

June 2012, The Poetry Project

Anne Boyer

SAY HISTORY HAS ENDED, SAY YOU WON.

Wept till seven over
 the corpses' hand bones
inserted into gourds for the clattering

hours between seven and eight
when the drum circles
against decomposition
hit it.

At eight the ritual burning
of model museums
begins, each tiny

Louvre

our first star
as first stars are cinders
in the coming night.

SAY HISTORY HAS ENDED, SAY YOU WON.

The police bully nothing
not any more

not with taxonomies or vision control
not with batons
or lethal and less-lethal lethalties.

Pint-sized now but ardent still
they're kept around

as minor strategies.
When we're bored

we set them on each other.
They're a memorial

we configure to war.

SAY HISTORY HAS ENDED, SAY YOU WON.

No longer must we jack fame
behind the bistros or star-walks.

No best person
arrives glitterless again.

No passerby is unstruck
by the unmurky quotient of our dazzling.

There will be no stranger unawed
by you serious
men

and you serious men
will not be unfawning
at how my eyelids have always been

foredoomed with Latinate
visions of skyscrapers
and giants

and/ or skyscrapers'
or giants'
ruin.

SAY HISTORY HAS ENDED, SAY YOU WON.

Remember the decorous nonviolence
of our formalism?

That's when we were whores!

It doesn't matter who's hot now
but once we lived
as an empty container,

were a check
on which was written VOID.

We went oinking
through the suburbs
at the symbolic contentment,

took a hit
while tagging jpegs,
clerical and feminine,

trembling at the texture
of our identity
errors.

SAY HISTORY HAS ENDED, SAY YOU WON.

The official version fluttered
desultory on the infrastructure
spine down on the city planner's
what. Gained a
dark vision of anti-civ
ic glory
I'd

gained a collapsible
#trope gained
a throwback bot-
tle full of gasoline gained exroads
hay-filled Fendi hand-
bags gained
hiking round hulls
of stalled
out hybrids

gained Godardishness and
gained 1000 lovers gained
OMG my amor mundi
these council
meetings
gained
the exposed
need for a course
of rhetoric

gaining
the frankly spoken
salvo of a death scene

lost my traviata

have I from this now forgot the hospital
my body bleeding poor weak female
and exposed?

SAY HISTORY HAS ENDED, SAY YOU WON.

Finally the phalanxes of dogs
advance
 toward the big box stores

their choir asked
 “How much love can you handle?”

their choir’s answer
 “None.”

Every shaggy fourierist its own
indifference
 that no-like-no of trotting
 not even bothering
 about obedience
 anymore.

they give no shit
 about feed times or leashes,

 let themselves go.

SAY HISTORY HAS ENDED, SAY YOU WON.

Goddamn shame
and godbless our precarity

every middling thing we'd done
a rollbacked offbrand sadsack whatevs
like a ceremony performed
entirely of officiant's error,

ghostwritten case files with subheaders
like "self-antipathy," 38 volume
collection of selected ruminations
lavishly annotated FML.

No more ritual inadequacy,
no more those longish nights, those drinking songs,
how we celebrated, as assholes, quaffed regret.

SAY HISTORY HAS ENDED, SAY YOU WON.

It's probably too obvious to write down
but every killed wife rose alive again,
the raped girls

unraped.

We got back the babies
aborted

when we were poor.

SAY HISTORY HAS ENDED, SAY YOU WON.

Highly against shopping and really for love
new languages

formed nounless, rough-housed,
made of modifiers mostly
but prepositional, too:

“with” and “boundless”

“of” “foundational”

“anti-spleen-ish” before-and-afters.

Math became the science

of both

anglers and their fishes. The rococo of money
we reduced to poetry:

our metonymic exchange rate

our foundling abstract.

SAY HISTORY HAS ENDED, SAY YOU WON.

Prove this can happen
and I swear I will swaddle you up in the streets of the eternal city.
You will startle only against
the constraint of bliss.

What I am trying to tell you
is that you will be like a baby
in heaven about whom a God says
"Whose streets?

YOURS."

L'enfant possible
and superior idiot,

every nipple will be egalitarian
and dripping nectar.

There will be life-style magazines
devoted to
the first days of the
fulsome
populace

I'm always a mother:

I'll take egregiously careful care of you.

SAY HISTORY HAS ENDED, SAY YOU WON.

All I ever wanted was the opposite
of yoga,

to be Dante never Beatrice,

shanty towns
not CVS-es,
sexual love as a library

also poets' councils,
bodily risk refiguring,

all my friends in one city

and an upswelling of feminized anarchism
aware of natality
and natality's
forms.

SAY HISTORY HAS ENDED, SAY YOU WON

before sweeping everything
up, brushing the floored
day under, spent
scraps piecing them
selves
automatically into a new geo-
metric relentlessness.

I'm just saying everything's a quilt
massively
occurring

wrapping the expanding family
in an aggressive
weight of the
provisional.

One people under
blankets --
you're my true romance-romance romance.

You there in the sleep of humans
back to futurity again.

Sunnylyn Thibodeaux

Necessary Feedback / All Recall

“The device must accept
any interference received”

For I hang my voice
so that my ear may repeat
vibration after vibration
all strung together
with the nerve of morning

Haven't we fixed the heavens
long enough with soundless openings?
sometimes wayward
grey uncertainty

Press the red button
when you hear a sound

//

was that a sound?

I'm stuck on a choke
a six time hush

remember the way we quench
the way we unstrung
the way we ghost-out

I cannot hear you
but your callings
will not go unused
We are the thrashers
of the undertow
mistakes become identity
three miles out, matter of fact

The Village We Couldn't Enter

for Shay Zeller

Regardless where I was
I was somewhere else
so said nothing
stretch language so

There gave our blue
our grasp, our dreamlessness
 reached in, picking up
 to map and remap the shiftings
Where our feet have gone, tongues
tell tales. What was previous
 grows out in our hair
 the perfection we quest
 whir of mystics

What critics we are!
 checking boundaries
 alternate worlds
 over the draw bridge
 just past the roar
of the train
 where our feet have never gone
 so said nothing
 stretch language so

No Stillness in Understandings

Tonight is the eve of the eve
sightful explosions of unnumbered varieties
freely penciled ruins, run amuck
All the provisions of McAllister:
purple plum leaves and a lemon tree
amuse the inward cravings
How fortunate to be struck with wonder
warm night still wet
conquest of over indulgence
Don't hold your pendings that way
you'll catch your death,
nothing obvious
Inner sanctum and a standard light
shadow out water hangings and dissipate
The language becomes commonplace
and then nothing.

Carry on

Which Is Not So Dark

Regardless,
we sought traditional
mysteries but were crowded with small
talk and emo we took leave of
empty signals
track death quickly
burned each other's thumbs
how it oughtta be
what role to play
how to deviate
roll of tongue and tip
words not withstanding words

How many times can I mention
roof-top doorways – the puzzle
found in the exit to a 4 story
drop. This is not a metaphor
This is my neighbor
Regardless,

I've never seen it
open. All images have left

This is true of sight
This is true of pause
Try again

Deep in the Avenues

I

With the reversal of a one
all my wishes are at the bottom
of a pond. Suburban statements
cavaliered. There are a dozen
miles of dragons' dens, a sawmill,
a locust tree. Mutterings fall from
chimneys to stranger beds
vaguely assigning traits to tolerance
and misplaced conjunctions,
a versatile "g", overextended "b"

We need something to do with our words
to keep from the anthem, crawl back under
the flyaways.

Standing in
the uncontainable and soundless
overflow, our eyes turn the color
of fog, unbroken. Unwritten
claims marked by the ink of India
Without anchors or hyperboles,
we'll set foot in the opposite
wood, pristine controlled
proportion where the sun's
shrouded in dense possibility.

II

We could go out in the drizzle
and leave wet imprints
of where we've been

Thirty-five years of left rights
or right lefts

I'm tired of the car-alarm honks
that crowd the block, careless
neighbors, damn motorcycles

I'm tired of *No Color*, a 10 hour repeat
but it has nothing to do with
the relationship. Promise.

and now it's lost—
the ability to create static
the names of thimbles and curtains
the hushes of brass from the sky

A sense of urgency sits
in the tight quiver of my lips
No new invention. 1 item remaining

III

Baby coughs a hack
 hack/cough
listening with one ear
deciphering bark or whoop
one ear distracted by
 sirens uphill
 rubber soles skidding burns
 downhill tracking cars
she knows to look for Papa

Seventeen minutes pass
no bark no whoop
no sound. hum. hmmm
ear tuned out
head tuned in

It's one thing
then one thing
then one thing
cough. cough. hack

Quick finger flip of drumsticks
repeat repeat repeat
nap two. dumptruck uphill
roar grumble repeat
one ear tuned in

IV

Figure
I'd enjoy the far-off
hills in contrast with the scrapers
of the Bay's line. Lost visitors
scan addresses fucking
with my zen. Hiding out below
the neighbor's view, counting
the minutes I receive
It's been too long, even
the cobwebs have cobwebs
It's 380 days of practice today
still shaky in the knees
what we were counting on
is out of our league. Can you tell
when I've read too much junkmail?
Can we bring back the use of swell?
The depth of sound is how we sing

HELP ME SONNETS

Teenage torture dream
End of a five-day bender
Interesting perspective

Beachfront property
Face continues to cause pain
Pinot grigio

Spawn of mushroom rock
Overhead bonding matter
Overall death smell

A good sense of planes
Presidential pardon
Recent death of sibling

Dance little sister
Commie credit union scam
Mom Dad Alone Time

Sweet, smart, always game
Sophomore year Holyoke
A slight resemblance

Public defender
She takes after her mother
Destroy this picture

Black patent leather
First class, special menu
Radio City

Late frost, April dawn
An artist, she don't look back
Like, lacking manners

JUST OUT OF CURIOSITY

You ever hear of knocking? Leave of absence is not just for girls, my friend, nor is the entrails of a shawl that clash with the finials in the entrance hall. I am difficult to trace yet easy to color. This is nothing but a pity ploy (sticking my well-mapped tongue to that ice sculpture). Hours blur, each a quid pro quo. Do not make sudden movement or you will slowly shift into the realms of history. It happens when you're sleep, seemingly accidental. This is not the work I intended to be doing, but times occasionally change.

THAT'S ONE WAY OF LOOKING AT IT

The yes man called from the cockpit: THERE'S A WORD FOR PEOPLE LIKE US. We have been accused of harboring an irrational attachment to compressed air. Can you sense the overhead? And the tiny horizons over yonder? *We no longer serve snacks* was a bi-partisan ploy to make me jump off the bar cart in a fetal position. A geographical cure never tasted so good (the cumulative effect of growth not progress). This is what opportunity tastes like: free floating clotted cream.

Untitled Chad Poem

To Tony Towle

Gradually Chad began
to see words
as objects flying around
him, bouncing against
each other, etc
It was one of the most
Extraordinary events
of his life
like the first time
he dreamt in French,
saw a bear in person,
felt the instantaneous
Effect of Prozac,
that slight bubbling
A knowing that
Less days
Will be wasted now
A reaffirmation
of the power
of BIRTH order

POTATO BLIGHT

No one believed him
that CNN reported
IN THE SAME BREATH
about the fire
in the factory
in Florenceville
and the invasion of
KUWAIT
ALL
while he was dressing
for dinner
IN FRANCE

BOTTOM LINE

He could be
Happy doing
Anything
As long as they
Gave him
Enough to do

PLANET SERZONE

To Tony Towle

Jot somebody a note beamed up
during the floorshow
It is unwise to fake being done to death
Which precludes another turncoat, but never two
As we sit smack in the middle to sway them
But only get half-way past the shaftway
And the elevator pauses to catch its breath
Perpetually sandwiched in between, flagellating
Anticipating a jam-packed go-with-the-flow evening
Filing solo requires a certain amount of due diligence
Dodge and burn little more than a lifetime away
Those bowdlerizations require finger bowls
Without question, thinking straight/ Shouting out harsh verbs
Could entail solving the problem ("Hate on, player")
The upshot being a congregation that supports the arts projects
Please ignore us until the closing statement and then we'll seek sanctuary
With like-minded individuals and then take it from there

Simon Schuchat

TO THE TUNE OF "GARDEN FULL OF FLOWERS"

for Bob Holman

Too many feelings
Walk to a singing place
Little pearls of the emerald cover
Green tube top red shorts
Slowly waking in golden beer can
Paradise flowers tied to
Singing girl in bean-shaped hat
Dreaming ten years
Resting along the fence
Drunk or pale like the sun
So quiet in the wasted city

Mountains brushed with tiny clouds
Sky stuck on weak weeds
Painted corners noisy, broken woodsman's gate
Turn, stop, carrying a pole
Waiting together to go different directions
How many paradises and old affairs
Vaguely turned my head
Smokey dryness one at a time
Beyond the setting sun
A cold crow of a million dots
Flowing water in a single township

Wild, old pigeon hurrying
Rain fat plums
Noon shade blesses clear rotund trees
Ground ghosts hear the mountain
Clothing soaked with swallow smoke
Man quiet, bird sings to itself
Over a little bridge
Dripping with new green
Resting on an old fence
Yellow roof and bitter bamboo columns
Think I'll float down the Nine Rivers in my boat

Tears & years, like a society of sparrows
Blowing and flowing as weak as the ocean
Coming to send forth tall azure
Let none think beyond their bodies
High & near, seeking their forefronts
Sad drunkenness of the southern river foreigner
Who doesn't dare listen
Hurried pipes extravagant strings
Song stretching like a friend:
That first peaceful pillow
Full of my drunken sleep

Rain washes the tall cypresses
Dew changes the silent weeds
A solid clang beyond the building in full fall
Dirt flowers follow emerald
Sparkling fires drop to a shaded wall
Quietly hearing cold sounds cut short or continued
Tiny turning rhymings
Cold gasps bitterly sinking
Try to win a friend
Seems like moving an iron
Your feet crack, you wake, your heart a tool

I remember when I was a boy
I called for a lamp from the cave
I walked a bit to reach the sound
I had the responsibility of a shadow body
I could only chase what could be chased
Hand in hand I faced glorious play and struggle
Stopping at a little timing shack
Clever like a dragon, painted in gold
Now I've stopped speech
From below my bed
I've cold night and lovely whine

With dawning color the clouds open
Spring as casual as human thoughts
Gather rain kneel pass return to clear
Ancient timing shack, fragrant magnolia
Flying sparrows kicking red petals
Dancing tied up the thin yew falls over
Beyond the suede boots
Bridge of green flat water
In the east wind
Glimmering willow by a red gate
Lowering and pulling the tiny western dipper

Return to coming & going
Where'm I gonna return?
10,000 miles home to sleepy eyebrows
100 years of half-strength
Coming days, not so bitter
Sitting to see yellow island again glisten
Boy is over
Southern accent, southern song
Friends in the mountains
Chickens, pigs, social drinking
Working hard on the eastern slope

Say what?
Now I'm supposed to go?
Human life is big business
Coming, going, like something wound
Wait, slowly watch breezy fall
Fallen river's clear waves
Spare willows: good in front of the house
Answering my thoughts
Nobody to trim the mulberry branches
So I'll turn & say
Old man from south of the river
Right now let's join that pair of lonesome anglers

The corner of the pot has no name
The head of a turtle, small & sharp
Figure I'll come to touch the busy extremes
Everything already settled
Who's weak and who's strong
So I rush my not yet old body
I've got to rest
Some people are far from crazy
Within a hundred years
The murky learning's intoxicating
36,000 stages

What is there among humans?
Master of the Void sees the usual
Response says, seek the unchanging
Sit among my crazy friends
Wild head & unhappy belly
I inform them the golden branch droops
Ten fingers emerge
Spring shoots delicate & long
My family I've seen
Everyone greater than Song Yu
I imagine they're the image of him reciting his rhapsody

If you think that's heavy
Can you count higher?
Wind & rain are specially dreary
Half of me wants protection
& now am I gonna have to die?
I'll talk the short, expatiate the long
Happily face the clear billows, the white moon
Moss spread out
Cloud screen high & spreading
It's good in the south
A thousand bottles of exquisite wine

33 years – now who is left?
I'm counting on you to join me in the south
Zippity blue & green
Frost, bitter, a difficult pair
I know there's a road to the old country of captain's island
With clouds floating overneath
Bamboo & pine framed windows
On the southern bank of the river
Not because I'm sending you there
Rather I know you want to go home
A song called "Fragrance fills the garden"

Fragrant thickness on a carved plate
Cold life, ice arrows
Picture a house that leaves the shiny wind
The master of the house with heavy feelings
Opens the feast with red corn
Oily jade circles sweep white head
Matched threads, tender
Neatly woven magician gown
Song sound ends
Empty porch: turn to moon
Echoes still drawn out & fluttering

Snip snip
Far off passing showers
Wind dawns in the trees & they snap
Smoke covering a cloudy tent
I should like to grab
& gulp dry the jug
A private person & venerable officer
Just as in dream
Facing the other scorched by needles
Cut short the song
Traveler doesn't rise
Boat goes slap slap in the water

A naked ghost
At the edge then
Something fragrant after cutting the sound
Belted skirt lift light
Slow up heart in green shack
Thinking with name remaining
That coming, when did see it?
Empty as mole
A place of hurt
An elevated look-out you cannot see from
Lamp light already yellow dusk

Bob Holman

How Kora Was Born

--as sung by Papa Susso to Bob Holman

This story begins long long long ago
So long ago that it was a place not a time
There was a man
He was so alone
The only person he could talk to was Africa
Luckily there was a tree nearby
Even more luckily behind that tree
That's where his partner was hiding
All the sun and all the water were condensed
Into a single tiny block
Which the man planted in the sandy soil
He blew and he blew on that spot
Each time he blew he thought he heard something
What he was hearing was of course his partner singing
The man didn't even know what singing was
Because he could only talk
He couldn't sing yet
So he blew and he listened, blew listened blew listened
And the plant pushed out dark green
And began to twist and grow
A vine reaching for the breath
And stretching towards the song
(Because it was made from sun and rain, remember?)
So at the end of the vine that was the calabash
And the tree it was not a tree anymore
It was the neck and handles
That was when the man's partner Saba Kidane
Came out into the open (but that's another story)
And the breath and the singing and the vine?
Well, there are 21 strings, what do you think?
And now you say what about the bridge and the cowhide
And the rings that tie the strings to the neck
So you can tune the kora
Hey, what about the thumbtacks that hold
The cowhide taut over the calabash
And the resonator hole
Well you go right on talking about all that
I'm playing kora now
Next time I'll tell you about the cow

Song for Two Koras

Now there are two koras uhn huh!
They are talking to each other singing saaaaaame song
two parts one song 42 strings

You can hear the words even though no one is singing, Listen
Two koras make a river
Kora sound makes a river run ummmm
On the boat the calabash boat the view is fantastic
Float back to the river's beginning uhuh
Ok, now let's start the story.

Ready?

Not ready to start the story but how about the song?
Not ready to start the song but how bout the float, the river, the boat?
first song sings for
The second and in singing for becomes the story oh
Sing for the second the other the third with ears, the partner
The moon, the river with ears moon reflected in water, Listen

Hey there for a minute it felt like
It felt like we weren't making music
We weren't playing it was music playing
Music was just playing itself
Music, it was making, it was making us
Making us up, can you imagine
Can you believe Can you imagine Listen

The clouds, they hold the rain you know
What surprises me is when we hear two koras
Maybe balafon and see clouds that hold rain
And then it is Dana who steps in!

Dana, Dana Bryant will never guess these are clouds loaded
Loaded up with rain the way the kora ahhh
The kora holds the music
The music ahh ahh holds the words yes yes
The words that make us up as we go along
Kora Boat River Cloud Rain
Papa Susso Sunkung and Alhassan
What more do you want
What more than two koras making rain
So we can get out of the rain without getting wet
Talking talking ahh ahh
Koras in conversation
Not about music just music
Not singing just walking
Walking on river floating flow
Listen that is singing now sing and flow

Kaira Peace

--as sung by Papa Susso to Bob Holman

Kaira is a word
It is the word for Peace
Kaira means Peace I think you can hear that
Kaira Oh how Papa Susso loves that word Kaira
Papa Susso, the Internet griot with a BA degree
It is such pleasure to sing Kaira up and down kora strings
Listen to Kaira, that pleases Peace, Please Peace Now
Slavery is over, that's what peace means
1945, West Africa, you know the World War
Was happening – Kaira – but in West Africa,
In Senegambia, 1945 was the year slavery was abolished
No more slaves means peace – Kaira!
Now it so happened that a few years later
There was a rich man in Guinea
Name of Kaira-ba Toure, his name
Was Peace and he loved Peace so it was all together
And there was a great great great balafon player, I'm talking
Teneng Sory Diabate, who saw this and rededicated Kaira
To this patron of the arts and this patron of Peace, Kaira, Kaira-ba

Now listen here is Kaira

Slavery abolished but people still fight for power, Kaira
The jeli sing Kaira and people who come from the slave families,
Well, they still call themselves slaves, they walk around
Only now they follow no one. They are looking for work like
everyone else.
And the power struggles you could say they go on to this day
This New Year Day let's know this word Kaira
It's a word for Peace, it pleases peace, Please Peace Now
With slaves in Mauritania and Sudan -- Kaira
With political prisoners in US and Eritrea -- Kaira
With people dying in Iraq even though the war is not a war -- Kaira
The kora plays the contradictions and plays for Kaira, for Peace
That is Kaira, the word for Peace
Please Peace Now
Kaira is the word for Peace

Sunjata (short version)

This is the part of the song on my Sotuma Sere CD
Hear the kora? It is walking
It is walking the way that Sunjata learned to walk
The Lion King is now walking
Let me tell you his story

Well I think you probably know what this song is about
It's the great great story of the Founder of the Malian Empire
All your relatives are in this story
That is, if you are from West Africa
If you are from West Africa, this is your history
The Iliad and the Odyssey all rolled into one
The story has been told manymany times
It has even been written down many times

If I happen to see you in the Gambia
I will be veryvery happy to sing you this song
I will be veryvery happy to tell you the story

For now though, this will do,
That you know who the great king was, Sunjata!
That he was born a cripple and could not walk
But through the love and principles of his mother
And through his own courage and belief
He walked
He not only walked
But he ran and fought all for the Good
All for the People
And when he needed to speak,
He looked to his griot Balla Faseke Kouyate
Who passed his story along
For me to sing to you today
Walk along with the kora
Dance the story of Sunjata
Here we go

Corn for Rosalie on my Birthday

at 7 a.m.
my birthday
I open the door
to look for Rosalie
& there she is!
Bowing her head
as she always does
these ten for so years
& I dip a metal bowl
into the 50 lb. paper bag
in the hallway
& pour it upon the
bluestone patio outside
Hear her crunch the corn
like someone eating Grape Nuts
this birthday morn
in my mini-flow
within a Bigger Flow
on the Edge of the Great Flow

—August 17

Because I Can

Reading old letters
stretching the mind back
to understand conversations
36 years ago
in order to create
a structure
of Text

Why?
Because I can.

Saying Goodbye

Bus to NYC
to see Tuli
in ICU at Downtown Beekman hospital

He's peaceful
with now-&-then irregular heart
& non-functioning kidneys

I sing "Morning Morning"
leaning down close to his right ear

& Coby and I sang "The Garden is Open"

I noticed a tear
 had formed at the corner
 of his right shut eye.

As I left I told him
he was a great genius
& that we all loved him.

July 8, 2010

Million bell

Gunmetal million bell
this wide of the mark
tip cuttings propagate

like seaside tickets go
to his sweetheart with
hot little breath for sea

lion woman on medicine
lake, makes quick work,
sends broth up, post-

sentiment remotely studies
without dreary interpretation
sublime interruption, how

easily sucked in, both fish,
my dreams I bought I'll
drown my book, clean sack

of sun, it's only natural, world,
as far as your desires go you
seem pretty real if modular.

Gut flora

Phlox in a jar softens from
the sphere of it, the whole
sagging thing too distracted
to be very kind which is weary
you hurry my Cori not wrong
about this prayerly in shapewear
cut through here for bringing
a case, you again tipsy told
her I was nice, very mobilized
with hotter eyes all at the top
bottles little assaults on safety,
bald baby in her backseat gums
pink pastry, witchy necessary
habits flower his chest how Sharon's
secular crepuscular sky gathers
to its sky indescribability then
longish in learned airlock entry
together imagine to be rubbed
clear everywhere like cleanser.

Active system

Ran through car lots like belonged
flossy substitute from the start
not to understand just kissing
more than open shirts, snakes
over turf, hyperaccumulators, roots
that propagate laterally desirable
for tees, fairways, soft as chalk, kissing
him apart to adequate information
—what's a fairway anyway? Reedy
roadbed, inadequate aqueduct, heavy
metals poured on this which sucks up
heavy metals. Enjoy your formal phasms,
squeeze my hand hard as it hurts or fly
up with them in a network, revival field.

Poet's work

for Claire Devoogd & Claire Donato

Here starry Mary's made
of something you might want,
went toward real trees if that's
feeling required, really he tried
to remember the job, division
leaps, affection spent setless
as a spill how we all wish to go
home together this many dreams
removed herds another over
heart, loose card of light enough
repressed thrill perfectly expressed
in switches in crabgrass heard
through original door cider spills
down he threw, started upstate, you
must picture of me delight, single
new study though not spectacular
local blossoms all of right now
collected for me to like very much.

Leisure arts sisters brothers

for Andrew Durbin & Jennifer Nelson

Certain of my emergencies the personality
of modern catastrophe, pylons into earth
gruesomely cut, grass too much cleared
away from benches, some cannery glowing
up, incredibly gaining, the crackle, it's
a mark of you alone, so look at sex
and think of nothing, sea splashings,
rowlocks' clunk, sunny waste sunk below
her line flashes, prized, out this noon
like that you went with civic thump
heals proof over stylish, dirigible flusher,
twists, curls in yellow short shorts or
in the quality of short shorts, how you went
our little garden stretches me to him.

Turning on an erotic theme

Merrily casual our city floats, a catheter
lifting sluggish mists, defrosts skylight
lower branches trim, satisfies his torture

to be a thought on landscape disfigured
tediously through abbreviation, asks "you"
from cupola popular but heat-sick "come"

along dark mountains tremulous with
companionship, fizzy air, little story I
dedicate, paper wine, alcohol water, Ted's

thin ocean joice, vernal beer your balmy
sport or normal saline till finally no field, no
time to pin hair straight, anyway she leaves

before the wedding, like school, not enough
dresses, special sleep among some relatives
daily wadded up for languor, network

television, Ada on the railing has a boyfriend
surlly with championship. What a breeze
achieves in tangles scoops my skirt, hers

you fix as covers after, live oaks list, it's trying
to mean we stumble, idiot heart again
healed through abbreviation, day becomes

very different, foggy trip, an inch more
air, couldn't have been hopeful: beautiful
room so full, this is so few of my books.

Corrine Fitzpatrick

Amphetamine salts

for Arlo Quint

The world is full of possibilities
and sleep is to be caught
in a few good boughts each week
The soundtrack Joseph Haydn
as interpreted by Gould
with intermittent baths
of voice when pressure
drops too low

It's alright
perfect even
to spend each night
alone

Apartment's clean
bills paid online
blood orange tastes
so fresh
in clear harmonious
union
future present past

Cheers and cheers

for Will Edmiston

I really admire
the insides of your words
 glint spigot
 guts the bridge
I really admire your
galoshes
 lela
once
 you got a new president
for your bday
feels good to be the cutting edge
 like filmmaker
just sorting data
 like Bas Jan Ader
smooth sailing
c u in a bit
 maybe that's you now
walking in the do

A pride in my home

Imagined invasion costing us all of these feelings
 greediness hunger frantic for time to slow
on Carmine the washer said *hear about Whitney?*
 something like pale bluish light
quit my day quit it my day

each loss is all the losses
 each thought is all the thoughts of all the thinkers filtered through my friends
There's no time like the present somebody said
 the here and now
breathe in through your nose
 green terra cotta and gold

Since free will is illusion I'm watching apartment plants grow
 I like how they don't bother with intention
necessity of
 their *port de bras*
efficiently force-like, organic

Gay Boyfriend No Conundrum

my blood brain barrier hurts

Danny I love you your parents

are splitting up

conditions are awful but stakes aren't really so high

lipids are racing

maudlin and sensate

paraffin mis-

took for trees

what would it be like to be a well-oiled

machine

Honestly, I wanna live with fucking freedom

for Anna Gustavi

Pixels are scattered picture plane torqued my muscles are sore, overused
Deep cleft in my
ridge line. Asymmetry noted. Today's sidewalk black diamond today sky overcast My
bladder a globe tossed to sea. Street birds are huddled in disrepaired awnings
Virus commutes to my ear
Not impoverished I'm spending the sheaths of my nerves for my fare
It comes and it goes
Quiver of shrapnel gone for a smoke
lodized droplets like manna will fall from the sky will polish my clock
Personally speaking the
workers will triumph you know what I'm saying, peace will be wrought
Tepid inception ten glaciers might melt first. The lakes of their sorrow will dampen the
flame
with little to zero collateral loss
There won't be a martyr
I have no religion. Nothing about this resembles an ark
How dare you infer such an
impolite frame

Like a dog with its head out the window

for Fern Silva

all ambivalence

cut in camera

thanks

for the reminder

that it's good to be

alive

Laurie Duggan

Allotment #42

above the window a bellows
stone bottles (Morandi)
a kerosene lantern, old books

Lamb's Conduit,
March 15th

Allotment #47

peacock
brimstone &
gold tip

(a field note)

Allotment #51

sudden foreclosures

the state of the nation

Allotment #66

coppiced beech
a dumped mattress

soft mould under dead yew leaves

red wood ants build hills with these splinters
some distance from the source

**WARNING // Do not play
on the sculptures**

these have disappeared
replaced by foxgloves

an artist's name, a date, a serial number
but no art

instead
a sachet of HP sauce on the track

Allotment #68

some way from the sea
on a previous shoreline

The Ship (and all
who sail in her

a U-boat in an English canal
smelling of pub gravy

Allotment #71

The front bar of the Bear,
quiet at this hour, a smell of Brasso

and a hint of rain, of more perhaps,
a speckled pigeon crosses the square

passing the headless dummy outside the Op Shop,
Carter's Newsagent closes,

the pitch of the roof above the stationers
almost mansard with lead ridges

everything grey and white (white
of buildings, grey of sky) and red brick

Allotment #77

carved on the surface of a
dresser, the mark of Zorro

(an early act of vandalism)

Allotment #82

knobs of black fungus,
Cramp Balls or
King Alfred's Cakes,

white saucers (brackets)
to the side of the stump

HEADLESS OR HEAD

Headless or head lowered bowed down
I have legs could club you where
The zygote lives A love zygote
A zig-zag stream in orange

What are these metallic squiggles
and yellow that giant urge
to hover The place of death
and lentil burger dinner

Head down golden golden
Yet another blue explosion
crowned my head and wrung me out
Removed a tooth so I cleaned it

YOU

I cut the onions
You in the sun among
the multifarious faces
that open and color

(flowers)

How can one move
beyond doubt?

I felt or I felt I felt
i.e.: I am a striver
and could never smash
you Catch my cloak

How are we bruised like
this blue the sad
song that one
and drown in you

- 1) Dink Roberts
- 2) John Snipes
- 3) Clarence Ashley

OWL

Water spirit owl
cold bird Libra moon
who said forever
and you lie were some wing

Or is it a pink mid-song world
owl who also means water moon forever
born of you like my sons emerged
as owl does each night weighing matter

I don't mean to turn to
you who I love like poetry
and owl eyes trees bloom
tresses in the tree a pear blossoming

Earth moon flames pink and dark is
a flame of you and a force
form I said I looked up and forever
there There there my eyes

Owl said don't destroy your house
and run small flattened pods
and seeds Build it in the high thick trunk
the strongest place wavy edged leaves

IS THIS WHAT HAPPENED?

Just now
the plum blossoms
have arrived
near sunset
a dove lands
thru the silvery sky
and the next day's fog

Christopher Isherwood says
that Vivekananda says
there is no such thing as evil

like Corporate sponsored democracy

'Emptiness' being the infinity of things
W.S. Merwin reads out at Commonweal Sunday afternoon
Lots of poets from out of town
Born in 1927, son of a Presbyterian minister.
Refused to go to Trungpa's Halloween party.

Lacy dark gothic clouds
race across a gold
full moon

Still at the kitchen sink
doing the dishes

400 BCE Ananda is asked
to "recite from memory
everything you heard
Gotama say."

Now Year of the Iron Rabbit
a desperate focus
on 'self' survival
--victims of independence
and freedom

"Why can't we do it
the way we USED to do it"

Found a pen
So much better now
Not as angry at the 'consensus' president

And not cringing so much at the memory of my note

left on neighbor's car
"Park on your Own side of the road
--THE OWNERS of this side of the road"

"The sympathetic gesture
the understanding smile
I wish we could but we can't
and it's not my fault"

Sounds
laden with rain the plum branch
breaks
as Caesar returns to Rome on the tube
in triumph

'Nothing must impede the nation's growth'

Four large tide surges

Sound on the page
Acoustical map. Sonic scoring.

"The heart is not an individual possession. It is not yours alone."
A deep and pervasive melancholy.

"Tear yourself away"

—January through March 2011

From Fiends Fell Journals

6th November 2003

Worked at home until 2.30 pm; it was a struggle between appetite and attainment. Read a few Border Ballads.

As I walked through the hill mist to Fiends Fell a large bird lifted just high enough above the close horizon for me to see its underside as it peeled back below the escarpment and out of sight. So light coloured and large that I thought it was a heron at first but moments later it reappeared in silhouette, lifting to the level of my eye-line to assess the danger that I represented. It was a buzzard. When I reached the summit the bird was gone. A reclining limestone boulder patched with buzzard coloured lichen and situated just below the oncoming clouds offered partial shelter from the fast cold Atlantic wind. There was another rock at its base and together they formed a comfortable chair so I sat and read *The Gypsy Laddie*, and a few others ballads. After a while I became too cold to hold the book.

“Tis not Frost that freezes fell
Nor blawin Snaw’s Inclemency;
Tis not sic Cauld that makes me numb,
But my Love’s Heart grown cold to me”¹

The mist lifted and the sky lowered with a peculiar light that shrouded the surrounding peaks—dark misty blues, with a band of rosy gold on the distant snow line. I strolled through the heather and whipped grass, stopping occasionally to gaze at the rich green sphagnum mosses near a patch of burnt ground. Aware of a sudden calm I began to wonder how long the wind had been silent—did I catch the very instant when it stopped, or just become slowly aware of its absence? Then I heard a noise like a thin wind rising through reeds, but nothing stirred except the air some twenty feet above me where I saw a fast moving shadow, a wide massive sweep of starlings. They made no sound save two thousand wings flapping, or flaffing as I’d earlier read in *Lord Thomas and Fair Annie*:

¹ Waly, Waly, Gin Love Be Bony

There war four an twontie gray goshawks
A flaffin their wings sae wide
To flaff the stour thra off the road
That fair Annie did ride"²

They swept out into the mist on either side of me like the hurried rustling of a long silk dress. Then the silence. As I moved on the wind took up again as though it had opened to let the starlings through. I pulled my scarf closely and my hat down to meet it and followed a sheep trail towards a cairn perched on a summit overlooking the Eden valley, intending to enjoy the gloaming from there. As I approached the cairn a large bird flew up out of the rising dusk silently lifting its dark form to alight. But when I got there the creature was gone, and I wondered if I had really seen it. Or perhaps it was the bird from earlier, always ahead of me and just out of sight.

² [Child. vol iv p 470]

23 January 2005

A still, heavy frost on the tiles reflects light from half a moon, to bright constellations above the frozen earth. A north-easterly wields the lacerating cold with surgical precision making it painful to expose flesh for more than a few seconds. The small frozen tarn at Fiends Fell was decorated by wind as it spun a tango etching scribbles on the ice. In an attempt to find a pattern of direction—to record, or even paint the wind I took pictures. Reeds bent by rime. Movement in a still frames the invisible.

24 January 2005

—minus 4 outside before measuring the wind's mean bite.

11th February 2005

Having slept without the radio to talk me out of insomniac thoughts and because there was no sound from winds I woke refreshed, with sunlight on the bed and a horn in my hand, conscious of solitude in a way that's new and untroubled. There was a taste of spring in the air this morning but I'm unable to attribute that to the bright weather or the erection.

Clouds shift, shiver out the sun. A slanting sheet of sleet blown over the fells from the east without settling at all, delivered with insistence by a twenty to thirty mph wind. Suddenly it is very February.

On Fiends Fell yesterday I saw a pair of Golden Plover—and for the first time at this height, a solitary lapwing. The lapwings usually stay lower down in the shelter of the valley where they are plentiful. In Alston a thrush sang, but up here spring is sluggish. When it arrives snipes and curlews return to the hills drenched with larks singing this otherwise songless place awake.

A sleet storm veils the fells and thickens into quick snow. Silence falls to the crack of a burning fire. My pen scratches across paper.

The weather is overseer here. Snow turns to rain; the light withdraws as clouds of hill mist drift, lip Long Tongue. Visibility is reduced to a rainy pool outside my window. Still solitary moments as the woven day dies on these treeless voluptuous fells.

Rain on the window, a piece of coal or log shifts in the grate. My bronchial father by his kitchen window—pale bony face and large brown eyes—turns on the kettle as his wife walks up the street and into sight from char work. Sparrows fluttering in the gutter, a passing vehicle and his wheezing lungs. Help me take these booties off, she'd say at the door—the kettle steaming—my feet are killing me. Mist lifting, filling the cloughs up the dark side of a long steep slope—subtle shades of grey patch the overhanging sky. The valley thickens. Night ascends it seems, as those who dwell in skyscrapers know, where the lowest places become dark first. Only the faint curve of a distant brow remains visible. Wind driven rain insists on glass.

12 February 2005

Late at night without a coat and a cold wind blowing an old woman from the cottage hospital down in Alston, banging on the deserted mortuary window, demanding entry—convinced she is home.

Water drapes over worn flattened rocks smooth as curtains

5 February 2006

An icy north easterly, like a mad dog on a long leash, snaps and lurches howling through the power-lines. Gusts shake the bedroom floor, fast and pugnacious like a punch-drunk heavyweight on speed.

09 February 2006 Four o'clock in the afternoon

The surface of the tarn on Fiends Fell is frozen with thin recently formed ice, swirling geometric lines feathered and winged—smooth and streamlined—calligraphic fish and fin formed by wind as the water freezes. The last swirling gust sketches a pattern as the ice is formed. Clouds move slowly past and if you drift around the pool until the sun blackens the surface the engraved lines delineate. After this reverie of looking into frozen water and into thought I turned and caught the moon, fleetingly visible behind a parting sky, in alignment with tarn and sun before the clouds obscured again.