bet
of

words

from

the
lake

birds

come

and
go

wildfire sky
we wander around
as inkspots

cease.

a frog
's
. Breath

. The

. Fire

fogs.

mirror.

a place no one enters or leaves winter rain

Scott Metz

where the
ellipsis trails off
a fox

torn newspaper –
under compost
the writhe of words

origami master
a life's work unfolded
by fire

tag the clouds
in each square
prove you're mortal

Judson Evans

clouds risking the sky's edge
safety rules on the sign
for the beach

Gary Hotham

PRÉCIS

to read is to be reread

the original is a copy

TYRANT

The toy children
on his train
never grow up

They are killed
by real soldiers

SETSUBUN

Children relish the news that the pageant of demons
was just a group of dads.

A paper lantern sits by the warping cactus.
Today, it sleeted when it was supposed to snow.
Today, it is a mix of pork mince and beef.

Cheaper. The littlest child sees Trump again, asks:

‘If the demon was Dad all along, does that mean
Donald’s just a dad too?’

We have a Donald Trump
mask in our house.
The ducks fly up when we dash through the grass.

opposite
the schoolyard fence
a military man
kids, he says,
don't name your snowman

new year's day
for every time zone
a war

Alanna C. Burke

brewing storm
how the sidewalk glitters
with paraphernalia

spring thunder –
chunks of horizon
in mason jars

starlings

in time

corkscrew through

all murmurings

a wine-dark sky

are stilled

overhead, a crow –
in some poems
too much flapping

rainy afternoon –
in a museum
studied by a portrait

partita in d
leaps and feints of
the winter stag

John Pappas

wind in choirs
of sycamores is it
limbs or lymns

dusk
fine tuning the dark
around a cello

Jonathan Humphrey

moorland the beginning and ending of snow

Debbie Strange

SITTING ON THE GRASS

(Translated from the Japanese of Yagi Jukichi)

It was my mistake

It was my mistake

When I sit on the grass like this that becomes clear

autumn woods my assumptive world

Christopher Patchel

VACCINATION MARK

Perhaps it's wrong, proves that it was all my fault. I can name places – Prague, Milan, Madrid – but I'm damned if I can remember a single conversation. Not one word, though we must have talked. But I remember the round scar at the top of your arm, raised like an Iron Age hillfort at its edges.

shadows –
darker soil
where a wall was

Don Quixote
unexpectedly shows up
to see how my dream
turned out
now that she's dying

hospital bed
high enough for a view
of the playground snow

grandkids asleep
plugged in
to every outlet

Randy Brooks

STARK RELIEF

...you wake one eye on the ceiling
the other on day breaking open
again the way eggs crack
unevenly leaving an omen
of yolk on your finger

the way that thought overflows
forcing you
out and into

stark relief in the snow
where a sparrow still here
cumulus cloud suggest a tomorrow's
apricity

TIME WILL NOT TELL

You stretch out an arm
and it's a stranger's. The past

is like flicker books.
One image appears
from un-looked-at pages.

Today
it's what persists

of love: your sober sick-bed,
the overflow
of ashes. I won't learn you

from words in the head
that, even dead, you burst.

THEY ARE ALREADY CALLING MY NAME IN THE AFTERLIFE

After all this is over, will there be a place?

Like an echoey desert where we recognise each other.

IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I WAS
BULLETPROOF, SINCE I FLEW

I remember the beautiful, raw masculinity
of *Wolverine*.

A night-prickled scalp; ready to fight, ready
to dare.

A cage of adamantium around his heart.
He dies, to be revived after reaching into his own chest.

To dig into my chest.
To reach toward my medicated heart.

FOR THE HOMELESS WOMAN WEARING A GREY RAINCOAT AT COURTENAY CENTRAL

One of the versions of me will sit in the mall at the all-you-can-eat buffet wearing a grey raincoat, reading a book with a magnifying glass. I will look up at myself and try to catch my own eye as I walk past looking anywhere but at myself; noodles piled on a plate in front of me. And all I will want is some kind of acknowledgement: the self walking past is afraid I will want more. The self walking past does not see that I am past all that, trying to hold onto things.

BROKEN

*"So we lived
And chose to live*

These were our times" —George Oppen

What else choose? You can't
Your times.

Move among them, then
Swiftly, slowly, as you choose

If you can. If you get to
Choose. If you are lucky enough to get
To choose, & so to live

You get to move & breathe & love & be
Left alone

In such broken times
Tragically free.

OUT OF NOWHERE

Some poems
appear

as if

the if
were

nowhere first

even the road taken isn't

MAX JACOB AT 17

A few times he tried, not too
hard, to kill
himself. Then, a year

before graduating lycée, he
hung himself with his necktie
from a window hasp

near dinnertime. His father came in, asked
if he wasn't ashamed of himself
for fooling around

like a kid. His mother added, "There's
always

time

to kill yourself."

GRATITUDE

I'm not going to explain it away.

It is me, breathing.

I don't remember ever thinking

in a dream

of being grateful for anything, though
that's perfectly

okay
with me.

I'm grateful for any okay, okay.
I'm breathing.

Today I picked up
somebody's sigh on the street
I took it home and
rubbed it gently into this poem

laughter: paper

dancing as it burns

burrow
beneath time

the felicity
of field mice

in their ice-
blue tunnels

When Bach
died did

all the notes
he never

wrote fly
away and

become
sparrows?

WHILE OPENING THE GATE

I sometimes wonder
what birds did

before powerlines
were invented.

SWEEP THE YARD, ANY SIZE

broom-stroke tracks
on clean-swept earth

human traces
attention's spoor

abstract just-so shapely

POET

on social media
his posts of tree branches
reflected in snowmelt

as if looking directly
at their nakedness
would be problematic

select a gift registry for the departed

MISSING KEY FIELDS IN THE APPLICATION

All questions must be answered from our predetermined menu. Failure to comply will result in your claim being denied.

fieldstone wall
through a stand of oaks
first snowfall

misplaced stroke the scull moving mountains moving

whitecaps to air quote the ocean

into a crow's oily sheen the day's best light

Peter Newton

WINTER DAY IN WORPSWEDE, 1900

(after the painting by Hans am Ende)

Out of the dimming light
a few carrion crows glide
and settle in a field of snow,

marking an end to this day:
birds the color of loss,
sky the color of bone.

afterglow
the afterlife
of endometrium

ejaculation
a softening
of grief

ALL SOULS' DAY

The creeping flowers on the deck have dried brown edges. The temperature dips by ten degrees whenever the sun goes behind clouds. A guest arrives bearing a perennial for my mother. The family dog sits by the table eyeing the cold cuts. My baby wails as she is handed off to a new admirer.

in photos
of my parents' trip
grandmother's coffin

CONSIDER THE GRASSES

Think how they changed us,
the annual grasses: barley, oat, wheat, rye.

That chance fall of seed, taking root,
green tip breaking the earth.

And slowly we began to settle,
clearing the land, learning to till, sow, reap.

How hard it must have been, ploughing
with hack and hoe, reaping with flaked flint sickles.

We saved seed, waited.
Made bread.

We are grass. Our days are as grass.
Yes, surely the people is grass.

Even thirty years after the genocide
the scent of dried blood
lingers in the church at Nyamata.
Back at the hotel I remove
my copper bracelets
unable to bear the smell.

Suzanne Kamata

mud
slide
no
where
else

THE GROUND TIPS

Listen –
you may see a sign
a tip of the hat
a turn of the head

this is the state of *all* and *over*

a slow song,
broken and repeated.

from the stream
of thought
onto the blank page
a big idea
the light dying
in its eyes

ancient
i used to be a noun

angle of sun
dry winter grasses
staying alive

THEN THE VERBS START TO FALL APART FROM WINTER¹

for my wife it's the nouns
which could pass for weathered wooden slats
worked loose
radiation leaving gaps between words

she waggles her finger in the air mid-sentence
feeling the gust
that catches to vibrate the next noun loose
and fling it far out of reach

¹ Title is a monoku by Marcus Liljedahl, in *Sonic Boom*, Issue 21 (December 2021)

anticipatory grief
a closet full
of nothing to wear

Julie Schwerin

GRIEF

snow caps on fence posts
chimney mouth spits up grim soot
she left on her terms

car keys in the candy dish
he kneels by the unmade bed

mother's
bible
marginalia
with
exclamation
points

Beverly Acuff Momoi

N.B.

Note intended not
To be read in haste only –

Attend is the word.

ABSURD DOUBLE-NEGATIVE
DYSTOPIAN LIFE SENTENCE

Where oddly enough not
Even the odd numbers never add up.

DECIDUOUS

At last, his words,
mere black wiggles
on a field of white,
came so right and true
they erased themselves
as his hand moved
across the page.

Alone up here
in the mountains
I don't need
to wonder anymore
who drums
that frantic snare
in my head.

Mike Dillon

DALGARNOCK

The gentle rustle of a beech hedge
a cluster of sheltering snowdrops

TIN FOIL & KITCHEN ROLL

fulfil the role of keeping the roses fresh
until they're placed on the coffin

10th September 2024

Andrew Taylor

RAINY NIGHT READING

for Andrew Taylor

I'll do two more
from Winter, then
that's me done.

A DROP AT THE LOCAL

Artificial Christmas tree
on the bar. He smells it
lifts it, points it as a rifle
at the other barman who

photographs it and him.
I wish I understood. Now
that the family has gone
the place is quiet. *Ciao.*

They've knocked down
the Ginrei Cinema.

For years I worked staring
at its queues its red

film noir façade

and now work staring at the tarnished screen

of the wall behind where it was

awaiting the container

with their father's ashes

while in the corner of

the living

room a child

kneels lit

by a giant

screen

unable to cry

above her rabbit-fur muff
the young woman unfastens
her mask
to her mouth
surreptitiously lifts
the thin jade
of a leaf
of lettuce

ordering gyudon
from the touchscreen
a headless stone Buddha

CHARCOAL, SAND, AND SHORE STRUCK BY SUNSET
SHARE PERSONAL STORIES ABOUT THE VOID

They reach
no conclusion,
littered six paper napkins
with theories
no more tethered
then bedtime stories
or a mirror's monologue
on absence.

tiny cocktail umbrellas
another day
lost to rain

Seth Friedman

our bestselling sleep aid now with twice the cosmological constant

Kelly Sauvage Moyer

sunshower stuck somewhere in the dopamine loop

doomscrolling until I'm all caught up

shortening days
an unsheltered man
deep in Descartes

when we sleep
this winter

ear to ear
with the blackest crow

its broken wing
dormant

S/I/O

Like old soldiers rising to go
Slowly the mist rides the lake

From another shore's distance an echo
One loon tremulous

Waking early to receive these gifts
What can I give back?

WILD SWANS

A high thin whistle
over the lake this morning:
long white necks, arrows pointing
north to tundra, endless light.

BIRDS

There, at the copper bowl, a mockingbird drinks.
Our other birds, fed, gather in the trees
to perch in the day's last slant of light,
as if someone knew them there,
as if they had come home.

CHATTAHOOCHEE

We thought it was clean.
Look, we floated down the river,
some girl on LSD saw my eyes
on the shore, Eddie said let's go.
I said sure let's go, we could always
come back. Trees grew
rooted in the sand along the river
where Rusty Robinson was just
about to leave when we shoved
up and leapt onto the bank.
A boatful of stone throwers was right
behind us. What he pointed
was at them.

GRAIN MOTH

You are unsure whether mendacity
or a simple Google Translate error
had you wind up here, in this little
booth, but might as well make
the best of it. But what to expose?
A glass of wine with lunch? The breach
of protocol at the table tennis
parade? The password to your ex-
girlfriend's gmail account? So many
possibilities and just one priest
(albeit with an undisclosed number
of companion parrots) behind the screen.

park aviary
in her little questions
the big one

Adrian Bouter

a block of wood
empty hands
any child can show you

SPACE

A snow-covered field
opens
up
in a small room

a steep fall
from all I hold
too close
to examine.

VOID

Who owns this face
criss-crossed toughening hide
eyes as pliable as peeled eggs?

LIKENESS

At night, too tired to hold on to anyone
I think I am, my likeness takes over,
slips into the dark theater of sleep.
Watches, on the screen, someone trying on
strange bodies of light.

Come back, come back.
The words are clear,
spoken in the language of the dawn.

The mirror gathers me as my likeness
turns away to become
the face of a transparent sun.

BIRTHDAY

1.

A balloon a few inches from the ceiling.
The blue bar of a boy's new xylophone
clunks.

2.

A pebble stuck in the tread of a boy's "moon" boot
clicks across the kitchen floor.
Mouse tracks in spilled flour.

3.

A boy's wristwatch full of seawater,
the little aquarium his twelve years
swim in, around and around.

RUSH HOUR

hundreds of people hurrying along
I'm one of them
I have my thoughts they have theirs then I think

what if this is someone
else's thought I'm thinking

what if I go into his building
up his elevator
to an apartment not my own
with a key I've never held before
that opens the door

ALSO

i used up every also
in the bewitching hours
before the first train:

when dawn crept up
behind sober skyscrapers

i plunged the remaining fragments
of heart & lust
into pockets full of less

then tiptoed through the turnstile

as though

i were

a nun

rush-hour din
the old woman's pedaling
increasingly unhurried
each morning
like a stuntwoman
sleepwalking
into it

Paul Pfeuger, Jr.

ARRESTED FALLING

I ran for a bus last week and felt the joy of it.
My feet pounded the pavement, catching
up with my toppling body. Is that what I will
do at the end? Race, heart thumping,
to catch up with myself, falling?

he's pumping the invisible brakes in the death seat again

Patrick Sweeney

bouncing
off the clock
undocumented seconds

yet again

&

never before

&

never again

a dying light

letters like grasses

the body is its own ambulance

the day
father

left
by

the shadow
on his bones

MIRACLE IN FLORENCE

I want to believe
like Masaccio that St Peter
healed the sick at the side
of the road near the palazzo
that hot July day
with his shadow

LATIN CLASS

As the mugger stops me in the city newly dark
brandishing a tiny knife that looks like the beak
of a jittery bird of prey about to lunge
from Latin class a millennium or two ago
I remember a single phrase: *pax vobiscum*—
I say it over and over in the city darkening
as if my memory frightened had been short changed.
The mugger takes my wallet anyway
says he dozed through Latin class yet got a C somehow
but all he remembers is *Veni, Vidi, whatever*.

ANGEL, MORNING

wake,
spread toes,
rub eyes,
stretch
wings

i wore
brown
corduroys
to the library
of
infinite
knowledge

i wore
no
shoes

as far as can see whitecaps

mantis
I know
that look

the earworm
of a canyon wren song
wormhole

p tr ch r

you, white ptarmigan
from the lie of a fissuring
hare, a hollow egg

雷鳥よひび割れ卵詐欺から卵

SLOW SPEED
MINIMUM WAKE
pelicans

c
all
to
pray
er
c
ell
t
o
w
e
r

in solitude
I outcrow
the evening snow

I WAS THERE

I WAS HERE

I WAS HER

I WAS HE

I WAS

I

I

breaking silence the smell of bread

love in the Patagonia of my mind repeating patterns

Adrian Bouter

AFTER ROBERTO JUARROZ

The light deep down,
the light in your depths
does not have the words to say
“I am the light.”

The depths have no words at all
but must rely on darkness
to speak, in a language
they cannot understand.

and the truthfulness he called day moon

Dan Schwerin

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