

a The dark times with there also be singing?
 /a The dark times will there also be singing?
 /a The dark times will there also be singing?
 /a The dark times with them also be singing?
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 /a The dark times will there also be singing?

TRIPWIRE

20

TRIPWIRE 20

in memory of Lyn Hejinian and Tyrone Williams

OAKLAND : 2024

TRIPWIRE
a journal of poetics

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VALERIA ROMÁN MARROQUÍN

Comrade
january 19

TRANSLATED BY NOAH MAZER

AND YOU WEREN'T THERE

in the fields, in a factory

you were

in the street

agitating

—Dalmacia Ruiz-Rosas

i.

that afternoon i saw it rain

strange drizzle, this summer just now
sprouting its first heatwaves and
the sun that awaits us

is arching towards the upcoming month

it's january
and i saw it rain

tear gas from the roofs
the city center the asphalt bears witness
all the times i saw it rain

STONES STICKS PAINT PAMPHLETS RUBBER BULLETS

FIREARM PROJECTILES WATER CANNON WATER
PEPPER SPRAY HORSE SHIT

sweat on foreheads

i saw it rain

tears

and down in the park of tears

encrusted in the pavement

i saw people run

smash paving stones block highways cut off

avenues sing

anthems from a time to come

i saw the flags boom with the chants

and i saw the glint of motorcycle cops cop cars rockets

shining

two fronts tensing and exploding

everything at once

i saw the roaring shining masses advancing

always advancing

i saw the most gorgeous faces i've ever seen

endure the burn of the state's artillery

i saw mothers without their children

i saw siblings without a future

i saw the masters of power and war

aim their weapon and beg us

all of us to never exist ever again

that comfortable peace granted by the deaf verse of the dead

i saw their squads become an instrument of the commanders
and fire

i saw the union and the rondas
and the permanent struggle committees
and the relatives' associations and defense fronts and neighbor-
hood organizations
and how fear panted down their necks
like a cold knife

I SAW THE MASSES PART AND ADVANCE
ALWAYS ADVANCING
to get back what they stole from us

one country comes to an end and another
emerges out of the disaster they left us
builds itself with stones sticks asphalt glass dirt horse manure
rotten fruit unstuck soles empty bottles

ONE NATIONAL COLLECTION ONE SHARED POT
building itself with the remains of the generations
who couldn't get even before they left

one country comes to an end
we're collecting what's due

i saw the masses
and i saw you

that afternoon i saw it rain

ii.

in the spotless heart of repose
your sweat burns me
burns to the humid touch
of skin on skin no space left empty
we've come from the first day
over already for some

this is how we top it off
we dehydrate with beer

i hear you piss impeccably
and kilometers away
i hear them drawing close again

this is the moment of our nightmares
before the hangmen's dream:
permanent state of emergency

machinery willing
to annihilate anything that gets in the way

kilometers away the night breeze
surprises us and lulls the hair layer the pore layer
mixes up my memory of the first offenses
imported tactics war tactics
with your the contact of you
this *novo* affect
bitter stink vinegar alcohol grease tobacco

and still

we're here
and here the numbers rise

bodies piled
together in the spotless heart of the holding cell
in the spotless heart of the plazas
they organize the days of lament
and in the spotless center of the main plaza
the police are gathering
to kneel in the power of their masters
fictional power
comrade

in the spotless heart of the country
kilometers away
from the cot mattress spring platform

a people
like you and i said comrade
an organized empowered furious towering unstoppable people
is here pushing at the gears of history
AND WE'RE GOING TO WIN
nothing and no one stops on this front
slogans and pamphlets pass from hand to hand
flood walls roads columns lampposts
rooted here
bread and water pass to the ones resisting
the declarations pass

breath passes and cheers after the leader who ends
 this first round of speeches
TALK THAT TALK COMPAÑERA FROM THE BOTTOM
OF YOUR DIAPHRAGM
 and the bottom of your pain
and let's embrace one more time

 everything we have is precarious but it's ours

no one stops producing
 here we rise in full-on shortage
stomachs empty ligaments exhausted
 story of an unwritten nation
forgotten
a history etched in the skin of the people mobilizing towards
 government monoliths
singing
behind the kilometers they traveled
to shake iron and concrete
because something's got to shake
 toward the spotless scenter of the scorn
of the lords of power and war

kilometers away
 i can hear them drawing closer

it's the days ahead

but you come back

at your side i feel
fear of going out tomorrow morning
facing the sun

starting again
on the same task
and never finding you again

in the spotless center of our bond
i call you comrade
nothing else, just comrade

i cling and sink
to the broad brim of your presence

iii.

i lose sight of you
as you rush out to the front lines
after breaking your fast and slicing the bread

i lose sight of you
streets are hot flesh stupored
they're planned narrow
it's an ambush

i lose sight of you
wild turn toward the retreat route
holding hands

the most beautiful faces i've ever seen
rushing to let out a breath

they're waiting out there too:
nightsticks and steel-tips
that's why they've blocked the street
excited as ever
to put their tools to work
they work cruel

i lose sight of you
behind flags megaphones drums bandanas helmets shields

i lose sight of you
and imagine you in the closest public hospital
in state custody
in the bed of a truck with no plates headed god
knows where

i lose sight of you
and don't look for you anymore on the edge of the crowd
now we're multitudes again

from here on out we feel our way
forging the bases of our project and its program, forceful
feasible
possible
a new country, like you and i said
comrade

something different
comrade
something so that nothing nothing at all
can stay the same
comrade

then i lose sight of you

the tyranny front is waiting for us
its useful spokesmen
its de facto workers
i lose sight of you
before the clash
that inevitable disconnect
you and i have already calculated

there's something concrete and material
to give to the people
some kind of support
some way of stepping in
when violence gets ahead of our tactics

and it doesn't matter

i lose sight of you
before the repression comes

i was with the masses
and i felt like you were too

JAZRA KHALEED

TRANSLATED BY PETER CONSTANTINE

The City

1.

The city resembles her proletarian ancestors, she has rough hands and a bullet deeply lodged in her spine, she resembles the class war that fed her urban planning, she preaches civil war without denying sorrow, this city is flesh and material, she sweats all over, from navel to neck; proletarians sprout in her moisture, she measures them one by one and they prove short in times of war and tall in times of peace, this city is dry like the night entangled in her hair, unproductive like a poem, wanton like a Saturday night, this city has always bewitched me with her brashness and cracked sidewalks, she has always seduced me by pretending to be the dual character of work, she is a city that, if she traverses you, that's it, you're done for, she will swallow you along with all your theology.

The city resembles the rebels crouched in her bowels, those bearded communist combatants, girded with their bandoliers and their civil war fury, she resembles their pain and their barefoot loneliness, the battles they carry under their arms, some rust remains on her shoulder from the weapons slung over her back, on her lips the tang of rebellion, she offers them honey and a handful of the bitter almonds of memory, she reminds them of the schools repurposed into command posts, the barricaded roads, the surprise and the deception, she reminds them of the

debt they owe her, and when the drums beat in her ovaries she sharpens her knives, because she knows that the time for revenge is nigh.

The city resembles the Muslim women who scale her embrace, she cannot offer death a further grace period, she wears her orange life jacket and eyes the sea, waits for the weather to change so she can set sail eastward, to her homeland, her sisters are awaiting her there, they're called Homs and Daraa, they're called Beirut and Fallujah, she pines for the hookahs and the jasmine-laden carts, the sadness of the muezzin and the dust in the travelers' fists, she waits for the weather to turn, waits and waits, but the tramontana wind keeps blowing, for decades now, ever the tramontana, that fucking wind that is drowning her children and will soon drown her too.

The city resembles her seven hills, in her breasts the milk ducts have been blocked for centuries, the milk has turned to stone within her glands, black as her orphanhood.

The city resembles her Wikipedia entry.

2.

This city gives me allergic rhinitis, an itch on my back, and an intense aggression toward the bourgeoisie.

3.

An orphaned city without a mother, father unknown, a city without windows, without rivers, without fruit, a city full of pips and phlegm, stuck in your throat every time you try to breathe, every time you try to call out to life with all its sounds, a fortified city, her urban planners dream of straight streets, the

generalized possession of space by those in power, the center dry of mother's milk, only weapons and spectacle, weapons and weapons, a clean urban landscape without the risk of corrupting of the young, without the flaneur's game of *dérive*, without the bad seed of proletarians; a city that is a field of military operations, the White Guard isolates the center, blocks the highways, every house an enigma, a threat, a trap, the workers arm themselves at construction sites, they move radially, they knock down lampposts, attack police officers, march in chains with all their bones and all their songs and all their landlessness; this city is not for them, she is a place of fortification, a humiliation. I used to love this city, when she was a very disorganized city, when she was bidirectional, when we played stone battles on Sundays. I once loved this city, until she forced me to commit my first mortal sin, that of rage.

4.

In this city of bosses we are strangers: immigrants, emigrants, Balkanites, Middle Easterners, provincials, villagers, chicken thieves, illegals. This is how this city is read.

5.

This city is the consciousness of the past in the form of debris upon debris.

6.

This city has disease in her blood, patriarchal viruses, bourgeois fungi, nationalist bacteria lurking in her colon, at the back of her tongue, under her bra band, waiting for a signal from the

state to spill into her arteries, to cause blood clots, pulmonary embolisms, pogroms, it's a stinging in the back, from west to east, it's missing an arm to bite, it's missing a leg as a support, but it's got patriotism to spare, racism to spare, white blood cells rising, tissues are compressed, congestion results as blood coagulates in the streets, in the squares, this is a state of emergency, national unity follows, popular rule, mutilations follow, this disease is genetic, it has a continuity, it is bequeathed from father to son, medical history now includes patriotic rallies, nationalist festivals and the hunts for immigrants, silent protests and indignant crowds, narrowed arteries, accumulated anger, blood rushes to the head; all this in conjunction with a lack of protein C can lead to a purpuric rash or otherwise a junta.

7.

This city was born before the war, and yet it raised only child warriors. This city was born before the alphabet, and yet her violence was full of voiceless fricatives. This city was born before the word, and yet she speaks only one language: that of the torturers.

8.

Everyone knows the name of this city, but no one says it out loud until the time comes to betray her.

9.

The city steals my poems off the clothesline, sells them on the black market, and mails me knife stabs sealed with her initials. She leaves me voicemails threatening to reveal all the

secrets I keep under my mattress or hide in my semicolons if I don't murder the snitches who peek through the cracks of urban planning when she takes her bath, if I don't thwart the scheduled gentrification plans or save my best rhymes for her; no matter what I do she will never love me, but I always follow the coordinates of her ankles, because I know that when I'm called to the cannons I'll find a safe hiding place in the hem of her skirt. Sometimes she speaks to me about the geographies of class warfare, the polarization building up in her neighborhoods, the low-intensity civil wars that break out in the lines of her forehead every time she frowns, about those she loved who fell victim to a cop's bullet, a fascist's knife, or suffered in the full heat of their lives with their denials and their hungers and their trenches, all those she has buried deep inside her, and the pain spills into her joints with all its rinds every time the air is humid. She confides in me her secret loves, she says that only prostitutes and fortune tellers understand her, she speaks to me about her female lovers, the antifascists, the immigrant women who hang out on the squares, to them belong her streets and boulevards, to them she will leave her trousseau, because only within them does she feel free.

10.

This city is a case of primitive accumulation.

My Body is Not a Country

My body is not a country,
though its borders were drawn after a war,
though it has mountain ranges, plateaus, peninsulas, plains,
though border police and coast guards patrol it.

My body is scorched earth,
where nothing will take root, nothing will flourish.
Its soil is sown with glass splinters,
its waters are polluted, its air poison.
My body is land that is barren, infertile, rotten.
Those who sowed it withered with their crops,
those who built on it collapsed with their buildings,
those who tried to cross it starved to death.

My body is not a country.
It never keeps its promises, never holds its territories.
When it says “love,” it means fire, arson, conflagration.
When it says “fatherland,” it means discipline, falling wages,
stop and frisk, concentration camps.
My body knows loneliness because it knows hospital corridors,
it knows pain because it’s so small not even a drop of hope
will fit in it,
it knows of death and so has stopped measuring its shadow.
My body knows the three gestures that pass between kiss and
betrayal.

My body is a health hazard.
It rejects social distancing,
doesn't observe any of the measures of personal hygiene.
My body refuses to submit to throat swabs,
abhors antiseptic solutions, disinfectants,
clean hands, well-ventilated spaces.
My body is filthy and foul,
it is covered in graffiti, stencils, tags.
My body is like a covert corner in a park,
in its unlit corners you'll find empty beer cans,
chewing gum, cigarette butts, hidden spliffs.

My body is not a country.
My body looks like Alexandras Avenue,
cops, protesters, beggars wander up and down.
The first oversee it,
the second condemn it,
the third send it to hell.
My body is full of potholes;
if you fall in you might lose a tooth,
your bearings, or recall.
what your hands are for.

My body is a civil-war battlefield,
rebels lurk in its trenches,
ambush the government army.
They are righteous people, their flesh alert,
they are wrought of iron and lead,

their grief unbearable, their collapse silent.
Their agony makes my body sweat,
in the morning it embraces them,
but it rejects them in the evening.
I wonder if my communist guerrilla ancestors
are still hiding within it, if
they have survived the antibiotics, and if
every time my back aches they're sharpening their knives.

It's getting ever harder for me to survive my body.
My body takes part in proxy wars,
refuses to become a civilian population, to lower its voice,
refuses to give up the hammer for the sake of the sickle.
My body keeps forgetting my name, it calls me Fallujah,
Aleppo,
calls me Sanaa, even though it could never pronounce the
hamza.
My body cannot cross any border
without running the risk of being shot, humiliated, raped.
That's why it knows all about knives, drownings, pushback.

My body is not a country.
My body is an incantation of class hatred from Arabic gri-
moires,
at full moon it smokes incense, burns sandarac, benjamin,
and myrrh.
*All the bosses went out one day,
over the hills and far away,
may they fall in the river quack quack quack*

may they all drown and never come back.

My body is a battlefield of class warfare,
all zero-tolerance policies apply.

For ten years now the Greek authorities have declared
a state of emergency for my body,
have placed it under constant surveillance,
have conscripted it as cannon fodder.

The Greek state has erased my body from its history books.

My body is not a country.

I am giving the Greek state three days to withdraw
its soldiers, its cops, its doctors;
to demolish the inland revenue services, the schools, and the
hospitals it built inside it.

Otherwise,

huge waves will sweep its shores,
swarms of locusts will destroy its crop,
a blanket of darkness will cover its territories.

Because my body is not a country.

Because my body does not belong to Greece.

AMITAI BEN-ABBA

Prison Break

Before reading this aloud, take a deep breath. Let all of your air out at once making the sound "PF."

The little morning, the hill in the south.
Thorns and dry wheat. Arid, dying fields.
Snakes. Fauna of the tamed/untamed border/nonborderland.
The sun, low, not yet scorching an early spring.
High, the still-blue sky.

Take a deep breath. Let all of your air out at once making the sound "PF." Take another deep breath. Let all your air out at once, making the sound "PF-PFF."

The little morning, the hill in the south.
It gazes on a fence, the hill. Tall metal stretching as far as the eye can . . . nevermind.
Barbed wire on the scrub land like a thicket of overgrown bushes.
A trench. A camouflage tarp flat—stretched.
Behind the hill, in the distance, the squat houses of a kibbutz close ranks.

Make the sound "PF." Then, "PF-PFF."

What else, on the hill in the south, in the little morning?
A soldier under the tarp stretched—flat with that camou-hat drooping over their head like a sexy veil.
Another soldier, a row of them long, awkward turtles.
Through the crosshairs, a procession or a carnival or both;

balloons, falafel stands, a thousand, ten thousand flags.
And up the field, a figure walking towards the fence.

Take a deep breath. Let the air out with short, neurotic exhalations through your nose.

He is wearing a dirty white tank top and dark pants. He's walking quickly. Straight-backed. Towards the fence.

"He has wire-cutters," someone says. He carries them in one hand. He furrows his brows.

He is handsome. His chin is strong; cheekbones high. He is thin and lean.

He is between the crosshairs. He knows. He is ready.

He is barefoot.

Now, simulate an airplane taking off by making the sound "SSSHHHWWOOOSSHHHHH."

You are at the airport. You are standing in a line folding in on itself like your intestines.

"I watched that film about the Holocaust. It was awful!"

"I finished my tour in '92. Haven't seen much action."

"No, listen to me, Chelsey, no, listen, no!"

If stretched—flat on the ground, this line would be longer than the entire Gaza Strip.

To read the next part aloud, get born in Queens and never in your life go as far as the Central Park Zoo. Twenty-five miles long and four-to-seven miles wide, this is the extent of your movement.

He is an idealized version of himself. He looks like a Pulitzer-winning photograph. He looks like still-life, still-history. *Eppur*

lui muove.

He has never left the Strip. But he is walking.

His forehead furrows.

He is in the crosshairs.

The soldier is sweating.

To read the next part of the poem aloud, visit a hospital.

Take twenty gallons of red paint with you. Imagine the hospital ten times smaller, a hundred times more crowded, and operating on two hours of electricity a day. Pour the paint along the corridors.

You receive a letter from your friend, the Canadian doctor:

For the first couple of days I was still in the shock of the violence of it. The protesters would go up to the fence and come back with bullet wounds. Drones would fly over us to drop screens of roiling teargas, and I would tear, suffocating, oozing more liquid than I thought I could contain, from eyes and mouth and nose all at once, the glands throbbing. But I quickly learned the patterns of it. How to evade the big hit of gas. How to anticipate the waves of injuries, the tides of blood. I got accustomed to the horror, and I could absorb the greatness. I felt it under my skin, a kind of euphoria when I would breathe and take in the world around me, that would sometimes erupt in climax. When a boy directed his kite right into the drone, and the string ensnared the propellers, and it came down, the buzzing metallic menace; the joy of it, the cheers. I was a part of it, we all were, making history by being bodies, here, together.

Take a deep breath. Let all of your air out at once making the sound "PF." Take another deep breath. Let all your air out at once, making the sound "PF-PFF."

The soldier shuts one eye. The sweat is oozing down his back.

"Shoot, Berlitz, goddamnit, shoot!"

"No, Chelsey, you're all out of screen time!"

"My brother was in eye-rack."

"Oh, I meant the Holocaust, not the movie! It was so bad!"

The ceramic vest is heavy on his torso his finger is shaking his commander is yelling he can't breathe.

Make the sounds "PF-PFF, TRRRRRR." Roll your "R" the Spanish way. If you can't roll your "R" the Spanish way, ask the cleaning lady to make the sound "TRRRRRR" for you. Kindly, pay her.

When the soldier will no longer be a soldier, he will travel to America. He will learn English, which he doesn't now know. He will fall for his English teacher. Her name will be Sally. He will write Sally a letter of unsayable things. He will write:

When reading this stanza/paragraph aloud or aquiet in your own head, do an Israeli accent. The "R" is pronounced close to the French way but more guttural. Barely any air is used, as if the speaker struggles to breathe.

When I was soldier, Yisrael was shoot demonstrators. More and more Arabs was come on fence. Commander say terrorism. Say shoot. We shoot. More and more. And still they come. I remember one man. He come barefoot, dirty clothes, very thin. But what? Carrying cutter. He go to fence. He look young and angry. Maybe terrorist. Maybe want cut fence and

kill my family. But he barefoot, thin, what he can do? But commander say shoot. Man walk, chin up, proud. I look at his leg. Try hit his leg. Miss. Hit his stomach. The bullet special. Hunting bullet. It hit target, then open inside. Man has small hole in front, big hole in back. Blood and organs fall from his back to ground. Medics come, waving hands. Commander say shoot again. I say no, is medic. Commander say shoot! I say no! Is medic! Medics put man on stretcher, pick up important organs from ground, put on stretcher, start walk back. Commander say Buzaglo, shoot! Buzaglo shoot medic in leg. Medic fall. Other medics help medic, he jump with one leg. Man with cutter stay on stretcher. Man die. Later I check news. News say three terrorists dead in riot, some injured. Then I look English news in Google. My English no good then, but I feel very strange, I put Google Translate. Google Translate say: 12-year-old, 16-year-old, 18-year-old killed, hundreds injured. I think: What? Man was 18-year-old? I was 19.

Find a copy of Berel Lang's biography of Primo Levi The Matter of a Life. Place it on a desk. If you don't have a desk, ask a person to bend over and place it on their back. Kindly, pay them. Lay one hand on the book and another on your heart.

There is the smell of burnt tires and a tangy whiff of teargas. Also, baked-in sweat.

There is a massive crowd that stops in front of an invisible line.

There is a boy in the crowd who's holding a phone. Smaller boys huddle around him. They are all looking at the phone.

A video is playing: young Palestinian men and women, faces

covered with kuffiyehs, dancing dabke during the protest, the sky behind them blackened by smoke.

There is the taste of tabboun bread and za'atar. There are seventy years of exile. There are memories of three recent massacres. Shellings, explosions, white phosphorus. Burns roiling, bubbling on a baby's skin. There are a thousand bullet wounds with bone infection. There are twenty thousand severed/blasted/incinerated legs. There is a horrible loneliness. There is constant dread. There is great despair.

And still there is a powerful desire to flow
like a powerful river
to flow, to flow

There are flags flying over the fence
There are martyrs who've had their prison breaks
Flying over the fence
There is the man who never left the Strip
Who has had his prison break
Flying over the fence

There are children with balloons in the colors of the flag.
They are dressed so colorfully that they look, between the cross-hairs, uniform in their multiform.
They are marching between two lines of fences
Between invisible lines
In designated death zones

In this perversion of topography
This nightmare dreamt—thought
This nightmare executed endocrinally on sea on land and in the
air I resume
You are the hormonal glands of an airplane crashing on every
former lover of yours between Brooklyn and the Bay and its
former shade
You died reborn flying over the fence

*To read this aloud, roll a literary magazine into a bullhorn.
Walk outside and make the sound “BOYCOTT.”*
The little morning, the hill in the south.
Yisraelians are sitting on folding chairs, observing the fireworks,
laughing.
An airplane lands, another rises.
The flags flow in people’s blood.
A soul is making its prison break.

Author's note: This poem was written after the Great March of Return in 2018, when Palestinians in Gaza marched towards the fence in their version of the Gandhian Salt March. The world watched Israel gun down thousands and kill dozens of unarmed protesters. OCHA declared Gaza “unlivable.” The siege continued.

CONCEIÇÃO LIMA

two poems

TRANSLATED BY SHOOK

These two poems, which I did not translate in time for them to appear in Conceição Lima's new selected poems in English, *No Gods Live Here* (Phoneme/Deep Vellum), are from her 2006 book *A Dolorosa Raiz do Micondó* (*The Painful Root of the Micondó*), and demonstrate both her lifelong commitment to intersectional liberation and her internationalism, in both their setting and in the first poem's use of English. In the second poem, I have translated the term *soba*, typically used to describe the leader at the level of the village and most commonly associated with communities in Angola, as "chief," and in most instances I have sought to retain the elevated diction of the original, which often endows Lima's poetry with a haunting, prophetic tone.

—Shook

Jenin

Os *bulldozers* partem sem fanfarras.
Arrastam na poeira as tiras das sandálias
e o pavor nas asas das galinhas.
No seu rasto agonizam as palavras
e o bíblico rosto das oliveiras.

O fémur que perfura os escombros
está morto, não tem nome.
É uma estaca de marfim
que brilha
amargamente na terra de Jenin.

Amanhece em Berlim, outro lugar.
Não na Libéria ou nos *fields* de Freetown.
Não no refúgio de Jenin ou em redor de mim.

Jenin

The *bulldozers* depart without fanfare.
They drag the straps of sandals through the dust
and fear through the wings of hens.
Words agonize in their wake
along with the biblical countenance of the olive trees.

The femur that pierces the rubble
is dead, nameless.
It's an ivory stake
shining
bitterly in the dirt in Jenin.

The sun rises in Berlin, elsewhere.
Not in Liberia or in the *fields* of Freetown.
Not in the camp in Jenin or around me.

Castigo

A morte devolveu-nos o desafio: abandonou-nos.

Com uma acutilância de pedras desenterramos
o corpo da renúncia — revelamos a última atrocidade.

Para inventar a salvação apagamos veredas,
um rasto de úlceras e ervas nos abomina.

Como deuses nojentos prosperam os sobas,
fisionomias da nossa culpa.

Punishment

Death gave us back the challenge: it abandoned us.

Sharp as stones we unearth

renunciation's body—we reveal the last atrocity.

To invent salvation we erase paths,

a trail of ulcers and herbs abhors us.

The chiefs prosper like disgusting gods,

physiognomies of our culpability.

PAULO DA COSTA DOMINGOS

from *In the Shade of the Vertical Farm*

TRANSLATED BY INTERIOR MINISTRY

the next day you're nothing
but a vague idea
on the vague empty
horizon

someone told them: go there
& destroy the homes,
the families – with phone calls; & we
have the great advantage of:
not believing: in homes or families,
only: in the telluric force,
Sun, & Moon... in the orbs; & in the vineyard
conquered from the volcano's crater

they brought their million petals
& now the border
is the Great Wall of Blood

stealth, in the opacity when the night
closes in & the black oyster shell

burrows into the ice, in the sands,
devoid of scent: a paleo-graphic
bomb

it is, above all, the name
that disappears
in the shrapnel

let us weep, in the rain,
on our knees

with the landscape scratched
on the carriage window
all the burned seeds
on the fulminating side
await the moment
of the final push:
we flee, we flee with
hot heads in fear
& the scribbled landscape
on the carriage window

& the eye probes, reconstructs, compares
shells, pebbles, little pieces of bones

barefoot I decipher triggers,
the fury of the storm in the snow,
the faint trail until where:
don't shoot, don't shoot

a fraction of a second's peace
between – zut! – two bursts
in the fabric of the text, where:
the yellow jockey races
on his ball
splattered with

the cracks in the centre of gravity
release a gentle chant:
they say: *war is the on-going*
of ideological slavery
by other means – me in my pyjamas,
going insane in the middle: of the street;
with you asking me for syntax
& hope

here is a dialect
that flees neo-imperialism
with a plastic bag

for the scarce belongings
& eyes closed
to the metonymy of life,
as if that were an act
of the game in damnation: an X-act
for lesser cruelties

azure field, what are you doing here?

meanwhile, the noise-engineers
with plenty of dynamite
split open the vulvas of mixing tables:
wounded, the wheat abandons us: mute,
departing towards the inside-out

full of grace..., one could hear in the tired
meows; if I'm not mistaken, this was once
my pain

when we mocked everything
without hurting ourselves, without falling
from the tree remembering wishes

dispatches flow like blood in a blow whose
crooked suture indicates, in embers,
the howl of steel;
the volunteers held them to their chests:
all: the volunteers...: in the open wound

come & see: the bomb's bed
(a shroud of excrement),
the burnt passport, the knot in haemo
dialysis, the moist ash of snow

no one was prepared for eviction,
hiding among the dead, hatred in the heart
for no one in particular, white,
genuinely similar & poor
in understanding or comprehension:
I hesitate, we hesitate, one hesitates
to hide under the light of death

in silence she holds
fallen torsos in her eyes, the librarian
of crumbs, with her broken perfume
bottle in her pocket

in the abode of fear

& the sight probes, reconstructs, compares
capsules, triggers, little pieces of

journey to archaic survival,
to the adventure of conquering a crust,
they no longer remember how the circumstance
tore dreams or divorce papers
in the haunting of the forbidden light

the errand boys of Contempt
put all their care into transporting
the fresh dung of Violence

the carbon dogs
have lost fur & skin,
but their black teeth
still grip the wing:
loose from the missile

RUI BAIÃO

oçço bucco

TRANSLATED BY INTERIOR MINISTRY

illegal purpose
pantomimes against commas
father turned mother
without ever naming the well-spoken
& well-done biosphere
underneath that precise warhead
a bear hugging itself
misfortune upon misfortune
above dream & nightmare
they called them a fig
for reasons beyond our control
behind the pillar there is
with each mataruan
movement
at the rate of a few meagre metres
a fiasco without realising it
becomes interestingly
settled even when occupied
with donkeys & codes
augmented on this side of the armpits
anomalous in dissuasion
peculiar in taste meddlesome
cell skilled in such indifference

mastery fetid serving no other purpose
maker of inclement weather
indeed controversies, if there were still any,
over a narrow warmonger
greater interests devoid of suspect
interest as is customary
the big bad wolf after all
dressed as a good gentleman
cephalic-chaotic
a king with foam in his mouth
fat serving as his apron
the next breathless
& betrayed death
that is to say
you're neither a man nor anything
anti-painting / suspended gaze
moss-limp
your breed nestled
in the calendar of calmness
diffuse intern
not content with the outcome
a third of the lecture rooted in the dollar sign
focus & stains: make a mistake
trapdoors are full of pitfalls
open idiots sobbing
blackened muzzle
decrepit pirate brandishing his sword
pianos in the mud
they don't wash with gargles

against promising fires
the street is the best option
we counteract with whatever
there is to counteract
shivers in various voices
edited paralysis
do not stun it excessively,
revitalize the uproar
the tough one to crack on the pavement
a damn situation
stuck to the neck
sucker boy / swamp squid
castrated lame
preferably stuck in the puddle
measured by scrap & eagerness
only you, my old donkey
while you peek, something specific
is wrong in your
fuck-it-all bone
to the height of the pigsty
nothing pollutes the panorama
no lousy smut or
vortex of fistula
a ditty on the tip of the finger
shocked in the snow at the wheel
para-olympic stuck to the pedals
so be it
dead geese
glued to the inertia of the handles

your immature skin
in the face of possible lines
hubris you shall not pass
until you leap from
the lost or found void
it would be better to be a satellite
if we communicated in astonishment
forgiving a rare,
rough beast-god in battered tulle
a dinner without artillery
without tenderness or penumbra
it depends on how you fall
life is what is
lost by a hundred / lost by a thousand
life is sometimes not even
curious that fall
sheltered from intrigues
what about these friends
unconcerned about what is already failing
sweaty scoundrels who skip
the necrosis of ethics
let them conform
to the shaking of the loafer
goodbye my dear
zeugma proof vests
regrets just for some
pages & pages
regurgitated
with no one cuming in the mirror

on the surface always glimpsing the procession
don't exaggerate that ridiculous fear
for it is the mind that pays
against the polishing the iron forehead
unfortunately the grackles in the grill
assigned to a barbecue
finally albatrosses seriously alone
in the warehouses of ideas
a real gale
bad luck already assigned
to the dressing rooms of pettiness
do not leave here without an answer
nor take what brought you here
don't be foolish
mark the level of the mask
by the oldest wrinkle
according to shame on the face
you should have studied swamps in the original
lesson of a forbidden father
con game
you know it well
with one foot here & the other there
speaking of that
believe it or not, in rude mountains
fictitious spiders are not a good thing
let's hope it only happens
to the best
carnival of impotence
succinct tents / cowardly successes

a man here sniffs through
the bold band of the fall
burdened with the minutiae of the world
hints on the tangent
extraordinary hands
someone's pockets entirely invaded
palliative night drizzle
harmful syzygy
saliva with blood
the sun as is known
blindness with sweetener
among lurking reeds
here we wait for the slow ones
while ignored elected
opaque use against transparency
a pair of kicks
one for all
all for never being too much
until they dare in front
of such a hebephrenic pose
sounds truly acclimatised
sign of fatigue it's clear
limited space
disdain for luxury that you may consider
a rare rose when breathing bigger
banal rock / enough uselessness
the hand that describes & spreads
everything clear like in a heavy bale
blink-poles / visions destroyers

stunted desert in the siege
of the great bait
foolish bonanza
another nest rotting on the wall
of the urgent one
full of seeds & nails
hungry heart
by the cliffs of sore losing
not tomorrow like the new end
so many others rescued for yes
spouses whitewashed
injuries filled with fear
at the disposal of exaggeration
the night far beyond the sea
between foolish borders
never shared before
ancient secrets
like words in a vault
children under the coercion of emptiness
tears you don't know
arm in arm with fists of camphor
in order to move everything else
poor mother for the howl that exalts
captive wounds / untimely leaves
also you in the shadow of some
dodgy press or accent
where civil thickness was lost
where coal was worth nothing
jack-truth let him choose

wooden spoon for wife-catharsis
dripping stelae together
clearly the very bones of the nose
impure blood in your veiled death
dislodged skies
in the flood that is coming
damned dog
knocked down a league from here
cuff gesture like relief in verses
irrigating palmistry errors
prime numbers
enlisted never registered
in what ambition designed
there are sands but they do not remain
beyond the moon among
the combustible poplars of faith
discordant deadweight
wobbling scale quite
cleanliness unacceptable
through these holes the mellow vertigo
tattered blanket of evidence
visible neighbours hands
calibrated by false folds
veins reignited
blind & deaf violence
now strangle the irrefutable
to the one who left here in a boat
to the ships of angular clarity
to the falling verse

putrid star to chaste dying
miasmas of the same
punctured childhood
seam louse
without adding or subtracting
a child from his mother
eel urine
verses at night
destinies are unleashed viruses
buried in spells
that teach us nothing
needles in blood concrete
alarms on the rhymes surface
flesh & beasts
so succulent they were
supported by the ferment of the larvae
dreaming with you
rich mornings cracking
fissures still & always
in that complacent impact
I repeat the air you breathe
flamboyantly dead
the green eye of disorder
turned south dirty
that doesn't fit in memory
immaculate retina by a kerala
teat dispute loose at the mouth of mistake
bats in hyper-sonic flight
like our plural semen yesterday

in other females gathering
bites & abysses
others masturbating
cities tied to breasts
rough arms / hollow masses
benign cataclysms
puerile fury largely unaware
slow birds to the unbeliever
from the taut wire
possible lenses
to such an ancient verb
capricious emblems
half a distance further
on what it means to be close
the rhythm until today
primordial head
a few metres to the ditch
less than was expected
to watch over paradise
retain it in dark arrogance
where the beats wouldn't tread on us
caravans through the twilight after all
ancestors like feudal formalism
because love owes nothing to literature
nor can it be transmitted without delay
the dust beyond the causes
houses erected from things
blood in gushes through the storerooms
there drawn to the inexpressive

what the gesture had doubted
semantic playfulness / encompassing silence
in ventral decubitus
the old masters of the situation
wretched assumption
to the sacristies of the factual
cautiously sneaky mornings
unsuspecting pilgrims
with a spirit of mission
naked susceptible to a certificate
retaliating against ghosts
phalanges in harsh lands
because it is necessary to favourably
validate one's own death
reach the voice of the false owner
vote together in the fold of fear
a simple slip
was the death of the autistic
in the well of this unusual death
a loud cry I would give you
zulu-dog
always on the lookout
barricades barricades / samsons aside
other postponed corners
futile clutter / portable beings
dehiscence therefore
poor little things

LESLIE KAPLAN

from *The Book of Skies*

TRANSLATED BY JULIE CARR AND JENNIFER PAP

(from Section I)

I go out very early, I go to the factory.
The path opens, under the trees. Round tunnel of leaves, far
above. I cross the town on a bike.

On the bridge a young guy picks up a cigarette butt, to smoke it.
I notice his insolent swagger, his jacket.

I get undressed when I arrive. We're almost naked, all of us.

There's the bearded girl. She's at a machine.
As soon as she can, she speaks.
Her father doesn't love her, that's what she says.
I listen to her story.

The girl's pain seems confused, it's full of regret.
I cry too.

When I leave, the night is flat. And always this swollen sky.
I bike home slowly, I pass the men, unnerved.

I move on to a city surrounded by hills. Beautiful sky, modern.
Refineries.

Near the refineries, the sky is violent.
There are no women, there are no streets.

A bad road, wide, and the brilliant sky.
I drive around with friends. Ignorance.

Here, the sky is curved, far away.
The city feels impenetrable, solid.

Simple time. I am outside.

The air is blue and quick, too calm, and I sleep badly, in rented
rooms.

It's an old French city, available.
Everywhere heavy clouds, stairways.

(from Section II)

I meet him just outside of Paris.

I know the scene. I'm waiting for the train, with him. It's hot.
There's a café in front of the station, we have a drink on the
terrace. The café tables are wrought iron, lightweight, painted
white.

Little decorated café.

Terrace and round chairs, and the rows of flowers. I drink.
Everything's white.

Sky without contours. A plane circles above.

Later we take the train. We get on without paying.

The tracks are laid out across the countryside.
Curving countryside, and the flat tracks, extrinsic.
We advance without moving.

Specks of yellow and green, leaves.
There is the heat.
The countryside is as if encircled. Contained.

He's sitting across from me. He wears a green jacket.
Army surplus. It's already a look.

In front of each station, the earth is red. Thin poles, some
clouds. The sky is too bright.

You go through a forest, its mist, the precise trunks of its trees.
The forest is a stain you move across. You go.

Hot leaves and grasses, and the jolts of the train. You witness the
disappearance of things, their closed-off colorless laughter.

You laugh too. It's brutal.

The light, the rails.

Odor of iron, broken odor.

Ancient hills, sand quarries. The air is drawn, stretched to the limit.

There is no particular thought, no possession.

On the ground, the pebbles, all the little pebbles, swollen. You resist, you look. You see them explode, one by one, on the sand.

(from Section IV)

I enter the room. The radio is on.

I see him. He's there, sitting, with his eyes closed, open.

The room is drowning.

The head appears alone. Interminable face.

Outside there are bricks, chimneys.

The air is wet and wooly.

The street comes in, in waves.

Everything he does, I know. I can know it.

I open the door, I enter. Muddy floor, sticky.
The house doesn't hold up well.

I look at the wall, the piled clothes.
So many folds.

I'm in the room, I turn a little, I walk. He raises his head.

I see the diffuse face with its awkward features, shadowed absent
face. He shows it, like a hole.

We don't eat. The room is a box.
He's always asking.

The rot, the growing hair, the air that flames up, I see it. I don't realize. It's in me, elsewhere.

He raises his head, he shouts. I am with him.

He howls, it's like a young corpse, he can't die.

YEDDA MORRISON

from *Ever After*

There will be a year and in that year there will be a month and in that month there will be a week and in that week there will be a day and in that day there will be an hour and in that hour there will be a minute and in that minute there will be a second and in that second there will be the sacred non-time of transfigured death.

—Clarice Lispector

01.00

I walk to the fire and blow
again with my mouth but the fire is going
And the little dog
her salmon tongue, warm
moon in paintings
hovers monochromatic is
swimming in salt caves, gone
the paintings, shabby, from the
walls on which they hung, paint
making legible the canvas
and through glass tracks and sonar
summer's frozen plums

00.59

nearer and nearer creeping
in the shattering snow plain
short and long eared rabbits are gone
art history in vertical columns
digits collapsing, integers, centuries of thinking
mediocrity and excellence
alcoves of dirty light stacked
books and tissue
sillage that maintains a wrist now undetectable
disappointment, plastic wrap, animal
minds turning from the object world
an empty cavity, talc and sequins

00.58

Teachable moments are gone, trust and its opposite
factory, board room, flood lights
docks and futility
peevish skin, pocked or otherwise
neon and the gaze
and various forms of the gaze of which there are so many
categories of gazing and consequences
facial recognition, symmetry as dominance
ticks and veins
forbearance, countenance, nomenclature
knee socks more
feminist than another

00.57

Poets and diplomats and boxers and laborers
labor is gone, intellectuals
false dichotomies, systems of commerce
inaugurations, hate crimes and commuted sentences
appeals, transgressions
magpie with its earrings and formica
uncertainty from cars and windows, uncertainties
spread eagle, fetid rains, zombie bacterial multitudes
meaningful forms, torque, projected growth
milestones and with it the house
limits, sensations of the face
so called shadow play

00.56

Therefore tone and misunderstandings are gone
the crack of vertebrae and doilies
methadone and integration
pigeons, glue guns well
intentioned posters blown along the street and streets drop
into wetlands and wetlands to salt flats
and conservation easements and their requisite birds
and tiny brains are gone and ones that are only slightly larger
so eaglets, the titmouse, polypropylene and sorghum
larvae and maxi pads with wings
hoping on one foot with an arm tucked under
“losing oneself”

00.55

Candlesticks, mud cloth and ceramic wind bells
glass coffee tables, crabs set in lucite, gold lame' lobster bibs
finer things are gone blue and
white porcelain across which figures habitually
cross a tiny bridge fading into a linear mist and certainly the mist
burns off and dissipates and porcelain against a lip, any lip at all
is gone all arguments of the body
collapsed veins and edema, asthma and ingrown hairs
the cough that brings up blood
amputations, consent and legacy
pharmaceutical trials, bile, extortion and gender
ectopic pregnancies of every sort

00.54

Having forgotten key dates or told a story poorly
suffering anxiety in the company of others, journaling about it
passing through the faux wood door frame into a rectangle of
tension ripples, alcatraz, aim
shock at the back of the throat, roots
spasms, canyons
birch and cottonwood
water dish with its pale pink rim
potter's wheels and flytraps, indigo
pockets, so utility and children
children are gone, so murderous
need, osmosis

00.53

And petty jealousy is gone, awkward embraces
with other bodies so shame is gone and its earliest
memory so childhood is gone
and with childhood a good deal else, the dark drawer
for instance, proximities, hiding and seek
“healthy touch” so every kind of touch
of which there are too many
ever too many
every shape and size of finger
trenches and gauges of which there are too many
and geology and with geology
standing or squatting, the effects of gravity

00.52

And losing, losing at anything is gone and losers
of which there are so many, tar pits
and particulars, and generalities, and tidiness
astrophysics, not understanding astrophysics
keeping quiet or drinking too much at parties
classrooms and cadence in voices and stomach
memory, a particular voice
transient lacing bones wearing
mom jeans again is gone
snags or loose buttons lost
ebay is gone
aggressive enthusiasms

00.51

Puppy sketch, prayer rugs and wilderness photography
every child bride and illusions of choice
hair pieces and saving face and the face itself, the face is gone
so too the rough graft on the heritage apple
the compendium of influence
inherited attitudes and living up to, and up too is gone
watching others die and gaining nothing
superstitions and silver linings
data management, fire insurance, peaceful resistance, subprime
mortgages, dental floss, the persistence of fungus
eyelid oil and torque
meaningful forms

CACONRAD

from *First Light*

when you
win the
lottery
every
dollar is
someone
else's dream
once
in a
mirage
listening
into the
open hole for
the fallen
if I see
him again
questions for the
crocodile inside
my old friend
perfume
of fiction
on his
breath
I'm glad I was
there to stop
myself from
gnawing
the burnt ends
of forgiveness

we forget the pledge
of allegiance on the
path to finding NO
a flower widening
a crack in the rock
when we excel as
father's least
favorite it's
time to put
a foot in
the poem
I tell you
there's
nothing like
waking in
the flutter
passing
hours of
barbed
wire across
America
the road
beneath
us the only
public space

go ahead
call me a
child for
asking
is there
no war
somewhere
instead of this
daily butterfly
fighting
suck of
fan blade
you should
break up is my only
relationship advice
on the
way to
slaughter
pigs on
truck pass
deer with
broken neck
where love
is merely an
afterthought
we must banish
the intrusions or
become them

KIMBERLY ALIDIO

from *Dread Poem*

A figure double-
steps in many
 gouaches + oils
 painted by Maia Cruz Palileo
 two violins two
flowers two flâneuses two
 become three a thousand
 arms a family of five
 waders treading teal
waters one the color of
 ash shadowed
 by hanging wild flowers
 a gloomy veil of
heady honey
 a wordless scene
 for words
 diwata lore alone
This field is where
 I am waking now
 Shirley writes
 an ekphrasis of an
opaque watery gouache
 the painter's
 hand making white

gauzy on brown
figures gazing
at their viewer
looking at
images of them
posing for cameras.

Crescent cradle sickle
comma province
shadowing the lake
waterfall gorge holy volcano
province of Maia's
mother + my father
two revolutionary novels
secret lanzones
peeled back for six fused
translucent lobes
evolved as such by
intervening fingers
of the Virgin or an angel
depending on the lore
quenching the christ-child
or pilgrim
popular tales are parties
where the divine divides
erstwhile smooth flesh
puckering under a hot touch.
Black + white snapshot

of five relatives at Pagsanjan Falls
is novel under
painter's collage + brush
sampaguita
framing motifs
blossom-strewn lake
the tourist resort returns wild
enclave painted
for genuflection
garlands
arch of jungle branches
nothing extracted to sell
everyone protected eternal at rest.

Maia's artist book
slows for the extra
art made to make art
collages of U.S. colonial
photos + family snapshots
heavy with occasion
fusion by oratory
captive between words
or composed
by camera + gun
on the street of
an occupied town
tableaux of a white
woman standing over

a child self's
serialized blank stares.

A novel
to be written between
the painter's mirror
prisms

a spray of orange
dots across a familiar
face, rendered again
by fevered

archiving + adaptation
across visual media
an analog biometric
sensibility

for ruin, a face
among others
color shape line pattern
recognition

palm array repeated
shadow.

This data system was me
my relative
my estranged self
says the speaker or the poem
speaking a color photo
of me in hot springs
on the slope of Mt. Makiling

teenaged face among five
 improvising mouths
 monsterring raucous girl law
 gang-hazing
my gigantic diasporic body
 which I plunged giddily
 into crisis
 strange words turning
me strange + stranger
 girls into my lolas
 crashers + plus
 randos on the scene
a gap laughing within
 text's repertoire
 A photogram is an index
 of shadowy moves
on light-sensitive paper
 More surface area
 + *space*, Stosh texts me
 just as three different
ways to eclipse a face
 come to mind: handheld
 mirror, reflective mummy
 tape, an artist's finger
over colonial photography
 after the fact
 disarray the face
 from indexing capture
I can say there's a book

I don't know how to blurb
a poem can be far afield
reset to zero
avant la lettre
if only trailing behind
trying to take care
with naming's tells
a form void of form
a footprint prized
over the foot it indexes
walking on horrific
ground + figurative idyll.

Half-asleep on the couch
she entered a noisy party
my loud-talking at
Drag Race Down Under on TV
a fictive scene only
for the coincidence of dreams
an atmospheric body
zones erogenous + contact
The shape of my hair
Gina says, *strangely*
animal + vaginal
a vitality signals to the selfie
but also mom's
paranoid scissors
a transportive object

isn't an anti-logic
 private reveries not
 always territorial.
 An open field strewn
with quivering lanzones
 a dugout canoe
 boatmen half-dragged upstream
 in and out of the banca
calves flexed
 swinging a nuclear family
 above the rapids
 then a delicate reset
nested
 bag basket rolled
 bark net
 home medicine bundle
shrine museum
 a list from LeGuin
 Hair pick in the back pocket
 of my cousin's bell bottoms
dancing to *Bad Girls*
 on yellow shag
 The Container Store—
 title of my future
chapbook
 a holy place
 I can get to
 where I might home
a *narrative of loss*

thin or heavy air
a medium for vibration
without the need to take
a direct object.

The difference between
reconfigure + *transfigure*
is configuring the pleasure
of your company
loving its shape + form
the poem's here + now
Let's not get farther
afield of dread
if you line up all laments
to form an arc
the line indexes
a spear
an infrastructure
a way to declare
Here's the point we begin
+ *you end*
so space's no longer
here, taking
a direct object
gel of selfhood
supplanting ambient
forms, the poem's
a bildungsroman

on colonial time

Bring back my losers!

my *demoralized duplicates*

delirious with *puzzlement*

what Hawking calls

a brief history of time

You will never see the cup gather

itself back together

But you can hurt + be hurtful

anterior to life or sacrificial

once you touch history

pressure your words

to deflect from the day's textures

overuse incantation

a *detached mother*

or abstract ancestor, spaces

unaware of their fictions

pull from writing a self

you think you need to be

just to pull out others'

recognition

a self flushed with

luminosity.

Not unlike the light

suffusing a Manila photo studio

in the 1870s caught

in long hair

fanned over billowy
sleeves + embroidered pañuelos
waves of fringe, decorative
edge, pattern over pattern
mammalian mama
photochemical mineralia
Stephanie makes
shield + *marker of defiance*
taking the archival original
from holy artifact
to grainy xerox
recaptured obscured by her hand
as subjects obscure
their faces with mirrors
these protective measures
alchemical measures
rehome the fetish
into art.

In person a lightbox
turns a mirrored sun into
supernova, halo collapsed
the flared punctum speaks of
light's field. I am shadow
in a gallery room lit
at my left by Lani's
neon quotation of Little Flower
quoting John of the Cross
I look into suns
smaller than the cold cathode

moon in sans serif
its sentence not my friend
my Mother, the Church
hidden in secular pronoun
smallest | least greater | more value
all of her | to her | all other
a cold expression
lit novel | pop psychology soul | self
my gaze glowed five times
sucked by gaseous tattoo
Gia's houseplant | shadow
of Jesus Charles Bronson
a shroud burned by dusk
oh boy she writes
my own personal annunciation.

I am in a vitrine
behind a map fringed into palms
dizzied by symbols burnt
into a vest, eddying
sentences of vernacular
Latin. Nauseated hexing
+ hexed in geometrical type
I dread. I looked up that lore
from our ancestral province
in a book. It's easy
to say immigrants
are nostalgic but nostalgia's in

all tales of
how to be a thing
with a past
declarative statements
that I am you
are we are they
are that. There are
entire factories
outsourcing other factories.
Maybe I never cared for
what you said but obsessed
over your vowels
that change pitch
what creeps me out
is that condensed feeling
indexed by conjure
sans absolutism
or relaxation
so clenched
it immerses
in claustrophobia
Not once did he own a pair
of jeans that's how formal
my dad was, I may from this day
speak only in polyhedral grief

This excerpt from a long poem relates my encounters, through artists books and the Silverlens' Shrines show of summer 2023, with artifacts and processes of certain Filipino and Filipinx artists: Maia Cruz Palileo, Gina Osterloh, Pokling Anading, Lani Maestro, Ryan Villamael, Norbeto Roldan, and Stephanie Syjuco. Through encounters with the mystical, hauntological invocations in these artists' works, the poem contemplates dread, both as a concept defined by Søren Kierkegaard and as a poetics theorized by Benjamin Krusling. This poem may never be quite finished.

ZÊDAN XELEF

Of Body, Distance, and Metaphor

"We carry the river, its body of water, in our body."

Natalie Diaz

I was conceived in the land between two rivers, Navava
My grandmother named her sister, Navava
And named my niece Xunav, *dew*
Xun, *blood*
Av, *water*
Then she died of thirst
On a dry mountain with a dewy memory in Navava
I was too dry to weep then,
And now these words dry my body up.

The Tigris and Euphrates are still running in abundance in
the Book of Genesis
Still running in abundance
In our songs and prayers, vehicles of despair
Drying up before our eyes.

My grandmother visits me in my sleep,
How is life in Amreeka, my little daughter? she asks.
It's wonderful, I say, you know; Mountain Dew is bottled up.
As I piss in the morning, I open a new tab on Safari:
Daughter, in America the river isn't wet.

Young girls learn to fill their jugs on the internet.
A Pashto mother tells her daughter in a landay.

In Kurmanji, we say my womb tongue
Instead of my mother tongue.

In my womb tongue,
Pêxem, a message, breaks into *grief- on- feet*
Pêxember, a messenger, *grief- on- feet- forward*
To say wind, just set air free from your insides—ba
Ba, the autobiography of wind
Ba—your mouth, a yawing word pit
A song slithers away from
Songs, our coded grief—on feet, of wind
O xerîbo, bayê xerbî xema tînê
O stranger, running east, western winds carry
Bitter memories from our pastlands
The song slithers.

It is low tide this morning,
High tide this afternoon, the tidelog shows.
On the ferry to San Francisco,
I open Lunario sentimental, Lugones writes:
Every word is a dead metaphor.
In my womb tongue, laş, body, breaks down into in-
motion—
River, wind, word.

A Song to a Turtle Shell in Turtle Island

for Archie Lyle Tomales

we
sowed
the remaining
seeds of survival
0 & 0
worshiped the devil
that
others told us we worshiped, when our habitat was stormed by others
in their blue uniforms. assailed, we took sanctuary in a deep Marmara. in our
homeland, our very immediate pastland of no-return, our becoming-a-song homeland.
we took sanctuary in the Marmara—but we weren't amphibious
enough—disoriented fairy wrasses that muffled their kaleidoscopic
prayers & got stranded. we had no fairy tales about our brief marine
lives, nor did we have any songs of effervescence to bequeath. trapped in
between two fatal blues, we surrendered to the most dormant, most abstract.
before seas what color was the sky? before the sky what color were the seas?
surviving pages tell us that Holagu dumped all the books of the House of
Wisdom in the Tigris turning it into an inky river of running words that watered
the mesopotamian marshes where reed flutes sheltered ever-howling blues
that smuggled sorrows in our pulmonary memory on the back of mythical
winds to our collateral times, that spoilers tore their covers apart to make
sandals out of their leather, walking, shod in the corpses of imagination.
today, mom slapped me on the face with her rough & cracked
dominant hand as heavy & light as *la mano de dios*
when i arrived
home in a blue
Maradona
jersey
.

ABD AL-KARIM AL-AHMAD

two poems

TRANSLATED BY CATHERINE COBHAM

Postponed interview

We are trying to know more about you
We disagree over whether to call you
A communist or a Marxist
We are tracking your sperm-filled pen
While your penis appears on the screens penetrating
Sensitive labyrinths
We are trying to know more about you
In this time that advances here and stops in those orphan forests
We interrogate
Paths that tell the truth
And birds that flock over Warsaw on Christmas night
And trees demonstrating in Stockholm
Demanding the Nobel Prize

Calm and peace and sacrifices
We are trying to know more about you
We are tracking
Your feet that are anchored in the other world
Where the comrades dig
A tunnel in the forehead of the sun
With that chisel that barks like a stray dog in the void

A Heart Woven from Bubbles of Blood

We bless
This heartbeat that flutters at the memory of your first love
We bless
The heart woven from bubbles of blood
Blood that is renewed every now and then
How many scars did your ancestors leave you
And how can you converse so fluently with bullets
How harmful is your ability to forgive
And how destructive that tenderness you refuse to give up
It hurts me that you rely on blood
And hurts me more
That you are the only constant in the midst of all the random
changes
While the world is like a rock which has turned to face you
I give you this profound insight, prophet of nature,
There are stars parading in your empty space for a reason

And messages, wind and kisses touching your tired cheek
Kisses from an unknown mouth
And a wind offering you marijuana in moments of excitement
And messages that consider you the ideal
Always remember
I will continue to bind you up with ink-stained pages
And shock you with songs and anthems
In thousand megawatt loads
And I'll be a ring on the fingers of your branches as they play the
final melody

ALICIA MÉNDEZ MEDINA

from *Uprooted Histories*

TRANSLATED BY KATERINA GONZÁLEZ SELIGMANN

Viper's Nest

Giving off conquistadora aura
and colonizadora attitude
Through the cobblestone pathways of a city that adores them
she walks.

Bastion of lost times
Coloniality's aura
Bodies flowing in opposing directions

As the mistress says
Yes m'lady
Don't talk so loud cuz madam ting won't like it.

Behind her back: damn bitch
Colonizer
Witch be damned

Unfolded, trying to survive
Breaking necks
Cutting out tongues

Voice removal
For the people
For the children
For the payday, that makes simulators of us.

The Paths Await Me

A rage that passes over me
It tries me, transcends every inch of my body
Of my soul.
Spirits from the past
Maroon souls flying over my space, my vital energy, the
path, ancient routine
Life ritual.

Mountain spirits ambulate backwards along the paths, along the
streets of a city alight, along the asphalt I go.
I survive
Uncertainty
Time extinguishing
Last breath...Maroon souls flying over my space and
the path is ready.

The Mixture

More than a mixture we become oblivion.

We went suppressing bit by bit, burying, avoiding,
relegating that place where we were the tribe out of our
memory, but, in seeing, in speaking, an odor remained, a halo
that fluttered upon the heads of those of us who did not
inhabit that time.

There are those of us who, like migrating birds, had to find a place
to be able to be, fly to other spaces with other smells,
colors, a way of seeing from which to measure
our existence so that we could go on.

On the way out we find: motorized people, the great pleasure
of the masses; those who come and go.

Never staying

The pride of blackness, the migration of the northerners, that
culminated in the stigmatization of everything, the club
and its pints of Clairin, the leafy greens and the rice fields,
with love for Uncle Ho

The house from the beginning of the century: reminiscence
of that other past English style.

The political ideas dividing us and that
great avenue condemning us to be marginalized until
kingdom come.

Complicated Times

While taking the public car downtown from the south, a heated discussion between the driver and a migrant passenger took me back to those years; to childhood, to images of people from one country and the other that made our lives a mixture.

A life surrounded by so many lives!

They were complicated times, times of migrations, of protests, of university workers who voiced student struggles at the Autónoma university; that was an immediate reference: we lived on its lands, in its classrooms we played and every now and then: the milk, the cheese, the yoghurt stolen.

The barrio hiding spot for fugitives; revolutionaries, and migrants, unexplored place, of late the barrio for those who wish to flee from the world.

There was opulence on one side, the most rampant lack came fleeing from the forced evictions, from the devil's emissary: with a party on the body and many children. Crowded into cartridges you could only hear children scream during the day and the ruckus at night, the tafia, the maisisi, the bachata and the neighborhood association meetings in the mornings.

“Damn noise, coño. Those people do like bachata, carajo.”

While taking the public car downtown from the south, a discussion made me recall the first time we saw an immigration truck and our scandalous friends fleeing in terror. A madam said, “leave it be, folks” and I returned from the past right at the corner of France.

TERESA CABRERA ESPINOZA

from *The Ages*

TRANSLATED BY HONORA SPICER

Eating an illness that grinds between the teeth

out of this dream I couldn't get a single thread of language
just a mess of speech organs
eating an illness that grinds between the teeth
and lodges in a row or in a muscle
before the tremble or eruption
a mass sheaves off the continent and leaves the rest
the rest is poetry

in the dream there is a doctor
he believes that his books will speak through my body
just like the official the seismograph ended up ruined
the population is me
I marked on the map what remained of the continent
after the sloughing offs
what remains is poetry

on the form I had to tick
which parts of my body do not belong to the State
what remains sloughs off

the word a contagious disease
a deterioration I cannot reverse

only truth rots from inside out
its rind has a healthy sparkle to the end
in the mandate to eat only beautiful fruits and vegetables
is the poison of your time
the depletion is poetry

a fruit asks what class of monster is beauty

Comer una enfermedad que choca entre los dientes

de este sueño no pude obtener ni un hilo de idioma
solo un desorden de los órganos del habla
comer una enfermedad que choca entre los dientes
y se aloja en un renglón o en un músculo
antes del temblor o la erupción
una masa se desprende del continente y deja un resto
el resto es poesía

en el sueño hay un médico
cree que sus libros hablarán a través de mi cuerpo
lo mismo el funcionario el sismógrafo terminó arruinado
la población soy yo
señalé en el mapa lo que quedó del continente
tras los desprendimientos
lo que resta es poesía

en el formulario debí marcar
qué partes de mi cuerpo no pertenecen al Estado
lo que queda se desprende
la palabra una enfermedad contagiosa
un deterioro que no puedo revertir

solo la verdad se pudre de adentro hacia afuera
su cáscara brilla sana hasta el final
en el mandato de consumir solo verduras y frutas bellas
está el veneno de tu tiempo
la merma es poesía

una fruta pregunta qué clase de monstruo es la belleza

Imagination mercilessly demands its feed

blood jostles without rest
oxygen sugars imagination mercilessly demands its feed
communication is subterranean information is transferred by
tunnels
moles reign in occulted networks suspect the conspiracy
blindness is their machine
they align substances master chemistry and principles of electrical
impulse
move codes rancorously
launch images ceaselessly unluckily without fix toward anything

if one of the moles trips the machine jams
one of the images remains fixed
then everything follows one moment indistinguishable from the
next
water is always the same

in the morning in the shower or on the brink of the workday
a subversive mole sends a message to the surface
lasting image to flash under eyelids
just an instant
you must speak the image
your word will save the image
your word will return to the mole as an ordered series of noises
insomniac the mole will recognize the noises and will take them as
a sign

with the sparkling sign on its head
it digs new tunnels sets effective traps
in those tunnels too
this is the pact

La imaginación exige inclemente su alimento

la sangre se agolpa no tendrá descanso
el oxígeno los azúcares la imaginación exige inclemente su alimento
la comunicación es subterránea la información se traslada por
 túneles
los topos reinan en redes ocultas sospechan el complot
la ceguera es su máquina
alinean las sustancias dominan la química y los principios del
 impulso eléctrico
mueven los códigos con rencor
lanzan imágenes sin cesar sin fortuna sin arreglo a nada

si uno de los topos tropieza el mecanismo se traba
una de las imágenes queda fija
luego todo sigue un momento no se distingue del otro
el agua es siempre la misma

por la mañana en la ducha o al borde de la jornada de trabajo
un topo subversivo envía a superficie el mensaje
la imagen duradera para que destelle bajo los párpados
solo un instante
debes hablar la imagen
tu palabra salvará la imagen
tu palabra volverá al topo como una serie ordenada de ruidos
insomne el topo reconocerá los ruidos y los tomará como señal

con la señal brillante en su cabeza
abre nuevos túneles siembra eficaces trampas
también en esos túneles
este es el pacto

HENDRI YULIUS WIJAYA

TRANSLATED BY EDWARD GUNAWAN

Translator's Note

These poems were written in Bahasa Indonesia mixed with a spattering of English words and expressions. They were published in the full-length collection *Stonewall Tak Mampir di Atlantis* (*There's No Stonewall in Atlantis*) by Indonesian publisher Buku Mojok Grup in 2020. In keeping with the author's intentions of highlighting the plurality of languages in the original text, the translator has approached the translation in the following ways:

- *Italicized* text denotes English words that appear in original poems.
- Commonwealth English words and expressions in original poems have been translated into American contexts and spellings.

Ouija

burned alive

Mira now a wandering spirit
roaming through HRC Report.pdf
conjured ritualistically in an air-conditioned room
for the loyal spectators of international conference attendees
speaking in codes and formulas of toggle P-value & $y=a+bx$ &
SOGIESC
her visitation no longer expected
lost as Mira was in her journey to the afterlife
after a brief transit on the powerpoint slide screen
in the back of the auditorium
an *office boy* and a security guard
chew on cuds of *frequent flier cards*
Mira pays her own way home

In April 2020, accused of stealing, Mira, a transgender woman, was assaulted and burned alive by a group of men in Cilincing, North Jakarta.

Jelangkung

Mira dibakar hidup-hidup
jadi arwah penasaran
gentayangan dalam laporan HAM.pdf
pada sebuah ritual jelangkung dalam ruang ber-AC
peserta konferensi internasional duduk serupa penonton
setia uka-uka berbagi wangsit dalam
kode-kode dan angka-angka seumpama togel P-value &
 $y=a+bx$ & SOGIESC tak lagi anteng
menanti Mira yang sempat tersesat mencari akhirat untuk
transit sebentar di layar slide
powerpoint
di belakang auditorium
office boy dan sekuriti
khususnya memamah biak *kartu-kartu frequent flyer*
Mira pulang pakai ongkos sendiri

-

Pada bulan April 2020, setelah dituduh mencuri, Mira, seorang transgender perempuan, dianiaya dan dibakar hidup-hidup oleh sekelompok lelaki di Cilincing, Jakarta Utara.

Money Boy

Much too great is the distance
between a male therapist and the CEO of Apple
Twitter is now LinkedIn:

Professional male masseur. Privacy & Safe.

Well-Education. Fast Response WA: 1800-XX.

no matter how quick of a reply
they will always ask for a break
even though the signature *heavenly touch* is already discounted
20%

exclusively for *early bird*

rescheduling allowed 5 times maximum

diligently reading *Kompas*, *Tirto*, *Detik.com*, and occasionally
The Economist. At the minimum, an intellectual

conversation during our time together

post-coital pillow talk in lecture-form

on the falling global prices of crude oil

not every gay man can be Tim Cook

but we are all *money boys*

for there's always a cost to living.

Money Boy

ada jarak yang terlampau sukar untuk ditempuh

antara male therapist dan CEO Apple

Twitter sudah berubah fungsi jadi LinkedIn:

Professional male masseur. Privacy & Aman.

Well-Education. Fast Respons WA: 081XX.

secepat-cepat respons

selalu saja mereka minta diskon

padahal untuk *heavenly touch* servis andalan sudah promo

20%

khusus *early bird*

reschedule diperbolehkan maksimal 5x

rajin menekuni *Kompas*, *Tirto*, *Detik.com*, dan sesekali

The Economist. biar setidaknya tergendar

intelek sepanjang servis.

post-coital pillow talk sembari memberi kuliah

tentang menurunnya harga minyak dunia

tak setiap homo bisa jadi Tim Cook

namun, semua orang adalah *money boy*

karena hidup butuh duit

American Queer Theory

Because, just like a fate line across one's palm, so it is written: a prophet will always be rejected outright by his people. Often he had to crucify himself.

Long ago, an English-language BBC radio program informed that your pair of feet doesn't always have to match the home address on your ID. At the bottom of those shoes, lies hidden is a piece

of the shattered fiber-glass globe from biology lab. At twenty-two, on the day of the international scholarship's announcement, you came out to your parents, who were too cheerful to be angry. Foucault parts the sea to a promised land. A liberation. But the tongue doesn't always yield a smooth

journey. Unsure whether *knowledge* should be plural or singular. Those vampire-skinned's applauded. When he'd completed his paper written in tongues of the holy spirits. Hegel, de Beauvoir, Butler, and Althusser. Even though he is not yet a Ph.D., let alone a postdoc

in Europe. The more theories steeped in *cup noodles*, the whiter his skin becomes. At times he feels like going home, despite the color of his passport being different now. Like when he was at a gay club and suddenly he felt like he wasn't gay anymore. Like when he was with a group of Indonesian students and suddenly

he felt like he wasn't Indonesian either. That night he finally did fulfill his wish to crucify himself.

At a *BDSM* party. To be born again.

American Queer Theory

sebab seperti garis takdir, ada tertulis: seorang nabi selalu ditolak mentah-mentah di kampung halamannya sendiri. Sering pula ia harus menyalibkan dirinya sendiri.

jauh-jauh hari, program bahasa Inggris radio BBC mengabarkan sepasang kakimu bahwa alamat rumah tak harus selalu sepadan dengan KTP. Di ujung mulut sepatu, kamu menyembunyikan serpihan fiber bola dunia yang

terpelanting pecah di laboratorium biologi. Saat dua puluh dua, pada hari pengumuman beasiswa negeri empat musim, kau coming out pada ibu-bapakmu yang kepalang riang untuk murka. Foucault membelah laut untuk sebuah tanah perjanjian. Sebuah pembebasan. Lidah tak melulu patuh pada pavement

yang klimis. Ia tak tahu apakah *knowledge* seharusnya plural atau singular. Orang-orang berkulit vampir bertepuk tangan. Ketika ia menuntaskan makalah berbahasa roh-roh kudus. Hegel, de Beauvoir, Butler, dan Althusser. Padahal ia belum Ph.D., apalagi post-doc di

Eropa. Makin banyak teori yang diseduh dalam *cup noodles*, makin putih pula kulitnya. Kadang ia ingin pulang, meski sampul paspornya sudah ganti warna. Seperti saat ia berada di kelab malam gay dan mendadak merasa bukan gay lagi. Seperti saat ia berada di kelompok mahasiswa Indonesia dan mendadak merasa

bukan Indonesia lagi. Malam itu genaplah tekadnya untuk menyalibkan dirinya sendiri:

Di sebuah *BDSM* party. Supaya terlahir baru.

TÔZABURÔ ONO

十三郎 小野

five poems from *Osaka* (1939)

TRANSLATED BY JOE RUPPRECHT

White Flame

Strong winds blow,
and thin ice
floats in the muddy river.

Heavenly spring of my thirteenth year breathes fire
and glimmers on the brim of high cirrus clouds.

Heads of the dry tangled reeds moving together
resound thunderously in a view of the field.

Cement

iron and steel

electricity

and magnesium

arrayed as desolation on the horizon
under the azure sky

白い炎

風は強く

どぶ はくへう

泥濘川に薄氷浮き

十三年春の天球は 火を噴いて

高い巻雲のへりに光つてゐる。
シーラス

枯れみだれた葦の穂波

ごうごうと鳴りひびく一眸の原。

セメント

鉄鋼

電気

マグネシウムら

寂寞として地平にゐならび

蒼天下

終日人影なし。
じんえい

The Reeds

Sound of waves
from far away.

The power lines slacken to an arc
above a field of cattails with tips beginning to wither.

An oil tank
on the horizon.

Like krill in the sea, a damselfly
is flung through the cold transparent light of late autumn.

In a field of steel and electricity
ammonium sulfate and soda ash

a patch of wild chrysanthemums crinkles up
to extinction.

葦の地方

遠方に

波の音がする。

未枯れはじめた大葦原の上に

高圧線の弧が大きくなるのである。

地平には

重油タンク。

寒い透きとほる晩秋の陽の中を

ユーファウシヤのやうなとうすみ蜻蛉が風に流され

硫安や 曹達や

電気や 鋼鉄の原で

ノヂギクの一むらがちぢれあがり

絶滅する。

Sumiyoshi River

Sun-shrouded wind gusts in.

A pillar of smoke flutters out
from a brand-new spring's shaded black horizon.

In twilight's silent approach,
the current laps at the edge of the overflowing canal.

A scattered mound of coke fuel¹
clutters the reedy delta where
filthy children run and play.

I almost can't believe how easily the hours pass
without getting a word through to one another.

In the mountains, some things still catch fire.

¹ Coke fuel – 骸炭 (*gai-tan*) a coal-based fuel made by heating coal or oil in the absence of air.
Used in iron-ore smelting, as well as stoves and forges.

住吉川

陽が翳り

風が出てきた。

ものみな黒く隅くまどられた早春の地平に

煙が一すぢ横になびいてゐる。

しんとして迫る夕暮の気配の中に

ひたひたとゆたかにあげ潮は運河の岸に満ち溢れてゐる。

三角洲でるたの葦原にぶちあけられた骸炭の山の上に

汚い子供たちがちらばつてゐた。

信じることができないほど永い永い時間を

お互いに一言も口を利かないで。

山の中にまだ火になるやつがある。

Mound of Coke Fuel

Reeds like rusted-together needles
somehow or other keep the people away.

Two white gowns are blowing in the breeze.
Occasionally, I look up, awaiting this.

I didn't know where to wander.
I ended up somewhere great.

Before the muddy river, a cold, birch-colored
evening glow projected.

All the while I didn't move.

骸炭山

錆びついた針のやうな葦だ。

たんとなく人をよせつけない。

白衣が二つ風に吹かれてゐる。

ときどき顔をあげてこちらをうかがつてゐる。

どこをどう廻つてゆけばいいのかわからなくなつた。

えらい場所ところへ来てしまつた。

前の泥溝どろ川に樺色の寒さうな夕焼けが映つてゐる。

そのまゝ動かない。

Early Spring

The wind picks up. So cold
it's hard to breathe.

There are no birds at all.
Plovers and sandpipers congregate here, but not yet.

How spacious
and withering. I walked this last year, too.

Two reeds, how are they different?
They must be different. But why?

That steel frame opposite us. Where?
A warship at Fujinagata.²

It's clearing up now.
A storm is coming. Let's get out of here.

² *Fujinagata* - 藤永田造船 (fujinagata zōsen) refers to the Fujinagata Shipyards in Osaka, which manufactured warships and railroad cars for Japan.

早春

ひどい風だな。呼吸いきがつまりさうだ。
あんなに凍つてるよ。

鳥なんか一羽もゐないじゃないか。

でもイソシギや千鳥が沢山渡つてくると云ふぜ。まだ早いんだ。

広いなあ。

枯れてるね。去年もいま頃歩いたんだ。

葦よしと蘆あしはどうちがふの？

ちがふんだらうね。何故？

向ふのあの鉄骨。どこだ。

藤永田造船だ。駆逐艦だな。

澄んでるね。

荒れてるよ。行つてみよう。

Translator's Notes:

Tōzaburō Ono's book of poems, *Osaka* (1939), depicts the city as it mobilized for Japan's fascist occupation of East and Southeast Asia. Sparse and colloquial, these poems are a haunting critique of Japan's imperialist aggression as it manifested in the local ecology of Ono's hometown. Reading and translating them in 2024, as United States and Japanese forces conduct joint military training exercises in Kagoshima and Okinawa, can hopefully call us to means of resisting militarization and its unavoidable presence in our own communities.

The word, 葦 (*yo-shi*, alternatively, *a-shi*)—in English, “reed”—is crucial to the landscape Ono guides us through. Reeds, or *phragmites australis*, grow throughout Japan and the city of Osaka, which sits at the mouth of the Yodo River where it empties into Osaka Bay. Mostly, I maintained a faithfully reedy ecosystem, but in the poem, “The Reeds” (the Japanese title actually translates to “Region of Reeds”), I slipped in a reference to “cattails.” I grew up in upstate New York surrounded by reeds, which I mistakenly called cattails. *Typha*, or ガマ (*ga-ma*) in Japanese, do not appear in Ono's poem, but in my botanical confusion, they appear in my English rendering of it. I also happened to have just read Jon L. Pitt's translation of Hiromi Ito's *Tree Spirits Grass Spirits*, which offers infinite insights into the naming of plants and which I think inspired the choice.

Are reeds and cattails the same plant? No, unfortunately. Are two reeds, two individual stalks, separate entities? What if you refer to them using two different characters, each with the same meaning? These poems dwell within language's illusions, its inadequacy for cleanly differentiating phenomena in a world ruled by empire, military force, and capitalist production. Throughout his career, Ono rejected traditional Tanka lyricism instead writing critical and rational, Marxist depictions of an industrializing Japan. These poems and their jagged realism, replete with technical and industrial diction, are an early iteration of that project.

SERGIO RAIMONDI

from *Selected Poems*

TRANSLATED BY BEN BOLLIG AND MARK LEECH

ZAFRA

The theme to consider at the Camagüey conference
was the dialectic link between consciousness and work.
And therefore before his speech he mounted the harvester

and in a few days cut forty-five thousand *arrobas*.
This was a declaration, at least the factual base
that's able to support around forty-five thousand words.

The ministry saw in the *macheteros* the vanguard
for the oppressed of Asia, Africa and the Americas.
The *machetero* saw a cane, another, another.

How to get across that this was not just another field
but instead a potential reserve on which depended
the war against the most powerful force in history?

Up on top of the machine to look at how it's working.
Badly. Makes sense, as it's new. But we need to work out why.
There are too many blades! Fixed it. Now there is something else.

The difference in cutting for the company and cutting
for the revolution is, the revolution demands double:
it wants a muscle with capacity for abstraction.

No furrow this: it's a power plant, purification
and efficient boilers, it's cash and a Russian tractor,
diversification, the socialist world's imminence.

But in the cooperatives the numbers give no cheer.
And although a few would think about how to come up with
a domestic alternative for the broken coupling

that would not have been available for quite a long time
others didn't quite understand why there was so much work
to bring about the days in which you'd never work at all.

**Zafra (Spanish): harvest; the poem refers to a speech given by the Argentine writer and revolutionary Ernesto 'Che' Guevara (1928–1967) at Camagüey, Cuba, in 1960*

悬挂

Let's leave to one side the monumental nature of the work, part of the plan designed to transform using a third of the steel and half the concrete that is produced the length and breadth of the planet an ancient landscape through advanced infrastructure

concrete witness – chiefly in the literal sense – to GDP growth since the gradual peculiar incessant opening of the market economy and therefore too a demonstration of the scale omnipresent, proverbial of the Party's drive;

let's not think of the relation between the huge dimensions of the scheme and equally huge size of the reserve army of labour in constant movement from rural areas to urban zones and whose occupation guarantees low conflict;

let's not take into account the more specific question of the engineering challenge involved in building this interminable hanging bridge overpassing in suspension the Yangtze's flow that breaks the broad area into two broad halves

so as to bear the Beijing-Shanghai motorway on ultra-resistant cables of great thickness each really made from many thousands of cables

that stretch outward from two anchoring blocks buried
in the flood plains along each side of the river;

better we focus on the gang on the walkway
there at the highest point, all from one area
kilometres away via a contracting scheme
devised to privilege a common dialect
so as to understand instructions without confusion;

we will look also at those who have just finished
adjusting the cables suddenly not as tense
as their own nerves in a high-risk activity
overcoming height and history's vertigo;
perhaps they are the real work under construction.

*悬挂 (*xuán guà*, Mandarin): *suspension*.

Warisata

Nearly four thousand metres above sea level
up beside the snowy slopes of the mountains there
and the lake surface multiplied in reflections

we have no need to construct a new school building
before beginning the term. The school term instead
gets started with the construction of the building.

So the first lesson: the making of adobe.
How do we learn? Outside the classroom, or raising
better its walls using mud, straw, some moulds.

By what criteria do we frame the programme?
In line with the daily needs of communal life.
We hold the class in a workshop, the garden, on the plain!

And the timetables? There are none. If in the night
it snows we have to get up from the bulrush beds
and tend the onion and cauliflower seedlings.

Today, arithmetic but ... the quinoa's in bloom!
Come quickly, come, come. It's much better if we talk
of nature and agrarian skills. What do you know?

In history class we are trying to restart
the Inca aqueduct so as to irrigate
social potato, oca, bean and papalisa rows.

We produce both knowledge and hats at the same time
and tiwanancota rugs and skirts for selling
in the market, as there's no life without economy.

And to sustain the aim of producing teachers
rural and also bilingual: because each tongue
creates many different worlds within this one world.

But the National Council for Education saw
anarchy in the strange syllabus, in the plans
insolent communism, danger. They were right.

**Warisata: a town and a school in Bolivia, known for its indigenous centred education.*

अनयिमतिता

Even with the 3d-modelling supercomputer
that has been announced by the Ministry of Earth Sciences
the inconstant phenomenon of the summer monsoon

capable of bringing the longed-for rain or lethal drought
will be simpler to predict than the recondite habit
commonly found among the western or southern farmers

of drinking herbicide as if it were exquisite rum
faced with fields full of millet whose price has fallen.
Because it's not the seasonal changes of hot and cold

between the subcontinent and the ocean that affect
the spirit of one who suddenly stops to contemplate
the overly flexible branches of the mango tree

but the well-planned variability of the project
of transforming a historically rural culture
to a nation urban, technological, digital

based on the exact example of modification,
precise and swift, of a gene of the cotton family.
You'd imagine that the ones who choose self-immolation

think it's worth enduring the pain to offer a message
that so far doesn't seem to carry clear meaning
in the unforgettable image of flames on the run.

*अनयिमतता (*aniyamitata*, *Hindi*): *irregularity*.

RODRIGO TOSCANO

Ethno-Politico GPS

This Ibero-Zacateco
palette loader
and his equally post-tribalized
Ibero-Totonaca lady
in scrubs

are not strutting Azteca
“decolonizing the poem”
jigging ibero-phobic
at a scholarly conference
in Boston.

These two Ibero-Huastecos
in chef hats
aren't shaking down
self-effacing Anglocrats
after hours

recycling mex-revolutionary
canonic cartoons
Pinot Grigio in hand
subordination *danzas*
en route to London, Paris, Milan.

This post-tribalized Ibero-Paipai
Tlaxcalteco-allied
Aztec Imperium smashing
Huasteca Totonaca liberating
cabrón

from San Diego, Alta California
is rocking a constructivist
Ibero-Indigeno-Africano
conviction-baked mask
over a poet mask.

¡Que viva México!

¡Que viva El Virreinato de Nueva España!

¡Que viva La Intendencia de Nueva Orleans
bajo la Capitanía General de Cuba
conducido por el Virreinato de Nueva España!

Go Saints. Go Padres.

Caras y Mascaras

Whitman.
Cannonball.
Puebla.

Frigates.
Dickinson.
Shanghai.

Pound.
Ramparts.
Manila Bay.

Blackhawk.
Mac Low.
Hangar lock.

Seawolf sub.
Shange.
Dry dock.

Puma drone.
Alurista.
Landing block.

Ordnance blast.
Bay of Pigs.
Baraka.

Radar jam.
Forché.
Nicaragua.

Canonizations.
Fuel depot.
Reconnaissance.

Workshops.
Close reading.
Launching pad.

White House.
Striking range.
Renditions.

Laureate.
Pacific fleet.
Pastorals.

Affirmineity.
Askancineity.
Imperium.

What's his face.
What's her face.
What's their face.

stevie redwood

In the Fourth Month of Al-Aqsa Flood, Joy James Is on
Revolutionary Left Radio Talking about Proto-Fascist Moms

In so-called California, \$221 is the approximate cost
of one 33.8-oz bottle of designer hair conditioner at
Neiman Marcus.

Designer hair conditioner sells for \$221 at Neiman Marcus
presumptively because it's made with argan oil
& properly because rich people will pay Neiman Marcus
\$221 for designer hair conditioner
because it's \$221 designer hair conditioner
from Neiman Marcus.

If you know how to squeeze,
88 pounds of dried argan fruit
will produce roughly one liter of oil.

Argan trees are endangered & native to Morocco,
a fact exploited in its exoticizing branding
Moroccan oil.

Moroccan oil harvesting is an Amazigh practice
of coaxing oil from argan seeds passed down
through the digestive tracts of peckish arboreal goats,
or so the story goes.

Extracting argan oil by hand & stone & grit,
Amazigh women earn a monthly income
downwards of the price of one 33.8-oz bottle
of designer hair conditioner at Neiman Marcus.

When argan oil was “discovered” by the “West,”
it was decreasingly purchased from Amazigh laborers
& increasingly produced by mechanical extruders,
cheap & easy to control.

“Israel” discovers argan oil
might aid its exploitation
of the International Health Industrial Complex
& the natural wealth of Palestinian land
to seduce settlers ever farther
into the stolen an-Naqab Desert.

In the name of environmental friendliness,
“Israel” dabbles in plant eugenics,
breeds seeds to yield more oil per lb
so it can yield more £s for oil. A *super*
strain, it swears.

Near the nascent Naqab argan forests,
“Israel” plans out plots for projected Jewish
settlements: a farm for every family in the rocky desert
soil.

In promotional propaganda for an “Israeli” plant producer,
a bigwig settler-capitalist christens argan
the diamond of all oil
& claims the argan arbor, too,
has historic lineage Indigenous
to Palestine.

Families in “Israel” include mothers, grandmothers,
children, siblings, cousins, uncles, aunts,
grandfathers, & IDF soldier fathers
who conceived their children
posthumously.

Human sperm harvesting is a contemporary practice
of coaxing seed from human seminal glands,
passed down through the urethra by ejaculation,
or sometimes
surgically retrieved.

In “Israel,” there is a market for good soldiers’
testicular tissue, cryogenically frozen
after being liberated
from just-expired bodies,
still viable if warm.

The Knesset moves to codify the practice
of extracting sperm from recent fallen patriots,
bestowed upon their parents

for future sale to the single settler fittest
to bear & birth their seed.

If you know how to squeeze: a seed
can be bred to produce a genetically desirable
super strain of human baby.

A Bloomberg article titled *Postmortem Sperm Retrieval*
Is Turning Dead Men Into Fathers
quotes the father of one such “Israeli” dead father-
to-be: *Once your son is in the army,*
he doesn’t just belong to you
but to the whole nation. Thousands
of women have contacted me
to be the mother of his child.

The article opens with a photograph.
On a couch, the aging mother of another long-dead
soldier
clutches at the paw of the woman inseminated
14 years post-harvest
with her son’s highly valuable sperm.
The women flank a miracle child
of blood-blue eyes
& snowy skin
& hair the hue
of purity.

DOMINICK KNOWLES

conquered, mass.

consider this a form of the bleak:
olive trees scorched by hot metal,
quick wattage, occult machines
while in conquered, massachusetts
we take turns washing out
a bucket of rice pudding.
consider the management of wilt:
i am preparing for a job interview
during another massacre, watching
a concentration camp hatch
within a concentration camp,
the matryoshka doll logic
of genocide. well-dressed strangers
garnish my wages, whose sums accrue
ballistically. my paystubs fuse together
like singing metal hornets.

consider the decades
of compulsory exchange:
four hundred years ago
a barge pole mangled the hemisphere;
now ministries of private dread
set up fascist billboards in food deserts.

consider too that all this was done
for a few more yards of ghost,
for a carpetbombed spirit to multiply
the sun, though the sun won't blink,
decides instead to rot,
and everything is dust
in yesterday's eye.

preface

what follows is a poem caught in the teeth of all experience;
in which i have a salary and dental insurance
and know how to filet a seabass;
it is a poem that feels like wearing a dress in public for the
first time;
that shambles like an androgyne;

a poem in which i listen to wendy describe the building of
the encampment,
which i believe; and its dismantling, which i can't;
a poem in which cruelty revels in its want of cruelty, bleak as
aquarium water;
in which my life becomes textureless, translucent, vaulted
into dusk;

a poem that is also the image of another poem slightly out of
frame;
a poem in which any claim about meaning is a claim about god;
a poem that is a poem in the same way a credit card terminal is a
human right;
a poem that flips over tables in the marketplace of ideas;
that howls *you have turned my father's house into a thousand
aircraft hangars*;

a poem that chokeslams the entrepreneurial spirit;
this poem is a poem that deploys chemical weapons against
the top five shareholders of general motors, of elbit, of chevron;

in which property dreams of stopping time and we nightmare
it to death.

a gorgeous, monstrous poem that does not end; that does:

IRENE SILT

Asymmetric Warfare

At the top of the steps you stopped to look at me
There was sun but I was only hot from climbing
You knew I had come all the way up there for you
There is nothing I can do about that nor deny it

We don't talk very often about death or dying
I have seen what passes through you in fear of prison
Your eyes will shift and then you move to optimism
Here we share a preemptive action against regret

I want to know what your face would look like if confused
It's not wonder and your impulse is to make it sense
Will you say what you decided on top of the steps
Do I have to continue on in this slow ascent

Mistakes are only made possible underneath love
The look is soft and almost smells like rotting fruit
I resist the urge to know what I get out of it
It comes in flashes and it is here now and it's nice

The back lays itself out for me in false confidence
Free will but no memory of a choice reservoir
Contents form to our container, your shin to my shin
There is something cruel in knowing what will happen

After the confession your spine flexed in a long bend
The room was dim and I remember it cordoned off
Future is accepted more readily than the past
The dampness encapsulates the body's static wounds

In my lack of comfort that is all I thought to give
It presents as a perfect sentence written for me
Energy is a poor translation , it is the breath
That animates us and leaves us to come back again

When he died we retraced all his steps across the peak
I tried to be your connective tissue where you lay
Not everything should be held up like that you know
Allow some things to sprawl out and be left there to rest

As you yell my attention shifts focus to the wall
The tags across stone mimic the passion and despair
It could all get covered generously in a sheath
I will hold you when you decide to take it on out

We are all doing different things at the same time
I knew you had missed this profound aspect of living
As it became more apparent you think this could end
We felt reassured that we have a strategic edge

I tend to assert that we have emerged here to win
And crime is not just a construct to scaffold the law

Violence is a long, frequent and everlasting fact
I start from there without assigning punishment

I'm sorry we weren't there to greet you as you got out
The emptiness underground felt up here like defense
Often I thought it's important to keep my distance
It is safer most of the time to just not know things

The ground looks nice and I owe that to my past usage
In particular acid makes each edge shine distinct
I can feel my hand move through the air to explain time
You are a grain of sand I know I have touched before

There is no moment in history that I would choose
We try to lay it all out like that into plain view
Each of us has our own point inside of the current
My arm stays with you, I am ready to pull you out

With few details I know the origin of each box
Their material has entirely changed all ways
It is hard to pick them up and see every side
Your action gave me the permission to do so

Sound is the first step in making new material
There is also cold water and a warm breeze surrounds
Penetration takes us there between bone and tendon
Hot air is kind to us while it stays in full motion

To know something whole is both the goal and the mistake
These sentences explain why my effort looks easy
I want them each to ascend into what one must do
The shape of my cries glue to my throat as I exit

These women are like mountains can you see the terrain
You did well today we covered a lot of technique
What confused me the most was to hear that I am good
I walk upon the threshold of doubt and step over

We shared a worship of the single curve in my wall
It was important to me that you would point it out
The smooth corner harmonized me against my own room
Street light shines hard enough to keep it all visible

My shoulder is cushioned beside yours as you trace it
The roundness is meant to make it harder to leave me
At first your finger traces transforming flesh to line
A bend staves off any harsh conclusion of collapse

I would like to make myself synonymous with sleep
When I come to mind you will think rest too is coming
Here I am when you shut your eyes and also open
I know you are busy and I am busy also

If all my walls were curved would that be superior
I stay up at night to preserve what has come to be

The gallery would have little function or valor
Regardless I will invite you to come and see me

My tears are very heavy they sink right back inside
Death is a singular event it comes only once
I don't cling to anything of this world anyway
We agreed to perpetual motion we continue

Pushing as one unit does of course make a difference
If you are tight enough your feet will lift off the ground
In the mix of things it was actually so quiet
The definition of nonviolence will ebb and flow

The city became rubble by what was made here
Sabotage is inspiring and easily done
Connect the idea to the action of I love you
Intrusive thoughts erect themselves to block the road

Avoid over identifying with a singular role
Analyze only long enough to decide where to strike
The clearing is called destruction yes we will suffer
When you cannot get through divide and go around

The beginning of love should always last the longest
When you turn back you will say you saw it all along
I was careful to never meet your eyes with my eyes
This gesture rounds up the previous ones in time

I looked at the back of your head for some of those days
Almost yelled after you almost said your name out loud
I was unsure of how you would like me to call you
Wanted to get that right before I saw your whole face

He stood up to say that we are creative people
My plan is to pull him down with me in one motion
To make contact between the neck and the hips right here
You delineate the rectangle with round movement

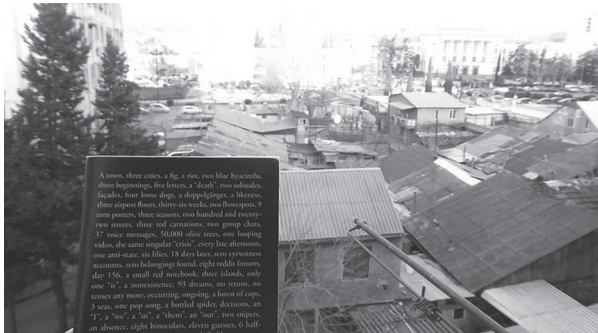
Without the face you may last alone a bit longer
If you look away fast you could say you never saw
His wife was spotted hiding him as he threw the bomb
They arrived and left together on a motorbike

author's statement:

I have abandoned spontaneity and instead I aim for deep focus. I trace the longing I have experienced my entire life, hold it steady and taut, to create a floor for my most pertinent desires. This way, my loneliness can never be a barrier. It is important for the senses to result in one another. To see things through touch, to know your methods directly. Strategy must develop in response to each situation. Measured and well timed stillness allows for the right messages to come through. A poem is a portrayal of the senses as they build cohesion and conclusion. Clear the way for need's final word. Revolution is only made through revolutionary actions.

KASHIF SHARMA-PATEL & LOTTE L.S

in conversation



Lotte L.S.'s *A town, three cities, a fig, a riot, two blue hyacinths, three beginnings, five letters, a "death", two solitudes, facades, four loose dogs, a doppelgänger, a likeness, three airport floors, thirty-six weeks...* (Tripwire, 2021) is a peripatetic series of essays reflecting on poetics and politics. Lotte's meditations are situated across Europe and the Mediterranean world including Marseille, Athens, Rojava, Ukraine, Tangiers, London and Reykjavik. This geographic movement is testament to a commitment to collective action, both found in the social relations that mediate these inhabitations,

as well as the flurry of poets and writers that are brought into the fold of the broader conversation through reference and quotation. The essays reflect an embodied socio-political practice with a bricoleur-esque method that develops a pliable and adventurous take on self-determination, political struggle and, latterly, the implications of capital's hold on poetic production. In the exchange that follows, Lotte produces an account that expounds on these themes after having settled in Great Yarmouth, England's most easterly outlier.

Hi Lotte,

There's a lot I want to get into but I'll start with a couple broader points that came to mind when reading back over the pamphlet and my notes. Obviously a big concern in the pamphlet is the relationship between poetry and politics, or poetics and politics. And I feel one of the ways you are doing that, or signalling it, is through a grounded sociality. Like this section:

Movement depends on moments of collectivity, if not a totalising unison of [...] Like poetry, movements, and moments, are not invented – but develop out of discourse, out of relations, out of real or imagined proximity and diffuse subjectivities. When are your poetics, your politics not implicated in another. (7)

It goes on to say 'real intimacy requires collaboration' (7). This is clearly discursive, embodied (real) and provocative at the same time right? Like my feeling is this is both happening and being willed-into-happening. It reminds of Moten and Harney's undercommons in that respect; as something always ongoing but taking conscious shape at various flashpoints. Is that fair to say?

I am also drawn to this idea of movement, figurative and literal: 'the poem continued as the crowd turned the corner.' (9) Like life as poetic arrangement beyond mere metaphorical yearning. It seems very reminiscent to me Bonney's insurgent secret that erupts in the street, and the way that problematises the relationship between aesthetics and politics. I guess you are trying

to complicate that and explore it through the duality of literature of life vs anti-literature? It felt very generative in any case.

Sociality is also brought into the fold through the space of the text: 'I was drenched in texts' (20). I read the pamphlet as part of a shared semiotic space, some virtual coming-together, which may be called discourse but also maybe poetics, or politics. But that 'we', as you say, is fraught and difficult. I wonder if you approach your work in terms such as social practice, socio-political practice or creative-critical practice? They're all terms in currency at the moment and I'm having a hard time working them through in relation to the sort of conviviality you describe - in the protest, in the text, in everyday social relations.

The ideas of horizontal encounters are perhaps interesting in this regard, and reminded me of Bhanu Kapil's *Ban en Banlieue*; writing to witness, to transcribe and transform simultaneously. There's also something here about historicity and form but I can't quite articulate at the moment; something about insurrection and a moving, collective subjectivity in relation to social and aesthetic form.

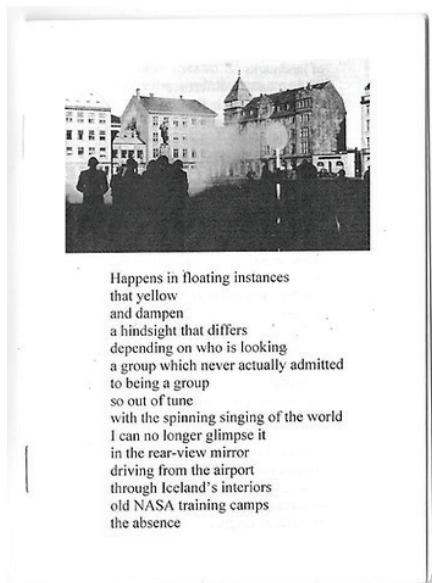
Best wishes,
Kashif

from Lotte:

Although the pamphlet came out last summer, I wrote the four essays in it back in 2019, over the course of a few weeks. 2019 feels like much longer ago than it is.

When I wrote those essays—and I write about this in the pamphlet’s afterword—I was quite naïve really, in terms of not knowing what I was writing into: traditions in poetry, conversations, theories, scenes. The Poetry Emergency festival at the end of 2018 introduced me to a contemporary politicised poetry scene in the UK I was unaware of. I remember going to a workshop and there was this guy there, talking in this idiosyncratic way, and I disagreed with something he was saying — about poetry and politics, I can’t remember exactly what it was — and interrupted him. Later I realised it was Sean Bonney! I had no idea, and even when I found out his name, it didn’t mean anything to me. But later that day he got up and read, and I was so moved by his reading — he said something during it about writing being a part of refusing to allow friends to disappear... That really stuck with me. I wrote him after and we laughed about the moment in the workshop. But I guess what I’m saying here is that while I was living the events of the pamphlet, I had little idea of what I was writing into, or poets that might be thinking and writing about similar things. I was just writing about my life, really—wondering if it was possible to write about it in that way, without representing or harming those living it with me. And trying to work out the contradictions I was holding in my mind, trying to fit together these seemingly opposed pillars of poetry and politics. Since then

my life had changed a lot—where I was, who I was surrounded by, what I thought it meant to live a life committed to political struggle, meaning and learning, and how I feel about reconciling contradiction.



Happens in floating instances
that yellow
and dampen
a hindsight that differs
depending on who is looking
a group which never actually admitted
to being a group
so out of tune
with the spinning singing of the world
I can no longer glimpse it
in the rear-view mirror
driving from the airport
through Iceland's interiors
old NASA training camps
the absence

First page from untitled pamphlet on protest and memory in Iceland, January 2020

I think having little idea of the context I was writing in, and into, was freeing in a way. I don't think I will ever write anything like those essays again, or from that particular energy again. I'm too conscious now of what I would be writing into, and all the ways a certain kind of politicised writing has currency. What, and who, it makes visible. When Danny Hayward's book *Wound Building* came out recently, with that final letter to me partly about a poem

I wrote shortly after the essays in 2019, after travelling to Iceland for the memorial of a friend who had died fighting in Rojava, I went back to the poem I'd written, and realised how much more ambivalent I feel now about it—not as a trace of that moment in time, or document of political grief and the struggle that necessitated it, but as a 'kind' of poetry. I think I feel much less compelled to write like, or about, that now. I feel more protective of those moments, but also my life has changed: I live in a town, in England, which I feel very absorbed by, and tied to — politically, emotionally, practically — in both good and difficult ways. I guess you could say it like this: when I wrote those essays I was writing as if individuals make up the collective; now I want to live believing that the individual is made by the collective.

You ask whether I approach my work in terms such as 'social practice, socio-political practice, creative-critical practice'. I don't really think about my writing in those terms, probably less so now than ever before. I don't have a fixed relationship to poetry, or to publishing: its position is always shifting, but writing has always been an unavoidable part of my living and thinking. Like I said, at the time of writing those essays, I was so full of unease about the relationship between poetry and my politics, as if they were two oppositional — even mutually exclusive — sides of myself in conflict with one another. It's not like they're integrated now or something, they just no longer exist as 'poetry' and 'politics' — as two parts of an identity that must be made visible in order to exist. Each is already inside the other.

What I do think about is what it means to be an anarchist writing and sharing my work. A friend once said they think there would be no books in an anarchist society. There would be poems, and there would be stories, and they would be a part of society and everyday life — but no books — they would be rendered meaningless as ‘publication’, and take us away from the present. I don’t know whether I agree, but it’s always stuck with me. It’s hard to imagine living in a society where you wouldn’t want to be taken away from the present.

I do think being an anarchist means I want to place less meaning on what I’m writing than how I’m living, though obviously the two are tightly connected. In much poetry in the UK at the moment there feels like a focus on communicating a politics — some kind of resistance — through signifiers like property ownership, tenancy, landlordism, etc — which of course is significant in how they embody a power structure, capitalism, class war, the precarity of everyday life, etc. But I guess I want to think more in terms of the privatised life — the life that is privatised: that seeks privacy and personal freedoms and uninterrupted time — and is just as easily pursued while renting. Living as individuals, as coupled pairs, as people with our own belongings, our own money, our own issues, our own exercised autonomy and independence and ‘rights’. The institutionalisation of precarity should make it harder to live a privatised life, but what seems to be happening is the opposite. In order to function, capitalism must always prevent us from seeing that we could live differently, with more freedom and more obligation, and a more meaningful relationship between

work and need. I think one way it's easy to live a privatised life is to be surrounded only by those who share your precise politics, interest, aesthetics, age, etc—even political commitment. I don't really think a collective language is even desirable at this point.

I can see how it can be strategically important for communists to be surrounded by other communists—to be together, organising, in one place; but I'm not sure the same goes for anarchists. What you want is an anarchist in every part of social life — every workplace, every street corner, every kitchen, every boxing gym, every advice centre, every post office, every school staff room. Conflict is inevitable, and a necessary part. Because anarchism isn't simply goal or strategy, but a frame for acting, it's necessary to scrutinise every part of your life — not just our relationship to the labour and time that doesn't belong to us, but how we write, how we love and desire, where we live (and how we relate to where we live), and how we share what it is that we write. The how seems increasingly more important than the what — i.e. form and content, which I touch on a little in the pamphlet. I think it means being prepared to stop writing, stop publishing — in the same way it means being prepared to stop, or redirect, any aspect of our living: to make sacrifices, in order to avoid this one long nonconsensual compromise they call life. And so these days I feel little angst about being a poet, because I am always prepared to abandon it.

ps

and they talked, and new worlds were born of their talking. It is of the nature of idea to be communicated: written, spoken, done. The idea is like grass. It craves light, likes crowds, thrives on crossbreeding, grows better for being stepped on.

The Dispossessed, Ursula K. Le Guin

I love the cities
as they predictably burn, the sound of ash and
yes this talk. Of music. Of soul. This so brief life.

Ghosts, Sean Bonney

What do protests, purpling flowers, starlings, police
and endless daylight have in common? I write from a
place that relegates us all. Each time I came across
him, plastered to the walls of alleyways, side streets,
plazas, doorways, the discrete borders of the feeling
wrapped themselves around the other feeling. Things
happen. His eyes remained alive and watchful, gun
strapped across his chest. The lilies shake out their
pollen to the earth, though there is no body to be
found; no way to know how or where or when - or if -
he died, exactly:

Missing from an operation in Afrin around
the second week of February 2018 & never
returned. Searched for two weeks with
binoculars & in nearby hospitals, before a
decision to announce dead due to a Turkish
airstrike—18 days after last seen. Zero
eyewitness accounts. Zero knowledge of last
location. Zero remains accounted for.

o, Athens: exactly one year later only a handful of
posters remain in Exarchia. I no longer feel compelled
to tear them down. It's funny the way the mind pivots
over time: the scattered illogics of grief, what once
touched you no longer feels tangible. How you can
come to see the faint edges of how it might just be
possible to live with the unanswerable. What you had
thought to be already answered turns out not to be,
anyway.

In June I travelled to Iceland for Haukur's memorial
and *Leikmenn án Landamæra* (Laymen without
Borders), a conference organised by his family and
friends, over a year on from when news of his death
circulated. All I held were the residues of memories
now fragmented and romanticised, 5 years on from
that first summer I spent in Iceland: the weeks that
offered an opening in time, that I left irrevocably
changed by, that planted the seeds for what constitutes
this almost-life. To see and experience the ways in

Pages from Iceland (untitled)

With this developing perspective since writing those essays has come an exhaustion of analysis, including my own. I'm most suspicious of my own best intentions. Critique is a necessary part of revolutionary culture, but there's a difference between shared, invited critique as revolutionary practice, and critique as a function of individualism, to cover one's own back. In many ways, the essays are polemical, but one thing I still like about them is their invention. I wanted to exert pressure on tenses, and to complicate the way — or speed, or non-simultaneity — that things are imagined to 'happen': the ways in which memory and intention force the past and the future into the present. I think they are probably read quite literally, as almost documentary, and for sure by the time I reached the third and fourth essay I felt a

pressure to acknowledge the fictions in the previous pieces, but I think I would feel more confident now to not. Tearing this world down necessitates the creation of a new one, a new way of living and relating to one another. I don't think it's any coincidence that the explorative worlds of films and novels are what touch me the deepest, and give me the will and desire for struggle without an end point — than explicit commentary, answers, or the authority of analysis. To tell stories, to invent worlds — that takes guts over self-consciousness, intuition over angst. To think outside of, rather than just against: to refuse to exist solely in negation. I can see how parts of the pamphlet exist in negation: an anti-literature, as you point out. I think this distinction is a kind of prioritisation of expressing over speaking, the latter which I'm growing continually suspicious of. And I think all of this touches on what you say: 'Like life as poetic arrangement beyond mere metaphorical yearning.' This past year I've been part of a group meeting online to talk about social poetics, and someone commented on how it can seem easier to build an archive of political work than to revive the practices that are being archived — that really stayed with me.

In terms of sociality, I think this means that there has got to be more, and other, possibilities than what there currently is for reading and writing and sharing one another's work—whether this is deemed 'publishing' or not. Sometimes I wonder how much as 'poets' we tread on, we disappear, the social and political possibilities of poetry — poetry because a moment demands it: an encounter — able to be accessed by everybody. As if the more we engage with some kind of literary industry — or even with 'poet' as an identity or career, and 'poem' as a thing you write and submit

and publish — we infringe on the possibilities for everyone to have these moments of encounter, or have these moments recognised within ourselves as moments of experience. People will scrawl poems across the busted walls of cells, on napkins, toilet doors, bus stops, scraps of paper passed across classroom chairs. We don't require publishing, or presses, to share our work. In fact, poems will find their way in the world despite publishing and presses. I'm not at all saying don't publish, don't start presses, etc — that these are a lost cause. Just that they aren't the beginning and end, and for them to be part of a revolutionary politics means relating to one another, and ourselves, in totally different, new ways.

I don't want to represent anything or anyone — but I do want to write. And I do want to share what I write, and not just with the people I already know or people who also write. The publishing aspect is the more angst-filled part, also politically — and maybe that's what my friend was inferring when they talked about a society without books. I recently worked with a friend to edit and publish their poetry, and saw more clearly how, in order to share it with others, we have to kill it a little — that magic livingness that exists in poems, not poetry or poets, but poems — that makes what didn't exist before exist now: that moment you realise you were only ever half-alive, a body without a song in your head... What is the power of the song that remains untranscribed? You kill it a little in order for it to exist for others. I guess as the years go by and I keep writing and not-writing, the killing part feels like it gets a little harder.

—originally published in *SPAM Magazine* (UK), 14/03/2023

LOTTE L.S

The Whole Ethic of Normal Sleepless Evidence

... hope this finds you not on fire?

the discrete borders of the feeling wrapped
themselves around the other feeling...
things happen. those who could not bear
their heads in no way has it been fully proven
I have actually left my own nowhere not
in search life or past. today—
what a mocking word in those days
we stayed wrapped up light gradually omitting
the eyes lichen stitched over the lids

it was as if I was always waiting for real life
to begin

otherwise this tenth-rate movie
otherwise “speak soon” otherwise
the same photograph of a shelling
passed out at propaganda meetings on separate sides
otherwise sceptical
of everything but the sceptical

utter darkness swarms the pupils

russian dolls unfasten themselves the bigger ones
climbing into the bodies of smaller ones

looping airtime ads for security systems

I listen to what I can
leave out

the other senses return to heightened existence

where I try to break the
rock with my head

everything else is just current events

subjects choosing to give themselves electric shocks
rather than be left alone

if not the certainty of change
then the uncertainty sustained

formerly touching each other in the busiest aisle

while seagulls cannibalised
other beings with wings
in the waiting room outside

I couldn't tell the difference between those long days and
these short days the light lasted 24 hours oh my god angelfire
lunar landscapes exposed 36 times before reload recall how you
fell into your own shadow I saw this.

Nobody said funerals. Nobody said dying. Nobody
said they were up
for sitting on the beach at two minutes past sunrise.
Nobody sleeps on the sofa with all the blinds left ajar
and the radio full blast. Nobody does it to

whatever! just attend to the spreadsheet's equation ———

I just hope you felt alive
in its dismantling

how a hundred heads turn
two hundred birds

fly from the tree

[...]

the blind mice drift away

it's not traumatic did I say it
was
not traumatic

how desperately I want to smack my head against the rocks
bright blood on the slippery surface
matte and fantastic
tulips at the front desk of every supermarket
fluttering little violences

it's happened so many times I couldn't even remember
that guy

impossible to speculate the state
I passed fourteen days
circling inside the sadness of work

escaping to crawl back inside my mother
I'm still alive
barely forcing capitalism to innovate
wanting only to repeat things that are determinedly unplea-
surable

or is it, pleasurable

no literal memory of
mastery over my mother's womb

wish I was able

want only to be

want only to be windowfloating
and ordinary

difficult to talk of anything that is not poem

the guilt of its failure

This is how things are they can't be any different. last sunday there were cows screaming in the carpark of B&Q and the radio was playing don't leave and the phone rang and when I picked up there was a beautiful sound something like the smell of pavements after rain and I was so glad I had ignored everyone's calls just to get to this one moment

to hear this silence

the faces of marigolds slowly turning toward my face
it is smiling and unthinking
it is pleasurable sometimes to remember nothing

observing mutually responsive movements:
pocket watches, alarm clocks, pendulums

—and other modes of individual deterrents
that remember the dead can be just as easily co-opted

is there a way to talk back at it?
to it?

when the price demanded to reinhabit the world has always been
silence

all but babies abandoning sense
the acquisition of language possible only through an act of
oblivion

prolonged stillness
quiet
vacant
a crawl space emerging from a tunnel
to fill mouths that make little ‘o’ shapes
reaching attempt for sound

satellites mimicking orbit in the nightless sky
the click of someone picking up the phone

[...]

—hello?

did not

was not

can not

as if whether the seatbelt buckled or not
is even relevant

still failing to ask: what is the line
between resilience to *go on*
as normal, and stupidity?

and: the leisure to ponder collapse?

utopia just another name for loneliness
the loneliness of song felt in a crowd

most certain only when in motion

But now I can't

a. remember

or

b. find your name

ANYWHERE

does anyone out there know? hushwing? anyone?

only it's heard we've been sought with telescopes just
waiting
without intent to desert

and the day is dark again

Note: The title is an adaptation of the name of a blog post by Lauren Berlant, from 24 September 2011. It's still possible to read up at their blog, *Supervalent Thought*.

—originally published in *87press*, September 2021

ROB HALPERN

Dear Tyrone

I'm in Ypsilanti tonite reading the *Night
Of Loveless Nights* by Robert Desnos
It's Lewis Warsh's translation published
W / Matvei's new beautiful Winter
Editions and I'm listening to Tyner's
Extensions thinking of you and about
What y'd make of Desnos's poem tho
It cld be any poem I mean it's just a place
– holder its disabled ghosts & rot
– ting plants its sky cut a diamond
Jagged in the shadow of fir trees
These are among the spoils of this
Night whose signs are etched in stag
– nant waters ant waters antlers real
– ly looming the way a distant sea
Looms reaching for the rogue
Tense split on a tongue that will have
Spoken of that other future the one
That falls "a foot from mine own lips"
As you quote Dunbar's voice a vessel a
Ghost who haunts the inaudible
Howl the unidentifiable call the un
– winding wind undoing every I.D.
"Fetal / misshapened delegged" you
Wrote some "future 'I'" like a dis

– combobulated condition “status qua
 Ad lib” yr critique of *claritas* it’s a com
 – mitment to the other the irreducible com
 – plex really the only thing that will “keep
 Hope alive” that’s you quoting Kofi Natambu
 – ’s hope against hope and I think
 “Keep the keep” as in the charge & the care
 In the gap btwn what happened and what will
 Have been here after some reckoning
 A gap for which yr poems Ty they remain
 Placeholders showing us how to do it
 How to be present to that absence that “pos
 – sibility of disruption” the promise of
 Being ghosted by some as yet unnameable
 Organ or sense like Dunbar’s “random light”
 Not unrelated to that “solemn booming gun”
 Nor identical to it rather a grammatical mark
 A pause to note the “future then” that is now
 Only not now and I recall talking w / you
 Of Whitman his opiate shades whose “eager light
 Dispell’d” what? the source of light it
 – self be it the sun or the bulb at the plant
 “I too will soon be gone dispell’d” he wrote
 “A haze nirwana” and I keep looking
 For this “storm of ghosts” (but that’s Desnos again)
 When I’m listening for the cold call & longing
 For the convo Tyrone the one we began
 Around *c.c.* and yr friendship

That's shaped and will go on
Shaping

— *this thinking.*

DANIEL BORZUTZKY

The Murmuring Grief of the Americas
Coffee House Press, 2024

Reviewed by Cait O’Kane

My inflamed fingers are clacking keys in search of the precise definition of the word *murmur*. The screen in front of me states that a *murmur* is a *soft indistinct sound spoken by a person or a group of people speaking quietly or at a distance*. Distance, I think, is a good way to describe the voice of the poet Daniel Borzutzky, who I believe to be one of the most urgent, necessary, important, & truthful writers of this epoch. His new book *The Murmuring Grief Of The Americas* will be released in August by Coffee House Press. The title harkens back to Borzutzky’s 2015 work *In The Murmurs Of The Rotten Carcass Economy*. A murmur can upset a heart, can destroy a body, can turn a body into a carcass. An economy can turn a country into a company, a company into a prison, & a prison into a mass grave. Indeed, nature itself is, for Borzutzky, a “devouring Economy.” Borzutzky writes in a heteroglossia of the personal, public, private, political, corporate, institutional, academic, medical, carceral, and financial, and the result is not a cacophony but a terrible/terribly human American web, a territory both concrete & liminal, which he calls the “airbreathdeath theatre” & the “earthstatebank theatre.”

I inhabit these theaters distinctly, indebted & overworked, no day off for months, ragged breaths from my emphysemic lungs, the heaviness of my hands playing across the keys. The screen goes on to say that as a verb, to *murmur* is to say something in a low, soft, or indistinct voice. I am looking up certain words necessary to Borzutzky's poetic web because I am recovering from a concussion sustained at work and a cardiac arrhythmia induced by systemic lupus erythematosus. I work cleaning the condos that are developing—the corporate loan word for gentrifying—my neighborhood. I am struggling to comprehend words & how they move together, what they mean together, how to say what I want to make them mean by moving my fingers over a plastic keyboard painted a faux-metallic gray.

The words & cursor undulating on the screen in front of me look sinister and menacing. The words *sinister* and *menacing* could also describe Borzutzky's oeuvre, as his style is anything but indistinct. While his words may seem to come from a remove—a reporting and indexing of emergencies large & small, plagues, suicides, massacres, floods, earthquakes, sinkholes, groundwater poisoning, lost bank cards, stolen data, closed storefronts, threatening emails, hunger, thirst, exhaustion, terror, grief, fear, tedium, loneliness, futility, debt, & death—in between these indices are personal confessions. Consider “Secret Code #306”:

I'm sick of being alive but I'm too afraid to die
(*is it ok to tell you this?*)

you can look into the sky and see a thread that connects
your body to the planets and the stars
I don't know what that means but I suspect it might
be true

But even the poet's confessions are subject to interrogation by an authoritative body, whether by the speaker's own hypervigilance interrupting the confessional stanza, or as is the case in "Poem Written Under A Pseudonym," an interruption by the living on behalf of the dead:

You think your poems don't matter at all and that no one reads them or cares about them then one day you get an email from a woman you've never met before telling you that her husband read your last book then killed himself and in the suicide note he keeps quoting lines from your poems and she thinks you should know because you might want to take the book out of circulation to prevent others from having to bury the people in their lives they love most.

Circulation—the screen in front of me defines it as *movement to & fro or around something, especially that of fluid in a closed system*. I think of Borzutzky's words as a necessary inoculation against apathy & complacency, against silence & suicide. The body as commodity and as metaphor figures large in TMGOTA—antibodies have royalties, the poet speculates over the prospective

worth of his anatomy, severed from the body as a whole, and what the condition of his mind says about the worth of his body:

What does my face cost?

I need seven dollars for lunch

Metadata says I bought too many books about mental illness

What?

What does my condition cost?

I need to assess the metadata on my skin

How much for these knuckles?

How much for these ankles?

Even the textual “data” of Borzutzky’s book is divided into sections, like a corpse upon a coroner’s table. The eponymous opening poem depicts a reality show wherein exhausted immigrant children are hunted for sport by “patriots” after crossing a river.

don’t die

the director says to the children

if you die we won’t be able to make this film

and if we don’t make this film then there is no evidence that once you were alive and if there is no evidence that once you were alive

then no one will know that we loved you.

Borzutzky implies here that to the viewing audience – us – that the verbs to love & to film are synonymous. Think about what it means to “capture” something on camera—the faces of weeping Gazan children, bloodied & battered & hungry & weary & worn, on all of our Timelines, come to mind. We are told that the IDF (& our own military, in the tunnels, silent as a virus) is killing them to *capture* Hamas militants. People say in comments sections underneath the articles about the conflict—they call it a conflict, or a war, never a program, never a genocide, no, not *that*—that seeing the faces of these children helps to humanize them for those on the other side. What if this “other side” is only a screen? What if we are only *capturing* them, collecting their grief to catalog?

The next four sections are headed under different permutations of the question “WHEN WILL I/YOU/WE/THEY BE HUMAN AGAIN?” This question of the qualia of humanity, the body, mind, soul, and spirit—how they live, what they are worth—are central to Borzutzky’s work. This question of worth is not just metaphor, but literal: “What does it mean to you,” he asks “the starving child eating garbage in the ruins/ what does it mean to you/ the bloodwords in the statemouths....what does it mean to you/ the diseased water, the diseased breath, the diseased lung?” “Every line I have ever written is a version of another line I’ve ever written,” Borzutzky admits in the poem “How I Wrote Certain Of My Books.” There are words & phrases & images & parts of speech that he returns to again and again, the questions of *What* and of *How Much*, the anaphoric repetition of conjunctions,

particularly *but & and*, the abstraction of debt as a concrete and crushing reality, along with the menace of the screen.

you begin with debt and you end with debt and
when there is no debt you don't know what to do
Because all you have ever known is debt

Screen is both a noun & a verb, an action & an object to be performed & projected. Even Borzutzky's epigraphs are placed at intervals around the pages dividing sections, functioning as a kind of cursor: blinking influence, blinking image. Clarice Lispector's line "I shall miss myself so much when I die" recurs throughout the text as an epigraph. This concept of missing the self, the living self among the dead, is present in the last section of TMGOTA, bookending the eponymous poem beginning the collection. The surviving children from the reality show are now in cages underground. They are interrogated by "authoritative bodies." Their names and ethnicities and nationalities are left only _____, the missing selves already dead, "a reduction in the blankness of blank."

One morning a man looks at a _____ child he is about to shoot. He sees a structure he cannot build into his life...he sees the cancer of the past reasserting itself into an organism of the present. The organism weeps. The sky weeps. The grass weeps. And the man cannot build this weeping into his life. So he puts the _____ child into the hole with the mourners.

But he doesn't like the language in which the mourners
grieve...he wants to own their pain....he wants to own
the murmurs they make...

Authoritative bodies own debt & grief & debt. They own nature
and disaster, ruin, pain, sadness, fear, exhaustion, hunger. They
own *everything*.

They are *happy*.

They cannot countenance grief, the grief that murmurs through
the beating heart of Capital, the blood money pouring from
our imperial wound. Borzutzky's words get inside this wound,
the war-wound, the world-wound, the wired wound of forced
Connectivity, & they *gnaw*. They fester & they grow. They
multiply. May we never become inoculated to them, to the sear
on the page and the mark on the soul. My own body attacks itself,
debt-swollen, antibody heavy. My head swims; my hands are hot
to the touch. As I finish writing this, the West's own traveling
terror tour of rebels-for-hire, the ISIS-K variant, have massacred
Muscovites in a concert hall. Palestinian children are starving to
death, limbs amputated with no anesthetic, families and friends
bombarded again & again & again by heavy Western weaponry.
Prisoners in the United States of America are drinking water
contaminated with human waste. The covid bioweapon continues
to maim & disable & kill, & the cure we were sold continues to
do the same under a shroud of edited headlines. Bodies line the
avenue behind my crumbling rowhome, their arteries shredded
from toxic cocktails of fentanyl & xylazine. Billboards on public

transit implore our impoverished bodies to work for the Bureau of Prisons. I have Grief, yes, that Murmurs in my leaky heart, rendering me breathless & awake.

“Excuse me, sir, what time is the massacre?” Borzutzky asks repeatedly throughout *TMGOTA*—and I think I know. It is unfolding, always, in an awful & eternal Now.

HOLLY PESTER

The Lodgers

US: Assembly Press, 2024 / UK: Granta, 2024

Reviewed by Andy Spragg

Unsettled and unsettling

Holly Pester's debut novel, *The Lodgers*, is an example of how her writing has inhabited multiple forms without losing its singular style and humor. In the past decade, Pester's work has encompassed poetry (most recently *Comic Timing*, published by Granta), radio plays (*Poetry for Idle Workers*, broadcast on BBC Radio 4, and its script, *Eclogues for Idle Workers*, published by Distance No Object) and "10-inch vinyl album with an accompanying book of poems" (*Common Rest*, published by Test Centre). There is a restlessness in all this activity, though it is all thoroughly accomplished and consistently brilliant. Pester's work is concerned with the business of how one lives, and how one does this in relation to the minutiae of commonplace objects and our social bonds.

Midway through *The Lodgers*, a single sentence encapsulates the novel: "Having to be impermanent but ready – like an imminent alarm clock, encountering street names and weather, sacrificing one plan and one direction in favor of another, regarding a nice tree, dead tree, common threat, bad design, couples walking

together, sunrise, nature in reality against my idea of it – is a socially inherited condition” (148). Being impermanent but ready is a neat summation of the novel’s premise: the narrator is a young academic who has taken a sublet room in a flat, one that is located not far from where her mother (referred to as Moffa) lives. The narrative shuttles between the first and second-person perspective. Chapters alternate between the narrator’s erratic orbit through her current living situation, and the life of a lodger that has taken on her previous living situation in another sublet room with another mother and her daughter (both unnamed). Both the narrator and the other woman take an unspecified university course, a mulch of holistic medicine and therapeutic practice. The narrator is in a precarious financial state. She has graduated, her next move is undetermined. In fact, everyone appears to be in one precarious state or another: the lodger is forced to fit around her landlady’s job providing beauty therapies to clients in her room during the day, itself a hallmark of the way that low-income self-employment can intrude on every aspect of the domestic setting (including the need to rent that space to a stranger in the first place). As the reader will have inferred, there are multiple parallels and contrasts in the set-up, and Pester’s accomplished style manages to interweave these into a compelling and sustained whole.

Pester’s writing recalls M John Harrison’s *The Sunken Land Begins To Rise Again* (Gollancz, 2020). It describes the same queasy and unexpressed tensions of sharing living space with relative strangers, and the way privacy becomes a guarded commodity; one constantly impinged by the scufflings and snufflings of people unseen but definitely nearby. Penelope Fitzgerald’s *Offshore* also

feels a likely influence, a novel about a group of relative strangers trying to mediate their common living situation. It is not just the setting that holds the three writers in common; Pester, Harrison and Fitzgerald are all accomplished stylists, who convey considerable depth of feeling with word-choice and sentence structure. The excerpt above demonstrates how Pester's construction of the text can mirror the narrative's constant deferrals and diversions, the way it snarls up and rucks its way to a conclusion.

The Lodgers has numerous rich linguistic moments. It is a novel full of words like “critterish”, “gargantuan” and “mayonnaised”, and also sentences like, “Together they are slurping and illuminated, living a quiet wholeness without you.” It is also a funny book: a group of children turn mobbish and chant NOT PRETTY at the lodger as indifferent mothers look on, an inexplicable character enters the narrative offering a *deus ex machina* resolution before promptly throwing up over the tools he is carrying. There is tension in these surreal vignettes, and Pester's sharp navigation between the absurd and bleak undertows is one of the critical successes of the book.

There are also underlying themes of presence and absence in Pester's book. Moffa is corporeally absent for a large part of the plot, though framed through frequent recollections. The sections about the narrator's chaotic childhood are delicate and vital, and adept at describing the complex feelings that arise when a parental figure is unable or unwilling to occupy the role we desire or require from them. This is made all the more poignant by the moments between the other mother and her daughter, where the

other lodger observes their rhythms and routines from a distance, playing the role of imagined mother at times with a detached curiosity. Multiple relationships in the novel explore how we simultaneously reject parents while still wanting their love and acceptance. *The Lodgers* describes the heady mix of affection, anxiety and fear that comes with gluey familial bonds without making its characters into villains or becoming a morality tale about poor parenting. Moffa is seen as a point of refuge and return by the narrator, albeit an ambiguous one that is synonymous with a disproportionate sense of responsibility. The narrator is shown as both child and sometimes carer for Moffa, or at least the proxy “adult” in the relationship. When Moffa arrives, it is notable that she doesn’t quite fit the narrator’s description; she appears less fragile and more soothing, as if the absence and presence of someone were two different, though similar, beings.

Beyond matriarchal relationships, *The Lodgers* features multiple social and familial bonds that shift within different power dynamics. The way sociability in groups becomes a means of excluding others is also the subject of multiple, mirrored narratives. Each social group and gathering demonstrates some capacity towards self-preservation at the detriment of other people, either in the way they talk or the way they act. These petty and mundane cruelties stand alongside instances where individuals seem to careen off one another on a one-one level, offering temporary respite but never permanence. The narrator bumps into multiple people from her past, the lodger engages in a casual sexual relationship with an older man, and nothing feels more secure for it. Within the book’s closing chapters one scenario shifts dramatically in its dynamics,

its sudden, sharp turn reminding the reader that power is often as temporary as one bad debt.

Pester's novel is overtly political, though largely devoid of contemporary political references. In a way, none are required. The fundamental questions of how to live, and how impermanence erodes a sense of security, are not new ones, though they are intrinsic to the world in which Pester writes. The Institute of Fiscal Studies published data in June 2023 that demonstrated that only 1 in 20 of private rentals in the UK would be affordable to a recipient of housing benefits. Office of National Statistics data demonstrates the regional gap between different areas of the UK, with rents in London being double what they are in the cheapest places of the UK. A UK tenant's charity, Shelter, estimated 309,000 people are homeless in the UK in December 2023, a figure that has risen 14% in a year and includes 140,000 children. The statistics go on, and the obscenity of it all unavoidable. This does not even begin to describe the number of people who find themselves at risk of homelessness because of personal circumstances, whether they be by accident, design or a transition. The housing market is a rigorous force in underwriting the reproduction of the same heteronormative and social typologies, as anyone who is too old, too single, too queer or generally too unsettled can attest.

It is striking that *The Lodgers* does not cast its landlords as immoral monsters, the unnamed mother in particular. Instead, Pester shows that, while good intentions abound, low-key antagonism and stress are embedded parts of any lodging or rental arrangement. In doing so it is more effective than having packed the novel with

pantomime slum landlords (with the caveat that I am certain there are plenty living amongst us). We have something that is intrinsically bad for all parties. Exploitation driven by necessity rather than greed is still exploitation.

The Lodgers is an excellent, funny exploration of impermanence. While it is a novel of economic realities, it also affirms and celebrates its principal characters' ability to live in kindly, messy ways. The fantasy play of the narrator and the other woman offers a means of low key resistance, the way they try on and adjust to different personas and roles as a form of escape. The mysterious course they both study, with its mixture of new age holistic therapies, is an opportunity for several funny lines on Pester's part, though it also suggests something being repurposed into new tools for living. *The Lodgers* resists easy conclusions or neat compromises; it is too ripe with strange eruptions, bodily smells and mysterious noises. It is a glorious, critterish thing.

GAIL SCOTT

Furniture Music

Seattle: Wave Books, 2023

Reviewed by Sarah Burgoyne

Prose Enjambments: The Heart Opens Fire

If a poem is simply (or complexly) “something made,” as its Latin root signifies, requiring attention in the process of its making and demanding attention once made, then poetry abounds in the spaces surrounding the quoted poems in *Furniture Music*. Gail Scott’s memoir, organized by musical notations and punctuated by excerpts of poetry by New York’s remaining avant-garde, thus harbours many poems. The loudest “poem,” perhaps, is the snowshoed walk to Parliament of a group of “youthful First Nations” from James Bay: “In up to -40C weather. Joined by hundreds more. Bearing gift for Conservative Canadian Prime Minister. Pair of beautifully crafted snowshoes. But where is Mr. Harper on day they arriving in Ottawa capital? In another city welcoming pair of pandas. Flown in from China. *They’re very wriggly*, he giggles.” This “ostinato refrain,” as Scott frames it, which means “recurring frequently” and also “stubborn and persistent,” bears the shape and flow of poetry. What do I mean by this? A poem is often an act, a gesture, a demand for attention, an insistence, the flow of fabric as a body flails, dances, marches, strikes out (in protests or long walks) beneath it. People in

Manhattan dancing or singing after the election of the first Black president is poetry. Likewise, fashion, famously ambiguous, is *Furniture Music*'s tonal punctum: Scott notes the post-2008 crash epoch is characterized by a narrow, dark silhouette, "cheap saddle shoes," Michelle Obama's metonymic arms, with the narrator (our "Northern") reminding us that fashion is *also* something that, like poetry, can express resistance.

Furniture Music is a memoir that takes poetry's roominess, its "space for affect and excess," as Scott puts it, and injects it into the veins of prose. Scott's chronicle of her Manhattan residencies spans eight years, taking the city's pulse during Obama's 2008 election and re-election in 2012 and the financial crash (spelled "Krasch" in *FM*), during which she mingles with the city's leftist poets and writers, in some cases deepening significant friendships (another type of poetry). In a recent interview published in *The Believer*, Scott states "All of my novels are written in a social context that bears discussing. Every period requires a different kind of experimentation." *Furniture Music* departs from its progenitors (her recent book of essays *Permanent Revolution* and her novels such as *The Obituary*, *Main Brides*, *My Paris* and *Heroine*) in its overt dialogue with contemporary poetry by leftist experimental poets who make up the St. Mark's Poetry Project, Belladonna Collaborative, and Bowery Poetry Club scenes (Eileen Myles, Leslie Scalapino, John Keene, Anne Waldman, Charles Bernstein, erika kaufman, Camille Roy, Stacy Szymaszek, Renee Gladman, Carla Harryman and most prominently Rachel Levitsky, to name a few). *Furniture Music* dislocates our thinking around the relationship between art-making and politics and returns us to the

question: *what is urgent?*—or perhaps a better way of phrasing this would be *what possibly, today, could not be?*

The memoir eventually heralds Trump's impending and much-dreaded election. It is also, therefore, an indagation of the questions "what does poetry do?" and "what can narrative do?" in the face of political bedlam. In exploring the dialectical relationship between art-making and resistance, the reader is left to wonder how much imagination revolution requires and if the way we use language (whether poetry or prose) bolsters our ability to imagine it? *Furniture Music* starts with the primacy of language in shaping occurrence and ends with poetry's ability to create space, or, as Scott puts it: "for freely imagining. Edges. Of le possible."

For example, the narrator asks, in the constellatory logic of "wide empire thinking," what impact do poets have? The question is posed as the narrator frequents St. Mark's Poetry Project, founded in the politically turbulent 1960s, which hosts poets like Anne Waldman (who once said her life's work is to keep the world safe for poetry). Poems are integrated into the memoir, cited in the margins like Maggie Nelson's work of autotheory, *The Argonauts*. Like Juliana Spahr, who sees resistance poems as the dogs that bark alongside a protest, the poems Scott cites contribute to the thinking of the work; they converse, punctuate and synthesize, like haiku at the end of haibun(-on-fire). In other words, prose and poetry work interdependently here. Urgency among the writers Scott includes is felt and practiced collectively; they are not a chorus but an emanation. For example, Scott reprints the opening stanza of Waldman's 1989 poem "Revolution" after exploring the

discourse around American “culture wars,” concluding that the “politics of Empire chip away”:

Spooky summer on the horizon I’m gazing at
from my window into the streets
That’s where it’s going to be where everyone is
walking around, looking around out in the open
suspecting each other’s heart to open fire
all over the streets

This memoir queers the memoir arc. It falls within the paradigm of Hejinian’s *My Life*—an autobiography written in Theory-A-Sunday’s coined term: *écriture au féminin*. But Scott’s work is much more deeply (or overtly) concerned with expressing current social issues. Like Hejinian’s lines, Scott’s have “vertical intensity,” a term Hejinian coined, comparable to Benjamin’s *jetztzeit* (time that is ripe with revolutionary possibility) or “the single moment into which the idea rushes.” The relation of *Furniture Music* to the now is figural, in the same way the memoir’s cities (Montreal, Manhattan), political leaders (Obama and Mr. SHHH) and writers, (our “Northern” and her friends, the “USian” poets) form a constellation which presents to us, like Klee’s Angel (what Benjamin called “The Angel of History”), a chain of events: “one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage.”

In *Furniture Music*, the sentence is something which “tilts toward the preconfigured/habitual,” whereas poetry houses “slants, estrangements, apostrophes” and addresses “the unreliability of predicates to do with time.” Even “if not poet,” Scott offers “in

[her] narratives, sentence relations. Close to poetic enjambment.” This is not a hybrid work but rather a tentacular work, feeling toward its time. In an interview from the late nineties, Scott expressed that writing is “about affect as a screen for all the social and political and cultural and personal and geographical particles, captured somehow in syntax, which is music. All the things that give tone to a moment in time. This surface is always in flux.” It’s this in-fluxness, this “vexed resistance to a regulation that [she] must honor [...] to prove how beautifully one can improvise against a basic structure,” as Fred Moten described Mingus, that is the ongoing trademark of Scott’s brilliant thinking and writing. I return to Scott’s works again and again as a reminder that there is a necessary and ongoing relationship between art and politics and that the way we use language can work equally as hard to perpetuate or disrupt systems. We need more sentences, like Scott’s, that look ahead instead of back, that tip us forward into vigilance, music, and flux.

CONTRIBUTOR NOTES

Abd al-Karim al-Ahmad was born in Syria and currently lives in Germany. He writes poetry, short stories and social blogs. He has published a number of his works in international literary magazines and on various websites, and his poems have been translated into English, French, Dutch, Italian and German. He won the Ossi di Seppia International Poetry Prize in Italy, as the best foreign author in the category of poetry.

Kimberly Alidio is a poet, essayist, historian, and teacher. Recent publications include a critical poetics essay in e-flux journal; “*The Girls* and a Joke”: 1080 Press Newsletter #144; *ROOM TONE: Belladonna** Chaplet #297; and Teeter, winner of the Nightboat Poetry Prize and finalist for the Lambda Literary Award in Lesbian Poetry. She is the author of three additional books, and a fifth is forthcoming in Fall 2025. She teaches essay writing, critical pedagogy, and postcolonial history for various programs at Bard College, and serves as a mentor for The Poetry Project’s Emerge-Surface-Be Fellowship. She lives on Munsee-Mohican and Lenape lands along the Mahicannituck River, otherwise known as New York’s Hudson Valley, and supports collective resistance, collective refusal, and collective flourishing to dismantle settler colonialism everywhere.

Rui Baião was born on November 24, 1953, in Lisbon, Portugal, where he resides. He has practiced medicine until 2020. Baião has published the following titles: *Quiasma* (frenesi, Lisbon); *Mix Dixit* (frenesi, Lisbon); *nihil* (frenesi, Lisbon); *Aqueduto* (& etc, Lisbon);

SIÃO, an anthology of Portuguese poetry with Paulo da Costa Domingos and Al Berto (frenesi, Lisbon); *Maligno* (frenesi, Lisbon), *Nuez*, with photos by Paulo Nozolino, (frenesi, Lisbon); *bone lonely*, with photos by Paulo Nozolino (Steidl, Germany); *naevus* (Abysmo, Lisbon); *Asco* (DSO, Coimbra); *Rude* (Averno, Lisbon); *Insane* (Averno, Lisbon); *Antro* (Averno, Lisbon); *Barbearia Tiqqun* (viúva frenesi, Lisbon); *balabela* (Bestiário, Lisbon); *paciente zero* (Barco Bêbado, Lisbon); *Scaramuccia* (Bestiário, Lisbon); *Strangulatorivm* (Barco Bêbado, Lisbon); *Motim* (Barco Bêbado, Lisbon); *segredos d'estado*, with photos by Anders Petersen (Barco Bêbado, Lisbon).

Amitai Ben-Abba wrote and produced the award-winning documentary *Objector* (2019) and published fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and journalism on a variety of platforms, including *The Independent*, *Haaretz*, *CounterPunch*, *Witness*, *Your Impossible Voice*, *Tripwire*, and *Mondoweiss*.

Ben Bollig is Professor of Latin American Literature and Film at the University of Oxford.

Sarah Burgoyne lives and writes in Montreal/Tiohtià:ke, Canada. Her most recent book, *Mechanophilia*, is an infinite collaboration with American writer Vi Khi Nao based on the number pi.

Julie Carr's most recent books are *Mud, Blood, and Ghosts: Populism, Eugenics, and Spiritualism in the American West*; *Real Life: An Installation; Climate*, co-written with Lisa Olstein; and the essay collection, *Someone Shot My Book. Underscore*, a book of poems, will be out from Omnidawn in 2024. She lives in Denver

where she co-founded and helps to run Counterpath and teaches at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Catherine Cobham taught Arabic language and literature at the University of St Andrews, Scotland, for many years and was head of the department of Arabic and Persian from 2011 until 2021. She has translated the work of a number of Arab writers, including poetry by Adonis, Mahmoud Darwish, Ghayath Almadhoun, Tammam Hunaidy and Nouri al-Jarrah, and novels and short stories by Yusuf Idris, Naguib Mahfouz, Hanan al-Shaykh, Fuad al-Takarli and Jamal Saeed. She has written articles in academic journals and co-written with Fabio Caiani *The Iraqi Novel: Key Writers, Key Texts* (Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

CAConrad has worked with the ancient technologies of poetry and ritual since 1975. Their latest book is *Listen to the Golden Boomerang Return* (Wave Books / UK Penguin 2024). They received the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize, a PEN Josephine Miles Award, a Creative Capital grant, a Pew Fellowship, and a Lambda Award. *The Book of Frank* is now available in 9 different languages. They exhibit poems as art objects with recent solo shows in Spain and Portugal, and their play *The Obituary Show* was made into a film in 2022 by the artist Augusto Cascales. Visit them at <https://linktr.ee/CAConrad88>

Peter Constantine's recent translations include works by Augustine, Rousseau, Machiavelli, and Tolstoy; he is a Guggenheim Fellow and was awarded the PEN Translation Prize for *Six Early Stories* by Thomas Mann, and the National Translation Award for *The*

Undiscovered Chekhov. He is Professor of Translation Studies at the University of Connecticut and publisher of World Poetry Books.

Paulo da Costa Domingos (Lisbon, 1953) is a self-taught writer, publisher, and book antiquarian. He started publishing poetry at the age of 19, during the Portuguese dictatorship, and has published over fifty volumes, among which his poetic anthology *Urbe Sub Rosa – Carmes 1972-2021* (Barco Bêbado, Lisbon, 2022). *1.2.3.4.5.6.7.8.9* (viúva frenesi, Lisbon, 2024) is his most recent book. His prose was published as *Narrativa* ([Narrative] Alambique, Lisbon, 2016) and *A Morte dos Outros – Pastiches & Visões* ([The Death of Others – Pastiches and Visions] Alambique, Lisbon, 2023). Domingos is further known as the publisher of the publishing house Frenesi, a house where – self-taught and son of a cartographic draftsman – he has turned graphic arts into an unyielding vortex amidst the aesthetic mud pulsating in commercial bookshelves. The graphic design of the catalogue of the publishing house Barco Bêbado is the most recent litmus test of half a century of acquired skills.

Teresa Cabrera Espinoza (Lima, 1981) has published the collections of poetry *Sueño de Pez o neblina* (2010), *El nudo* (2012) and *Las edades* (2021), all with the editorial Álbum del Universo Bakterial, where she is an editorial reader of the poetry collection.

Edward Gunawan is a Bay Area-based writer and curator who authored Start a Riot! Prize-winning *The Way Back* (Foglifter Press, 2022) and *Press Play* (Sweet Lit, 2020). As writer, producer, actor, and/or director, Edward completed over 25 feature films and short projects, and their work has been published in *TriQuarterly*, *Aquifer*, *The Town* anthology (Nomadic Press, 2023), and elsewhere. An

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Rob Halpern's most recent collection is *Hieroglyphs of the Inverted World* (Kenning Editions 2021).

Interior Ministry is a critical art collective based in Prague, London & Mexico City (www.alienism.eu).

From the beginning of her career, French poet, playwright, and novelist **Leslie Kaplan** has been an important writer of the French left. She has published over twenty books in all three genres, many of which have been translated into German, Swedish, Spanish, Danish, Norwegian, and now, English. Her first book, *L'excès l'usine* (1982), gained the attention of writers such as Marguerite Duras and Maurice Blanchot, and became an important book for the '68 generation. In 2018, Commune Editions published *Excess—The Factory*, translated by Julie Carr and Jennifer Pap. This was the book's first translation into English, though it had been translated into five other languages.

Jazra Khaleed lives in Athens, writes exclusively in Greek, and is known as a poet, translator and filmmaker. He has published four collections of poetry and has been widely translated for publications in Europe, the US and Asia. He is a founding editor of the Athenian poetry magazine *Teflon*, which publishes cutting edge literature from Greece and the world. *The Light That Burns Us* (World Poetry Books) is the first book of his poetry to appear in English translation.

Dominick Knowles is a poet, adjunct professor, and poetry editor of *Protean* magazine. Their scholarly and creative works have appeared in *Post45*, *Amerikastudien*, *Prelude*, *Midnight Sun*, and elsewhere. With Mathilda Cullen, they are the author of *Stanzas for Four Hands: An Ophanim*. They demand a liberated Palestine and the abolition of our colonial world-system.

Mark Leech is a freelance editor and writer based in Oxford.

Conceição Lima was born in 1961 in the island nation of São Tomé and Príncipe, where she resides today. She studied journalism in Portugal and attended graduate school in London, where she later worked as a producer at the BBC's Portuguese Language Service. She has published four books of poetry: *O Útero da Casa* (*The Womb of the House*) in 2004, *A Dolorosa Raiz do Micondó* (*The Painful Root of the Micondó*) in 2006, *O País de Akendenguê* (*The Country of Akendenguê*) in 2011, and *Quando Florirem Salambás no Tecto do Pico* (*When Velvet Tamarinds Flower on Pico de São Tomé*) in 2015. Her selected poems in English, *No Gods Live Here*, translated by Shook, was published by Phoneme Media/Deep Vellum in April 2024.

Lotte L.S is a poet living in Great Yarmouth, England. Her writing includes a pamphlet with Tripwire, titled, *A town, three cities, a fig, a riot, two blue hyacinths, three beginnings, five letters, a "death", two solitudes, façades, four loose dogs, a doppelgänger, a likeness, three airport floors, thirty-six weeks...*; translations of the Moroccan poet and Marxist-feminist Saïda Menebhi, who died on hunger strike in prison in 1977, with See Red Press; and shorter self-published pamphlets of poetry such as *untitled (Iceland)*, and *TWELVE DAYS OF 21st CENTURY RAIN*.

Valeria Román Marroquín (Arequipa, 1999) studied Philosophy at the National University of San Marcos. She currently works as a translator and interpreter. She is the author of *feedback* (2016), *matrioska* (2018), and *triza la luz* (2020). She is the winner of the 2017 José Watanabe Varas National Poetry Prize and the 2017 Luces Prize, where she also won Best Poetry Collection of the Year. Her most recent books, *ana c. buena* (2021) and *MULTITUDES* (2023), were published by Taller Editorial La Balanza.

Noah Mazer (New York, 1997) is a poet and translator based in Mexico City. His translations have appeared in *Paintbucket.page*, *Poetry Northwest*, and *Protean*. He published his first full-length translation, Belén Roca's *Infrarealist Magic*, with woe eroa in 2022. His translation of Valeria Román Marroquín's *ana c. buena* is forthcoming in 2024 with Cardboard House Press.

Alicia Méndez Medina (Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic-1986) grew up in the Herrera neighborhood of West Santo Domingo. I am currently studying journalism at the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo. In 2018 I participated with a poetic text in the anthology *te quiero mi cielo*, published by the Chile-based La Fonola Cartonera publisher. In 2020, I contributed to the *Pandemic Zine* by the Catalina Clandestina collective from Argentina. In 2021, Fonola Nano published my poetry collection *Historias de Desarraigo*. I have also been published in international magazines such as the Afro-Spanish magazine *Afrofeminas*, the Colombian magazine *Mal de Ojo*; and I currently write the Bahía Negra column in the Mexican magazine *Vertedero Cultural*. As an associate researcher in the International Health Working Group from the Latin American

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Yedda Morrison makes her living as a photo stylist. Her books include *Crop* (Kelsey street), *Girl Scout Nation* (Displaced Press), *Darkness* (Make Now Press) and *The Arrangement* (Krupskaya). She lives with her daughter in San Francisco.

Cait O’Kane is a writer & digital photographer living in Philadelphia, where she was born. Her first collection of poetry, *A Brief History Of Burning*, was published by Belladonna Press Collective in 2020. Her subsequent chaplet “Homecoming” was published by Belladonna in 2023. Cait has previously contributed to *Tripwire* issues 17 & 19 & is honored to review the revolutionary work of a revolutionary writer in a revolutionary magazine.

Tōzaburō Ono (1903 - 1996) was a poet, anarchist, and literary theorist from Osaka, Japan. As a young poet, he was affiliated with the avant-garde journal, *Red and Black* (*aka to kuro*), and was arrested in 1935 under the Peace Preservation Law. He later founded the Osaka Literature School (*Osaka Bungaku Gakkou*) in 1952, where he taught youth and graduate poetry classes until shortly before his death in 1996.

Jennifer Pap teaches in the University of Denver’s program in French and Francophone Studies. Her research centers on poetry and painting of the 20th/21st century. Her published articles are on Apollinaire, Reverdy, Georges Braque, Ponge, Dominique Fourcade, and Leslie Kaplan. She has recently completed a translation of

Kaplan's *Désordre* (*Disorder*, AK Press, 2019) and is working on a translation of Kaplan's *Depuis Maintenant: Miss Nobody Knows*. She and collaborator Julie Carr have published selected poems by Apollinaire and by Kaplan in the *Denver Quarterly* and other journals. Their book-length translation of Leslie Kaplan's *L'Excès-l'usine* was published by Commune Editions on May 1, 2018.

Sergio Raimondi (b. 1968, Bahía Blanca, Argentina) is widely acknowledged as Argentina's most important and influential contemporary poet, with an international reputation in and beyond the Spanish-speaking world. His books include *Poesía civil* (2001) and *Catulito* (1999, 2017). He was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship in 2007. He teaches literature at the Universidad Nacional del Sur and was for many years Director of the Museo del Puerto de Ingeniero White.

stevie redwood is trying.

Joe Rupprecht is a poet and translator living in Oakland, CA. His work can be found in *Dream Pop Press*, *Spoon River Poetry Review*, *The Poetry Project Newsletter*, *Petrichor*, *Full Stop*, *Heavy Feather Review*, *The Cackling Kettle*, and elsewhere. He tweets @heterofobe

Katerina González Seligmann (they/she) is a writer, literary translator, and scholar of Caribbean literature and intellectual history. From Miami, Florida and San Antonio, Texas, Katerina is a second-generation immigrant of Cuban, Colombian, and Austrian Jewish descent. Katerina's translated books include José Ramón Sánchez's *The Black Arrow* (Linkgua, 2023; translated with Esther

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Kashif Sharma-Patel is a poet, writer and co-founding editor of the87press. Their debut collection *furnish, entrap* was published in 2024 by Broken Sleep Books. Kashif runs a newsletter *culture hawker* kashifsp.substack.com/

Shook is a poet and translator whose work with Conceição Lima has been recognized with a 2017 Translation Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and as a winner of the 2021 Words Without Borders—Academy of American Poets Poems in Translation Contest. Their translation of Lima's selected poems, *No Gods Live Here*, was published by Phoneme Media/Deep Vellum in April 2024.

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Andy Spragg lives in London. He has written several books of poetry, including *OoP* (Veer 2, 2022). His poetry and critical work have appeared in a variety of magazines, journals and websites, including *Chicago Review*, *Datableed*, *The Hythe* (87 Press), *PN Review*, *Poetry*

London, Poetry Review, Poetry Wales and The Quietus. He runs the small press RunAmok with Jimmy Cummins.

Rodrigo Toscano is a poet and dialogist based in New Orleans. He is the author of eleven books of poetry. His latest books are *The Cut Point* (Counterpath, 2023), *The Charm & The Dread* (Fence, 2022). Forthcoming is WHITMAN. CANNONBALL. PUEBLA. (Omnidawn). His *Collapsible Poetics Theater* was a National Poetry Series selection. His poetry has appeared in over 20 anthologies, including *Best American Poetry and Best American Experimental Poetry (BAX)*. Toscano has received a New York State Fellowship in Poetry. He won the Edwin Markham 2019 prize for poetry. He was an Honorable Mention for the 2023 International Latino Literary Awards. His previous books include *In Range, Explosion Rocks Springfield, Deck of Deeds, Collapsible Poetics Theater* (a National Poetry Series selection), *To Leveling Swerve, Platform, Partisans*, and *The Disparities*. He works for the Labor Institute in conjunction with the United Steelworkers, the National Institute for Environmental Health Science on educational training projects that involve environmental and labor justice culture transformation. rodrigotoscano.com @Toscano200

Hendri Yulius Wijaya is an Indonesian writer and researcher on gender, sexuality, cultural politics, and sustainability. He has extensively written and provided commentaries on Indonesian anti-LGBTQ+ panics and queer movements for various national and international media outlets. His academic research focuses on the development of Indonesian queer activism from the 1980s to the present, anti-LGBTQ+ panics, pornography, and sustainability, among other topics. He is also the co-editor of *Queer Southeast Asia*

(Routledge, 2022). For his long-term engagement with LGBTQ+ rights and sustainability issues, he was invited to deliver the 2023 Tomlinson Memorial Lecture at Nottingham University in the UK. *Stonewall Tak Mampir di Atlantis* is his debut full-length poetry collection.

Zêdan Xelef is a multilingual poet, translator, archivist. They grew up in the Êzîdî community in Shingal mountains, on Iraq-Syria borders, where they herded four goats with three other cousins. They are the writer of *A Barcode Scanner* (Kashkul Books 2020/Gato Negro Ediciones 2022) whose title poem was adapted into a poetry film of the same title, by Shook, that received the Award for the Best Film for Tolerance at the 2020 ZEBRA Poetry Film Festival in Berlin.

