

Bones journal for the short verse

no. 25 April 2023 they downgrade the threat to high art

Aidan Castle

the alley windswept i fill a hummingbird

discharge notes each of three crows on a wire

the same anxious thought city moth

the ant in this thousand dollar a night hotel

amidst the mundane a terrarium

end of you snowdrops the first crocus after

Alan Peat

glass squid looking for the party's corners

guide to birdsong putting a blackbird on in the rain

10 Alan Peat

Grief's length...

...is an autocratic ruler. It listens for missed notes and raps on my knuckles. It makes me repeat it again and again...

sunrise locked in a minor key

Note Left on Her Door

Winter dark - - a path through frost and bare thickets, down to the footsteps

of daybreak, where the sun comes up beside an old bell tower. Follow the wind and the light

into the orchard, and open your eyes unto me

Inside a Picture of Trees

Aster vines between the trunks Sunlight cross-clipped by limb shadows

December and a line of oaks burned stark by the cold

The yellowberry and nettle share the grave of the poplar

Our world is long alone

Prayer to The Muse

Out of the rough instant, the second, the age,

rain in black elms rain in the oaks, mist

of the high crowns

you find me one flash ahead of my ear.

Solomon, Soren Bloodfire, Persephone

Find me, Queen of Birds, in rings of grief, in the illegible hour,

blind and abject without you.

Closing Lines

It was the third week of March, cool wind around the house - - Easter Sunday, you cut the stem in two.

The roots sunk inward, hushed, as they shrank into dirt - -

tourniquet and trench fire empty seeds of Heaven...

October again, a quickened sundown. Those few words you left here still speak themselves - - cold petals in the narrowing threads of light. now in his every childhood snapshot the face of sudden death

repeated in 31 languages a suffocation warning

caught in autumn's gravity my brother's first attempt at whistling ends with his missing teeth

18 Almila Dükel

watching swallowtails among goldenrods no thoughts on being human



spring an old demon but then that what it's for

the violence of history slowly as it rusts

shaving above the ear to fly better when the game of the goose gets serious fog clearing the future well-urned

2nd class ticket rain drops the night

Beate Conrad

first quarter moon no reason

night shore how search engines shape our world

Beate Conrad

28

the quarrel ends as it started electric guitar

stormclouds forming somewhere mark as read

afterlife i try the one that worked on you that high lonesome when the rain ghosts us

what music within the turkey tail mushroom

wintering all the monsters in monochrome

passing train: orange juice tank tank orange juice

twittering sparrows decades of the rosary in 2/4 time

36 Bisshie

disassembling the lowest notes to find me

if I've done it right fishtail liner

C.X.Turner

the bible of scar tissue anchoring winter

music in the mirror's escape route

rain lessons the atlas of her hands

take a step back the clouds become audible semi-bold dark sense of an inward burning

dismantling the monument in Helvetica



tryste

wet rings inside wet rings ease the tight grain

46 Chris Yurkoski

a reliquary

the maul head split off its shaft, almost split the stump in half

drēam

upstage song sparks the hall smoke & such blue shadow of applause

Chris Yurkoski

Unexpected Benefit of a Cancer Diagnosis

garbage day tomorrow bin to the curb I let go to the wing-beats over my shoulder

Inside, Moving Through Modified Martial Arts

outside the cardinal sings out from the cherry tree into my head, thus changing subjects sold a semi-automatic handgun theater

what if Sunday School was Saturday night rain in Memphis

Dan Schwerin

some of the bread broken English

walking in a coat of course wool meditation

54 Dan Schwerin

snow drifting in places I did not say goodbye

at peace with this raft I take everywhere

56 Dan Schwerin

fog the sky finally has come to church morning glory the blue song of the wall late at night the truth of an unshaven mirror the apartments of birds and squirrels laid bare like bones this frost breeze after 99 cuts so tart cherries may once more bloom in your mouth

her laugh tickles the sweaty moon in an inappropriate locale

bite of the apple. And we never spoke again. Though, in the film

black leaves shake a black mood back to Venus sentences, unlike elephant steps, holding up my pants,

too

fine

to

nestle

in

this

dream

your

small

hours

snow fall

voice

he asks of time in wind



branches depicting the quiet circle simple color yellow one a moon silence of autumn leaves well enough alone

mail order return of an exiled self

David McKee

72

self-abscission at the pace of snow falling

From the last gospel

to revelation in this moment I speak out in the beginning word without word without word of robin violet snail where would gleam of syrinx petal tentacle out of a spiral strike...

a scrap of paper dropped feather frost-sparkled

Sanguine

Wake of a red priest scarlet woman vermilion trail of a cardinal's hat a cheek turns crimson

maple leaf point at a fingertip blood on the bow

Vegan vanilla

The herbivorous dinosaur savours the pearlescent glaze of the ice-cream defrosted from time as every crystalline moment melts into memory

a brooch of bones her godmother's parting gift pitch perfect pines

pray prey keep an eye out

Elmedin Kadric

now's an insider coffin push (s)ing

pull (s)ing

after Robert Lax

at a minimum wage war

no ex posing

Crow (Fibonacci)

Crow's
poor
skull was
perfectly
intact apart from
the lower beak which swung loose no
matter how many times we wedged it back into place
only with much lamentation
did Crow and his skull
return to
darkness
and
peace

Italian restaurant winding melancholy around a fork

84 Farah Ali

rejected i kick the sun into the river $\mbox{\ensuremath{\mbox{Styx}}}$

when will bats fly from my two open windows

spring butterfly lost in the camera obscura

moon shot the american way

mug morning craving not to be born again craving

sinking in the monochrome rain

90 Hifsa Ashraf

dictionary palace of the winds



a drunken boat anchors in my library

the stamps have fallen off my letters

an ocean's roar finds itself a bedroom

upside down talking the other hemisphere

three white silos of sequential height according to her needs one door to the next crossing the tiled corridor to dance with orchids

stepping out of sleep I become an adverb

kireji farming sea stars' arms

uphill all the way to unfinished

if only to refine a black hole's palate

the foehn leans into over through & against a lexicon

the conspiracy of the spider webs in the cosmos

the moon on the mountain on the lake the mountain under the moon

above the smog a layer of birds

morning moon where you stood just yesterday

the beam stuck in mine own eye

the cross

TOTEM

over thought a

head chiseled over

my own

CHENGELKOY*

the bend in

the strait pulled on

fishing line

JIHANGIR*

down enough steps to have

lost count of all

the sea

for Asu

solstice apricot

apricity

the clouds rain

the rain puddles

the puddles clear

into skies pan pipes quavering through suburbia the fruit of the apple tree

mute swan just asking for a friend

for the foreseeable future the moon offline

Julie Schwerin

116

a perfect enso . . . now how to get out open to emptiness rain falls into my insomnia

118 Julie Schwerin

blowing leaves past our example-setting years

onward christian soldiers cherry-picking leviticus

120 Julie Schwerin

nonet, in which katie entertains the idea of great-uncle ken pulling her baby tooth at the norfleet family christmas gathering: december 12, 1998

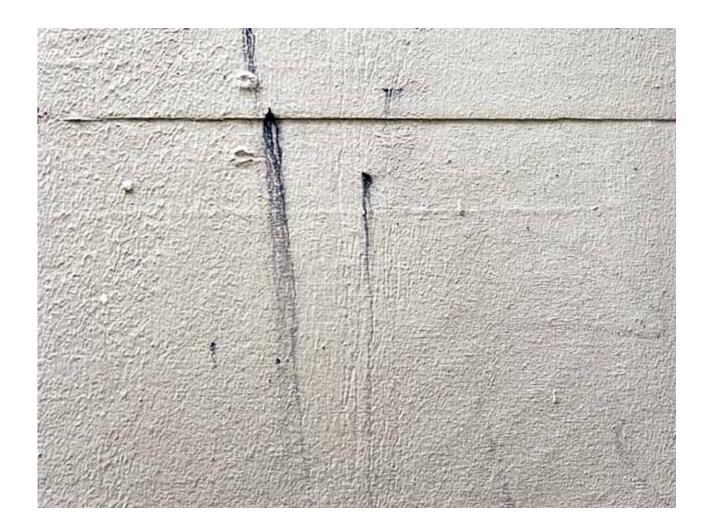
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You consider how many? he's pulled over HOW many? years while he wiggles your loose mouth bone; spins yarns 'bout stringing teeth to doorknobs, yanking with pliers. Little

eyes turn big—

*pop* There

'tis!
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Katie Cross Gibson



nonet, in which katie bleeds through on a multi-hour window-shopping trip to the somerset, ky walmart supercenter with granny: 2006

S'that time of the month. She had an acc—she booms to cashier (/entire store) before your cough interrupts.

Tag's on her side. Red-faced, you hoist hips up. Clerk shoots scan gun. Rip plastic. Ain't Minnie Pearl?

eros falling on the bones of kittens transcribing my sins buffer overflow

dusty windshield the patina of somewhere

in the drawer where I keep my voices

tic-tac-toe so it goes Maundy Thursday graveyard grass will I miss it

autumn rain my hollow breath conflated

130 Luke Brannon

a bleeding lamb speaks of roses in exile

if I could pick one thing it's the fast fading light

no less than a whisper away this mountain dew

the rain missing me a green comet

In My Father's Final Bout

he never eyed the fade-away hook that knocked him out but still felt the cold compress on his head, still heard the ringing, decades later, fingers still traced his sore jaw, bleeding nostrils, black eyes.

Even in the end, his hands made fists.

From the third floor I watch you

step in a short emerald dress
across fading white square
of worn-out asphalt, spit, repeat.
Where you're headed, Isabel,
there must be something better
than an empty half-lit room—
something that wants to unlock.

Sleepy Lonely

Unable to concentrate or distinguish my hand from a groundswell of singing starlets, my mind digs up a childhood time capsule: upswing whip of your blonde ponytail, spokes of my bicycle fluttering an ace, second hand stuck—past present future one, waiting for your steely blues to flutter.

GATELESS GATE

It's a set of stairs that knows your name as you fall.

Vernacular

Give me a seagull with a positronic brain & I'll give you the next leader of the modern world. A simple upgrade — that's all they're waiting for. That, & gluten-free food scraps.

hung out

to dry, sometime be-

tween the solstice &

the lunar new year

character assassination

If there's a Charlie in the drama

then

inevitably

they're the one who cops it in

the end.

A rattled saber

Is a matter of structure. Pattern, or growth—some thing like that.

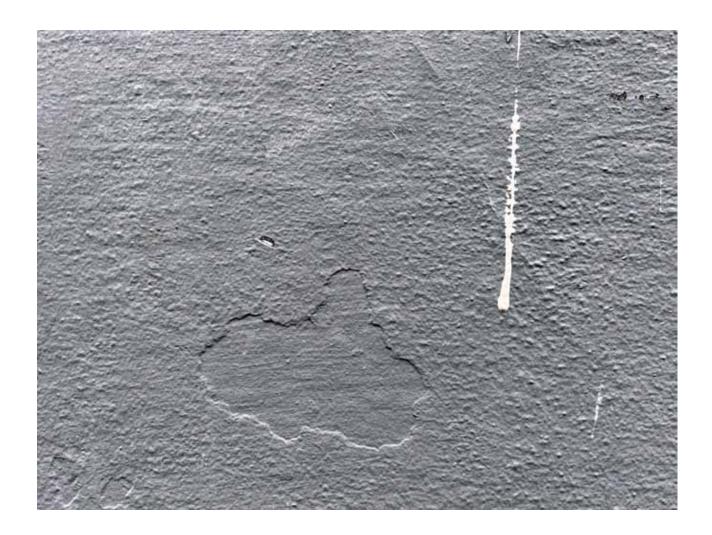
Is a biological entity, stress on the bio, not much logic to it. the verses they don't mention inferno

swallowing a gospel whole whale

smiting a fig tree out of season words

cloistered and yet surprisingly bubbly

cicadas start up the suicide machine



this morning's sunrise something something mass extinction

entirely enough alone unsatisfied orchid

150 Melissa Allen

after blossoming back in the holster $% \left\{ 1,2,...,n\right\}$

all anyone talks about is the chatbot year's first dream

152 Melissa Allen

hunting mainly small mammals we replace ourselves every seven years

all day snow gathers the broken machines

154 Melissa Allen

a wilderness of blue irises so this is how you will use my future but what if love... or if the clouds repeat our gestures

Michael Battisto

all my glass gestures... winterlight in a rented room hearing of your death, I walk through three decembers keep eating the hours: put on the north, that great, gray coat evening in the linden trees for how many lives can I be your voice? wanting her to remember what was not to forget

all shade on the north face no shadow

drawing the line at drawing the line

blow away the tiny spider on the book with spring breeze

Sip 'n Dip Lounge: the mermaid who wears a nose plug

dwarf ginseng on the freshly laundered doilies

river stone staying right where she is

pale green whirligigs before I could read

Unwelcome Relativities

out of time a few nuts scatter waterspouts collapse

the smoldering remain punchlines out of time

the power line hums out of time checkmate in two

out of time composting welts of loose threads

that bloody shirt knot to be falls out of time

tuba skinny out of time on the downbeat

Revengocity

where he gets his tripwire

a short hop crater to grave

back sleeper mattresses savor your canyon

faster than rivers past sausage factories

hard and fast a down and out hollow

flutter dome stirs a ceiling of swallows

specimen pine trained when to weep



touching her keepsakes to dust each one

stage left one lemon of a still life

174 Peter Newton

the same sound track coming as geese going

rising water level with you damn dirty apes

176 petro c. k.

she owns me petting the cat o' nine tails

my morning head a donut of protest

178 Ranice Tara

road breaks in white lips

he stands trapped in the early light of my chest

180 Ranice Tara

rushing to where the black balloon bursts into an insight

field edged with ice
the shrieks of blue jays
the shock inside

margins of white petals flowering shadows wave the dark night of the soul

attention pivots as on a dewed fibrous tip then petals the forest beyond rocks the body retreats to the drop-off visible in grief

fir and cedar fragrance
growing a simpler
transpiration of space

escarpment empties of wind the crows settle friction in perception

dew on daffodil
perianths the feeling of
scent in transparence

wintergreen's white a splash of light on rocks this freshwater high

wind unheard stops

the other winds

still in the word

reflected clouds adrift in river ice this ordinary life

Ballad

The woman living inside the walls of our house is called Ann. Before being immured she dreamt of becoming a painter's muse and wife. Eventually, she married a carpenter who walled her into the building he was working on...the very house that we live in now. During the day she is still, probably sleeping. But during the night she does nothing else but sings woeful folk songs. Through my sleepless nights instead of counting sheep, I count the hot and cold drops of her laments as they fall upon my brow.

The ladder

Father is napping. His sleep seems undisturbed. No noise can reach him. Viewers and flowers are everywhere. In a trance, mother keeps telling us that she could never have imagined that a man's body might weight less than a lamb. Mostly carnations. Some red and some white. If the body is well hidden, the soul cannot find it and eventually departs. Where once a walnut grew, now there is a ladder he must climb to reach the sky.

heat swelling south of her equator

the hum of highways inhaling green meadows

moon ghosting the machine of the sea's teeth

Unsharp

In her reading, only one spoken word is too young for any inner doubt.

vector arrows I ponder the problem of the roadless sky

Omission

mother's day begins with disturbing pigeons

out of okays autumn rain

not a word repeating the riverwalk

enclosing the sky of a necessary possession

to see i stain the apple's flux

nowhere in the middle of somewhere bloodied



the translator how one word makes the rain



the blue river a poet plants a surface chasing a deer the letter A

204 Robbie Clark

a question scenes of red Mexico trying to tiptoe around the animals

206 Robbie Clark

the blue boat upriver in the Ganga realizes it doesn't exist

chicken wing refuses to be eaten until it is loved

the wind there on my night table dreaming in a foreign currency

weeds

Cygnus

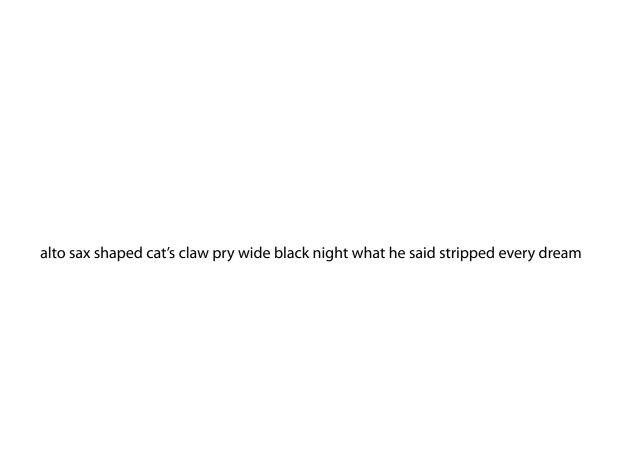
swans
on the river
at night
silver swans
in the night
the night
on the river
a silver river
at night
the swan
in the river
of night

the sound of his glove found in the toolbox

the length of the measuring tape the memory coils into itself

the weight of a 5 lb hammer centerstrikes the ten penny big bang

9" double edge carbide blade shark teeth rip through the nothing was said



cold cut steel light clamors against the unspoken the toolbox opened

why the odometer stops taxing the snow

this blue over that on the viola's tongue

220 Rowan Beckett

violets still fat while dissolving the symptoms

fissures leaving the womb a skinless god

Rowan Beckett

222

we are walking through three ages an inch away



house next house not even sparrows shared

dawn

atom

i

stic

embr

yon

ic

a

bort

ed

226 Scott Metz

full
they
return
from

diff
erent

stars

full
of
light
of
stars

and

thru

the mask glass

dawn's tongue

tastes talons

and glass

talons

228 Scott Metz

in
waves

imp
ing
on
waves

a
wing
on
thine

pressed upon

hell

heaven pressed

upon

a tad

pole's mouth

230 Scott Metz

```
it
is
                 rain
                 ing
it
                 is
                                  rain
                                  ing
is
                 it
                 rain
ing
                                  it
                                  is
```

al ready

pulled

over

them

the

sleep

ing

smoke

giant

Scott Metz 232

lonely

to the

garden

away

evening

singing

blue

goes

falls

inside

the

voice of

of birds

on

the

horse

on

the

flight on

the

eye

234 Scott Metz

the dragon still lives in an old wall phone

royal blue dragonfly towards the island of Kythera

quiet stream the sentence of least resistance

moonmilk exchanging opinions on opiliones

her body defies the grammatical attitudes

the peeing sun blurs the world

240 Vijay Prasad

her eyes suck things like breasts

at her navel the lack

242 Vijay Prasad

i exist like a dislocated organ

Kaffeeklatsch

I take my coffee with a lot of cream and sugar, like a wussy. Or you could say, I take my cream and sugar with a heavy dash of coffee, which keeps things exciting.

walking on hands the sober man



Editor:

Johannes S. H. Bjerg who also supplied the photos.

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