



WORKS & DAYS 4  
SUMMER 2024



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*Timothy Michalik*

If you ring the bell it changes everything.  
Down to the crankshaft, time of day, color of socks.  
The sentences I've written today have all fallen asleep.  
Pieces of them stand up and stretch.  
A few make it to the door and try to float.  
If I ring the bell again they'll all fall down.  
There is still time yet to learn their language.  
As they fall back asleep to images of deep glacial lakes.  
A thousand words were set down on the page  
so now I am free.

Have cut up darkness into little squares.  
Have put them on a china plate.  
Have sat on porch for three hours.  
Have handed many to kids in plastic masks.  
Have pretended was sleeping in coffin.  
Have seen giant lasers inside passing dog eyes.  
Have hungout whole life pretty much.  
Have worn cape made in May 63'.  
Have cared little for things in themselves as they are.

Our ships sail towards nothing.  
They're powered by magnets on some shore.  
Flattery will take us far tonight.  
As we recite what we've found in our fortune cookies.  
On our ships also shaped like small biscuits.  
Of all places to find myself I am on top of the water.  
I could have woken up in a tiny cave.  
The religion of philosophy dilutes my ambition.  
An ant on its back in a long spasm.



The yellow bird appeared like a pimple in outer space.  
We had just shut the gravity off and drunk ourselves to sleep.  
J kicked my feet with hers and I lifted right over her.  
It's amazing when the earth belts that huge sigh.  
Then listen to "Mandinka" thirteen times in a row.  
Dress ourselves once more just to swim  
    in the air over the pond.  
On its back the yellow bird flapped  
    like a missing link from the Bible.  
Like the teeniest, tiniest jumbotron: GO FOR CRAIG.  
Does anybody know what actually "goes on"?

Trees turn to documents.  
I love the small poems of Takuboku's Poems to Eat.  
Night skies of Alaska, will I ever see you?  
I don't want to feel a hundred anymore.  
What caused this was I drew a perfect circle.  
Everything I do is surrounded by this now.  
Look, I'm going to call people and crawl up the coast.  
Tuesday morning asleep touching spiders.  
Tuesday evening echoes stuck in rain.



I deduce her

ague

in the field

making holes.

Diminishing school bus scoots down the road.

If you flip these roofs, you'll have a boat.

# Cave Dwellers

*Matt Broaddus*

Barely a number, I  
pull friends from shelves.  
By comparison, monks read

in the grass. I didn't  
get to pick  
my nation's

squiggles and still  
don't. From her hand  
tea cups multiply.

Sexual mechanics implied  
in the verse of people you know  
changes how you view

their unique neuroses. Rubble  
at the four corners  
of self. A body forms

and informs. Torn  
artifact from alien  
rock vibrates

at a frequency I divine  
to be equal to steps  
per minute in a city you love.

Or, for troglodytes, the line  
hollowed out  
through darkness

brightens when you look  
without eyes.  
This is your life.

# Map, Table, Company

*Matt Broaddus*

Subdued evening  
I give up my rope  
What I was holding onto

Islands move one inch north  
Islands birth themselves one day  
what I was at the root

The clock I put my hand on  
to arrest time  
instead spinning me centrifugally

In a hotel room  
it's not inconceivable  
to become a different animal

A German restaurant would seat  
at the bar the lone man I am  
a little happier my shoes made an effort

The city surprisingly gentle  
runway to art galleries  
architectural firms haunting old wrecks

Pile up the books no one's buying  
I want to ask Alexandria  
when will she write the weird ones

We keep in reserve  
the best part of us  
from something even as ephemeral as poems

Kelly carries me across the evening  
line into night  
where they're waiting for me to sing

# BELLSPEAK

*Susana Plotts-Pineda*

Before I was anybody and already fully myself  
he looked at me with the particular insanity of  
that year my birthday was on a Wednesday or  
a month when lilacs bloomed a goldrush  
filled to the Atlantic, laterally  
orcas moved, bellied out under stiff clumps  
of green hearsay, that particular  
movement unknowable to me and her  
who were asked to fill in the details  
with sordid, ached testimony—  
a blue so flailed it declared itself  
a shore sung to anybody but us, the lilacs  
poisoning all premises littered by the  
strident gold fence, and slowly  
a wall of water so lived-in,  
it burst the glass of day.

# LAST HOUR OF DESIRE

*Susana Plotts-Pineda*

we had to begin at some point but the architects were too worried that the whole structure would collapse unto itself and become something else entirely, become a dream no one could return or escape from, I was afraid of this too initially but they told me trust my instincts as we had been here long enough to understand shapes change daily even though occurrences are forever etched into a sky beaming its invisible furor even when we turn on all the lights I wish sometimes they'd turn off the lights, I'm so tired of seeing although the bog is like the most soft sort of beckoning I've ever it wants me to touch the velvet of its decay wants me to stroke all the dead crisp little animals with my good, soft palm I, it's so good the way the brown, black, mud undersides are just silver in this light, so good how even the surroundings call me into them, to the soft insides, I'd want to annihilate into them, into yards of mangrove lungs and deerskin grafts even though some times I pray they'd turn the lights off, there's no night, there's only night, I want to drink the night milk out of the silver coolers where they keep all the corn husks and the pearls, how did they find such gleaming ten thousand miles away from sea? there are so many skeletons here, like for example, shell bits and crystallized algae skin and coral skills and the ribside wave patterns of the whole world sinking into its last dream



# EL DIA VA DANDOSE VUELTA

*Susana Plotts-Pineda*

Sleepless since I first started and sleepless as I do now. A curtailing event that made its way to you, or an ease, or an early, strikingly dappled road that measures the thick by the church in its crimson, or the slow wash of the man raking sand on the pavement, or the faces agape and many, and the plenitude and slowness of the eyes that pass me by. All this I try to take for spiritual penance, for the unpalatable churn at the bottom of my hip, and a bone above the dampest moon is licked clean by the ebb of memory, and my memory of you in every kind of light and in September. Because the surface of the film is sensitive and captures not the stuff, or the material, but everything it's not, the thing made real as if by light, as if abiding by you, I am, and the slow plenitude of the blink, directs. I emerge from all of this as if by chance, a rusted steel-blue sense at the bottom of the morning.

# AT THE BASEMENT WORLD OFFICE

*Susana Plotts-Pineda*

There was hungry feeling. When I was  
there. I remembered missing all of it  
and the only thing there was the table  
lamp, the light, or a vision of  
it. I tried to  
stretch my line past it or outwards, to  
reach an elsewhere-knowing but  
nothing came  
And in there all I could remember of the  
earth were those small Romanian  
linseed coats, hold on  
to them, it or something told me  
Keep steady until it splinters or  
remains. After  
what passes of the world has  
settled we're forced to face the dirt, and  
the version of things as they are kept down  
here, in jars I think, the worms  
edging a shape or an idea where you  
try to read the  
code made out of prints,  
thimbles, bullets, arrows  
holes in vestibules the size of  
worms. One room leading to the next  
which then is nothing. The dirt  
stamps it all with its repelling musk, its  
strangeness and its turpentine  
I missed you  
so much when I was there and tried to  
hold the shape of you, but  
felt  
your weight was pressing on the room  
the walls made out of dirt,  
the thimbles  
and the stones, and because I could  
only sense  
your weight, I couldn't sense you  
in the information office, devoid of  
information, I carry the general  
shape of all the feelings and the facts,  
but am

none anymore

They told me, I told me, once, before I  
was an "I" brought to the table What  
remains of the office when we have  
become the

room

When I was brought there, told to  
empty jars on

table and let loose ancient Roman  
coins, let them fall without letting out too  
much

of the dirt To read the coins as they fell  
on the grid that's on the table, but

everytime the reading became more  
senseless, the coins drifted more and more  
apart And I was made to

write my findings on imported mollusk  
paper I was

made to man the flood that once had  
burst from my filled with  
shrapnel, books

slugs, little boats and all  
wrapped traces of what once had been a  
goat or dog

parchment emanating from the  
wall like faded skin or slips

in tea as if made to look old but  
still breathing, and here were meant  
to to guide me as I made of my

removal from the world a question of  
the spirit and what I give it, the  
spirit that's so hungry

for the information of the world. The  
spirit

which the dog and goat head  
tell me will float up beyond the  
walls and tell the world the  
information

that's hidden there deep in the below.  
But I don't know if I believe them. My  
spirit

flutters or is me if I am me and  
wants to tell you that I miss you and  
wish you heard  
my call from

the beyond and wish  
you had not become the room which  
has become the world.

# SONG CYCLE

*Zoe Darsee*

*Song of teacup pets*

To price out of price  
hocks, to rage  
wow-blowing, free  
'Tis vulnerability

Biz' big worthy

*Song of summer*

Swimmers, offshore glands  
option bracelets  
option anklets

Those headlines lie. One swim  
was suffocating

Planked & resuscitating

*Song of tailors*

Hat-heads equal  
look-birds on pole-beans support the sky-  
puppets

Crush crushes, coin  
Toss tassels, pill

Smell smells  
hat-head-whistler-birds here

*Song of boar*

What's it like to suck  
suck mud  
suck mud more

Option 1 earrings:

Mirror border signs

(i.e., *You are now exiting the zoo*)

(i.e., *You are now entering the zoo!*)

Option 2 single earring:

“Tag, you’re it”

or 3:

“It’s a trap!”

These are the products of their parents, who we tracked

*Song of capital*

With instability comes stability  
With stability comes instability  
With instability comes property lines  
With property lines comes neighbors  
With neighbors comes fear of neighbors  
With fear of neighbors comes inbreeding  
With inbreeding comes medical discoveries  
With medical discoveries comes Flubber the movie  
With Flubber the movie comes thoughts of fluoride  
With thoughts of fluoride comes hyper vigilantes  
With hyper vigilantes comes nature versus nurture  
With a nature versus nurture comes bottled water  
With bottled water comes marketing of the source  
With marketing of the source comes pornographers  
With pornographers comes shame of privacy  
With shame of privacy comes instability

Instability comes in stability comes in stability

“Stab it in!”  
says Stability, “Stab it in!”

Get them a room and lock it



*Song of aging and dying*

I imagined you would look like me future  
I imagined you would be younger past  
I imagine you are dead present

Poof Poof Poof

That's the afterlife calling my dog

*Song of the unboxing video*

SPECIES DELIVERY

Opossum, organza, description  
Description, opossum, organza  
Organza, description, opossum

TIN BIRD IN A TEA CUP  
CIRCA 1908

Liverpool, livestream, beanpole

# [this systemic thinking]

*Zoe Darsee*

Like blue slips lock sun  
filtered through vent  
into filing. ("Gimme"  
I like to say, "gimme gimme.  
Inside that is thinking,  
calories and a pile  
is a translation,"  
of blue slips locking sun  
through vent sheen on  
file, "of the perfect,"  
folder.) Of  
this system, this's accurate.  
Of thinking, "perfect." I also  
like to, when the printer slips  
me a blank sheet instead of  
blue, say, "That sheet  
is exactly the shade of blue  
like I had in mind."

# [Dot's Diner/Dot's Diner]

*for Elizabeth Robinson and Jack Collom*

*C.J. Martin*

In the street w/  
some ppl in  
the reverse side  
though not through  
connections  
in the oil  
country the snow  
-filled lane  
w/ppl flat,  
soaked, saying  
anything or  
putting stuff  
in bags the acrid  
image pinned  
to bus stops  
which is (wow)  
how events  
are born I  
hit the reverse  
as noise  
that touches bodies  
(how hearing  
's made) so later  
we're soaked too  
& it doesn't matter  
you walk inside  
weather com  
-passionless in  
the shimmer part  
freezing death  
of birds  
on the menu  
thinking of  
Jack & Elizabeth  
ordering breakfast  
& ordering poems  
the sense gets  
around conditions  
to either choke  
the life out of or

(bucking/veering)  
open a little store  
—the life store—  
where things  
get easy  
by just making  
more things & eating  
pancakes  
& tottering death  
still waits  
outside in  
the parking lot  
“for a long time”  
or the employer  
slowly notices  
civilization  
's monetizable  
says inside  
there there's  
tears/pink  
struggle  
causing ownership  
before the dream  
those suckers  
doing car poems  
the serving crowd  
bending softly  
forward (starved  
families out  
in the moon  
for the evening)  
making just  
standing enough  
the man driver  
not experienced  
enough to  
really get it  
white grass  
where place  
protrudes  
so we're lounging  
in the present  
little fallen  
side-menu out in  
the lawn  
carried in

on dishes  
& the grain waves  
back in this  
version  
being defeated  
in heat in  
the metal getting  
uncomfortable  
I'm insulting the dark  
huge spiraling  
art (so-called)  
of redevelopmt  
in fields in  
the ferry over  
w/cars  
parked & ppl  
just leave them  
to walk  
on a deck  
near the sky  
deer-streaked  
atonal essay  
neither manual  
nor the other  
thing no meal  
the confused  
man ditches  
the camp gets  
clamor confused  
w/glitz  
now in front of  
the street  
"the breath"  
"the desert"  
"my eyes"  
walking around

[Maybe is the lawn an ellipse?/Essay on the ellipse/Detroit printing Co-op]

*C.J. Martin*

Then the time  
w/the objects  
on the page  
in radical A  
-merica then it's  
the regular room  
of objects  
(hands over  
the car, eyes  
on textile space,  
reproduction  
debris) one thing  
is texts  
& the other thing's  
just life,  
earnings & passive  
print—many  
breaks ppl just  
can't change,  
somebody's love  
of tangible money  
plus red titling  
in the reprint,  
marginal labor  
tribute &  
practical labor pain  
—you could live in  
Detroit, say,  
w/frescoes,  
combine your studies:  
the sage of  
the ruins of art  
or just  
a serial pause  
in art—weird bug  
on the co-op lawn  
reassembles an art  
of lamination  
like in the Bible  
ppl had elaborate

associates &  
knew their relations  
in time—upstairs  
to dial Alan on  
the phone or up  
-stairs in Paris, say,  
an after  
-life of material  
interior—come  
around & we're  
up here typesetting  
our response  
w/heavy silk,  
compound printing,  
condensing technique  
into able  
thermography  
or getting all out  
-dated & obsolete  
—getting odd  
in the workplace—  
like it's commercial  
December &  
we're under  
-budget or just  
standing on  
the corner tele  
-phoning a friend,  
passing time by  
making poems  
fr. politeness  
that ppl repeat  
as an organ  
-izational move  
(have to finance  
it somehow)  
Here we  
reprint grace names  
& grace periods  
as intellect  
-ual forest  
groupings  
We punch out  
& plant pamphlets  
as personal ltrs  
to grass



(that's a weakness  
of country -ships,  
friendly living  
conditions or  
questions fr.  
Marx) The book  
is a practical guide  
to bringing in  
accident  
as a momentum  
of voice:  
simple free  
love & spirit  
work, same style  
of textual ref  
or uncommon discourse  
That summer I  
contacted readers  
of ltrs in French  
having in mind  
to find arrest  
& publish it  
as crease,  
close practical  
color

## CALIFORNIA #3 (SOME FARGONE PLACE)

*Daniel Owen*

i'd rather write the poem of this thing fell apart  
than swim up to my teeth in hereafters with their  
blood-scented alligator teeth and candles, candies  
—approaching the flame, this is a key moment  
in the cycle of scald and wound and scab and  
scar—frame trauma—no one

cares about your hair, hypothetically though  
the correlation between youth and loss grows  
warned, like interest, epic expanse of the usurper  
my heart and feet singe stepping one after  
the other on its windblown soil looking  
for a little safe bet (apple pie or alibi or  
application) with cheese on the side and a cup of coffee—

was i talking to you?

too busy furrowing in effort to more roundly  
inhabit the soft psychological curve the circle  
i was given tonsils, tonsillitis, remembrance and good riddance

the bus driver says, biography again, huh?  
the chord is out of order so just shout when  
you want to get off—but there's no where to go and  
we'll be there in no time because the americans took this  
big beautiful place and made it into a variegated tower that  
fits in a bullet

mondays, memes, themes of borage, barrage, and  
belonging (bad, belligerent, longing)—you are not  
limited to one meridian—  
there is more than one meridian

# POEM ON CALIFORNIA (ZOUNDS OF LOVE & ERROR)

*Daniel Owen*

process intervened in the alley

there's no words for sudden nor complete in this light

because nothing feels final here

stop talking about time in mixed company

talk about distances

distances and eggs

and errors of judgment, measurement

doubles and their shadows

doppelganger blues in double-you hues

there are better historians in a fistful of white brain than the bargain I've got for you

stop talking in time about mixed company

the process got all wrong, stabbed sunlight where birds and flora would go

which part of which timeline

some assembly required the bare bones

a skeleton's fee

a skeleton's fate

a skeleton's cleavage

and a roller skate

though we have no home in this world nor the next, we have no none in the one after that

ah to think we met in years and days

to think the when of it

to think of it

no place in a poem for caution or care or cure, but when you can take the work with you who gives a shit?

when you can take the world with you

the work and word of it

smuggling up all nice and sweet to the object

which is to be a dragon and then be a princess at the same time

sipping hot chocolate with marshmallows and a warm hat

waiting, we are no longer in the borrowed graves and go for broke on an offer

tomorrow is a boom day

and any ash created is also talk of my old friends in the broad bay sunlight, Berkeley

November 17, 2023

regret it or fete it, speech offers its negative

in action, etc.

in versa and dejecta

and in sway

they offered us vice for our spackle

and all the world is need of a finger

it's impossible to spell the word bureacracy

driver absent of seat

absent of scent

with stents put in for survival

waves at a baby on the subway the way a perfectly natural heart beats and beats until it stops

all the schlepping it takes to will a body into society

anxieties and greetings bake into your pores

limitless, seemingly hungry energy for not being seen

not at the helm of a street at any rate

nor a wheel

nor a momo

certainly not a retreat

a shibboleth said in private,

“the glare of bright lights when you’re longing for dark corners”

am i now an echo?

or something more assemblable

informable

informed on

a babble, a bauble, a bubble, a bubbe

a thimble in a basket

sent a care package, misbegotten memory signed Mothers of Mercy, and meant too

those questions that can’t be taken off like a towel

nor like a tunnel

nor one of those soft shiny curtains that veil the door behind the door behind the door behind

the prize

more like a terry cloth robe per se

would a song suffice for a solid?

a peek at the wilderness

some die, some aren’t born, some react between chemicals

some seem, some salt

some stuff watered

mirrors, beads, games, bubbles

misshapen edges, dumb lumps, lucky dogs

doggone loaks moaks chilling in tony's fridge in the tropics  
a caesar salad in quotes  
spent breath condenses on a wet cold glass  
imitating a geiger counter  
or learning how to love the blown wind  
and to stop whining and wind  
does my face look like a tv or something?  
then why are you talking to it like one?  
or two  
or a whole battery of them  
stacked up like a human pyramid  
learning to write with your thumbs  
learning to let it go and operate at its own pace  
a schedule, a cease-and-desist, a case of liquid  
learning to operate a weapon with your thumbs  
bitter pill, bitter seed, brokedown jalopy crazy for acres  
for sale  
for labor  
crazy about an ear  
an insert here in california

# An exercise in which I try to see blue in the red flame.

*Kelly Hoffer*

when I write toward the world, I am pushed out of it.

fingering language's tether, I ask to be opened.

the saying about cake is a trinity: wanting—eating—having.

duality, framed as a contradiction, forgets desire.

the mouth insists, an abject shuttle.

my wanting turns on the invitation to move through, but not out:

I'm pulled back, into the fold.

if you must return to me after a long absence, let me protest first this length.

let me pick the season.

I take you to the winter woods and show you the apartment building newly visible through trees.

the branches are naked, and then, to the sky, so are we.

the pace of a miracle, something sudden.

when you say "serious as a heart attack," I think of how rapid a fall from the ledge of eye level.

I place my thoughts in rabid water.

a man suspended from the jungle gym curls his legs into his body; he remains the same height.

when I picture winter in my mind, I place an orange in a neat bed of snow.

I am so busy in my ritual gesture, I forget to be simultaneous.

the metaphor delights, the lake swallows, the noise drowns.

as if a landscape drapes a body in paint.

as if the gilded frame.

heat, colorless, rises from the vent in my neighbor's rooftop, shimmering the air.

I suggest we reconsider the past or I imagine you handling it as I have—shaved of a protective awning,

the grid, a fine mesh, objects to my movement and rewards me with a mirage.

my ears prickle in the cold—any exterior burns me.

leaving its forks lying on the table, the future makes for an exit.

the weather is either coming or going.

fulfilling its own bidding, a season undoes itself.

driving into the night's forehead, I see snow suspended: an explosion of tails.

the thing I desire, the cause of my suffering.

my desire, too, causes me suffering.

if I must countenance it, why not be its object.

cake with a thick slather of icing.

doing a puzzle, I piece together little men.

my hand is a spotlight on the line, I follow its thread into a void, seeing before me never more

than a breath's length.

you become the orange.

I call it again, a slice at a time.

my tongue lets me make of you a hymn.

I know language is plenty alive because when he calls me a good girl, I come.



# Or am I a room with a roof taken off, still holding onto my idea of a ceiling

*Kelly Hoffer*

the other night I woke in the early morning  
and texted myself, "can you hear a fire"  
not asking about the moment  
then but about the potential  
of a moment of being proximate  
to heat and feeling it with my ears.  
my sleeping self, thinking not, I think, of  
the domesticated crackle of our  
gatherings out in the cold of what  
will be remembered as the time  
of collective sickness and the collective fear  
of sickness approaching. the hearth kept us civil  
for half an hour. my sleeping self, tentative, opening,  
asks her virtual self, does a wall of fire  
sound on the scale  
of a waterfall? the roaring of what could be  
mistaken to be a highway  
filled with metal  
containers moved by their combusting  
innards. I realize then, we mistake water  
for fire all the time, every morning after a  
heavy rain when the world is especially  
recalcitrant. in the case of the non-  
virtual fire, temperature or smell  
or of course, the glow, is what, I assume,  
we render first,  
but I am stuck on the sound of something  
big enough to kill me.  
we shave the grasses down  
to a bristled penumbra, we build bonfires  
from the slash to convince  
ourselves of our reckoning,

newly unsettled, that this is the planet  
we've mastered, we hold our invisible  
ceilings without shelter  
standing aside the effigies of our problems  
papier-mached, caricatured, features too large  
as if we made the feelings big enough  
they would take up  
and leave, not taking up  
so much space inside us—  
the fire department is on call, waiting  
for things to get out  
of control, still,  
the morning after the fire  
doesn't burn me up  
my snot is laced with black ribbons.  
next to the flames, I did not register the smoke—  
what dollhouse tragedy were we  
playing at.

# Gift Horses

YL Xue

my grandfather gave me a little radio,  
analog, bakelite antenna  
I forgot about it until today  
wanting to listen to basketball on the radio  
static bursting like tiny blue flowers  
inferring how men move one could be cradled in sociality  
thinking about buying yb one of these strange shirts  
a cut up rugby shirt a pastiche  
of left over patterns from the textile factory

which is related to the meaning of a gift  
at night I listened to Love Line.

my grandfather loved his radio, and strong tea he brewed  
beginning in a double layered thermos he filled in the morning from the stove  
the air between the walls circulate, perambulate with heated thoughts  
the tea leaves suspend vibrato carrying like voices over the air  
so this radio was my first experience of something passing  
invisibly between people, a “ghostly prosthesis”  
Love Line’s jockeys: Adam Carolla and Dr. Phil  
a 14 year old boy calls in and asks if it’s suppose to hurt  
adam says oh man, dude, should you be having sex yet dude?  
the boy’s foreskin gets caught inside his girlfriend when he enters her,  
snagging a part of him slurring to a sharp pain behind his spine  
the pain enters his spine and straightens it, opens his heart  
as an older man he laughs that it hurt until it split open  
two separate tracts of skin that healed fine

“a scar crepes the hooded monk, a monk about pleasure”  
he would say with a wink to his grandchildren.

what does it take to experience ordinary suffering?  
If let’s say I pretended to have a penis on the internet  
which would flower, split open, bleed, and also

if my grandfather found out...

I am collapsing but you're a dead thing and I hate you.

*YL Xue*

and she turned on me, like a humiliated animal  
but art is taking pain and being misaligned by it  
which is what is beautiful about imagining shakers  
falling head and skirt in a circle,  
the memorized movements equalling faithful commotion  
which is like the body of a rat I saw on the street  
rotating through the spasms of life with its belly open  
this death like a totem like the dog trotting to the backyard  
hurrying towards a bone she's buried  
she remembers exactly where she has left it  
to be worked on by the sun or rain or wind  
the elements of our singular, uncontrollable life  
she digs up the bone and does not let it go  
with genuine joy and exhaustion  
until I see her, what do you think you're doing?  
and I throw it out.

# Give Me A Wide Margin At Pier 6 Park

YL Xue

yesterday I looked at freight ships on the hudson  
on the flat top junker, machines that lift, jerk, winch, sheave,  
lines drag on stubborn spools, and the hoist under light rain.

(a man on youtube builds his first sail boat from parts ordered online.  
you're like your engineer father the man says to me.  
an engineer's hunched over a large table wearing an ethnic shirt  
made of colonial linen or seersucker  
his scapula's like the lines of the boat  
lie horizontal, passed over by the white sail  
which yaws infinitely like a boy on his toes,  
shorter than a dinner table reaching over  
the pull of a door handle, trailing a long string)

his future will be the future  
or the derivative of future which is debt restructuring, a lien  
on all these ships a curse on all her enemies  
the fire engine ship is bright red like the fire department fire engine  
mobile vehicle plain sailing land animal needs help on water

the rain hit me and hit the dog on her run  
rounding on the ball again and again  
parabola cruise control fern buds in mud  
some short wave radios wave dark pool bets,  
digging and digging speed the circulation of global capital,  
my friends delight in games of men  
go home on the 4 train ride their trek bikes  
male body in lycra shorts meaning black diaper cushioning the taint  
men in conference rooms my own father  
smoke break free in rings and gusts, if you drink pure black coffee,  
and don the pure white clean room suit, enter the dust free chamber  
under polarized light, men as if in space patrolling the floor of  
flourescent women processing semi-conductors  
the woman are chinese country women who have migrated from the outer cities  
where the pork exports grow up on great gusty plains rolling to chang jiang  
they have no sense of history they are creatures of the here and now  
they get their faces cropped, exploded, printed on the walls

they send hundreds of usd home they slice potatoes and gossip ferociously  
fast workers get rationalized bonuses  
over the sensors piling up like fine grains of geo-political sand  
yes americans will politicize this  
yes they have no idea what gossip is  
even the idea of no idea a difficult idea for some people  
pulling foucault and derrida from their teeth  
or foreknowledge from a prophet  
or certainty from a demagogue

I am setting a scene I have seen with my father

to make semi-conductors one has to distill water,  
pure water in great white tanks serviced by wrinkled grey hoses and  
black wires  
the water becomes a knife, an infinite edge tenderizing microns of sand, or magnets.  
when you coil magnets strange things happen  
forces dislocated from direction, area, and time  
a man who dreams but will not stop leavening forces between his fingers  
like an old woman putting her shoulders in a slab of dough  
forming mantou in a steamer, rising the dough with milk to make it whiter  
the whitest thing is freighting a wish in a boeing 747  
between countries  
darkest thing is it's the same wish the world over  
make enough money to finally approve of your daughter,  
let her live as she wants, in infamy, sodomy, failure, polygamy  
let her live  
rise, taller, big sky scrapers across the hudson,  
on wall street where my sister lives, my sister with her little dog that she carries in a bag shopping

like a pork export, like a woman, like my father

blue is the dog's name and  
the park is empty, and the police come  
sir, dogs are not allowed on the lawn.

# Golden Bowl

*Hannah Piette*

In the form of a friend you share with an enemy  
That was your conscience who appeared to you  
Saying I myself have become a question to myself  
The sun has left the room but we are left with a question  
Even as I gather these apples now  
I know they are wrong but cannot blame the store

You can imagine any character doing this  
With some music in one ear, some music in the other  
Inhabiting the memories of her teacher  
Who is transparent to her, since she is carried  
Away with her thoughts in the story  
Like running away with a beautiful woman

I remember happiness from a vantage point  
A memory of my mind experiencing that joy  
Had I sidled up to it, I might have seen it  
And all the way around again  
I consider this apple in a golden bowl  
A bowl that was painted for an apple to rest on

Poppies resonating, a few of them toward the edge  
Of the painting bring red into the field  
A gift for the eye, red helps us along  
If the spiraling trees lead us there  
I want to return to the golden bowl  
The golden apples in a golden world  
Like the bowl emerge from the same materials

# Breakfast

*Hannah Piette*

\*

One month had passed and with its length  
I had forgotten I had focused  
For some months on these objects, shoes,  
The angular drinking glasses  
None of which could be reproduced  
In the market into which my kitchen led me

\*

I jumped up to hold this big sleeping baby  
Who might have woken up to our applause  
The sensation of speech getting ahead  
Of our thoughts, since I was in public  
And didn't want to get in the way

\*

The marine layer burns off with the day  
Carried along through the seasons with Diana  
A year built with certain materials like orange juice  
Described as it is or as it has been

\*

I don't want to be left alone with my breakfast  
I like the wind, I like the swell  
This woman in flip flops ignores the rain  
I just can't get out of her way  
For a few seconds at a time

\*



The abstract painting across from the couch  
Is composed mostly of dark purple  
And brown with a large streak of red  
Which makes it a scene in a somber picture  
A painting she might have hung on purpose

\*

I allow myself to think anything, these unruly thoughts  
Whereas there are rules to what you can say  
To another person, some of them ignored  
And some of them worth keeping

# Necessity

*Hannah Piette*

But what triumph is there  
I didn't think it would be possible  
If I had run away as a child  
Where would I have ended up  
One kid runs away he makes it to the sea  
But the frame freezes as he turns away  
From facing it before looking toward us  
His triumph cut off and the future cut off.  
A person other people could enjoy  
He started a stupid accident, his experience  
Of centrifugal motion, a simple device  
Chosen for the film, a possible combination  
Of visual effects.

The car across the lake could have looked smaller  
But the light magnified it  
And made it seem a drawing of a car.  
The mechanical life in motion  
Generates extreme difficulty for itself  
For the sake of nothing but pleasure  
The boat goes round, the problem stays with it

An impersonal source of change  
Forced me to retreat into this subjective experience  
That didn't pertain to the city  
In my own activity I observed the traces of that world  
Ideas that partook of an exterior  
Structure so I could see the good in it.

I knew before I opened the door the woman  
Would be looking at me in the kitchen  
Although she was my great grandmother  
And she shouldn't have been there  
I woke up and the sun had already risen

But I had conjured that woman and her anticipation  
Of my entrance.

Live buckets were an illusion of release  
The fish dead and shining like silver within them  
I didn't like seeing the boats  
That they had decided to transform this lake  
And its geography  
I didn't believe in infinite combinations  
Of letters and words in a random generator  
That keeps up with the requirement of it

For some people writing a poem is like dinner  
Given how far away they are from home  
Paying attention to their own mistakes.  
This husband allows his wife to spend time  
With other men, so she gives herself permission  
To have an affair that leads to her death  
In a car crash for which she is punished  
In the film by a man who played  
Himself playing Odysseus

This was the broadcast of a muse  
The continuous friction  
Between the broadcast and its listener  
Generates a contrast between music  
And thought. If I follow the thought  
I can track its location, the original source  
Of the music is silver  
A high-pitched sound that articulates danger  
The increased attention to a visual field  
Composed of sharp angles  
Of light means light enters sharply  
Into our eyes so our eyes are willed shut.

It was impossible to track one vehicle  
Across the city, the city  
Housed many men who matched the description  
Of the man and his son who faded

In the crowd after games.  
I had spoken with them but couldn't remember  
Which of us they were looking for  
His son would fall down laughing  
The end of their day was spent in rain

When I turned my attention toward this memory  
The attention produced pain  
Like the sharpness of light in my straining eye  
It wasn't a memory I wanted to ignore  
If I could stick with it, it would require the equivalent  
Of squinting into darkness and shifting  
My thought backwards toward one image  
This heavy motion was swinging toward it  
And in order to continue required a strain  
I didn't know if I could maintain  
The effort of an expert, a man  
Who turns his boats in the wind.

*from* **Toccatà and Fugue for the Foreigner**

*Michael Joseph Walsh*

Taking up a flower and smiling, without speech.

We call it the moon in terms of properties.

And this body, too, a moment of mountains, rivers, embedded in the flesh of its speaker.

Iridescent skin, refined nostrils.

To pierce the skull of the world and just to sit, as the clash of planes gives rise to a body linked to that "other scene."

This moment of flowers, arrival of flowers.

This primordial pleasing death-bearing hand, all white and pupil along invisible blanks.

*Even then the panic was just another point beside the main point, the non-point. A few particular people would creep into my periphery and hang there, right where a person's head would be, but never for very long. "There's no accounting for taste," I thought. I wanted to abandon everything. I simpered, I played at vulnerability. Even in my sleep I was like a doll in a music box: there I'd be, facing myself, just a flawless pair of eyes, while the night sky waved like a sea of roiling handkerchiefs. "Good-bye," I'd say, "good-bye," letting the words glisten like oil and spread across my face.*

Walking beyond and walking within, he applies it to this very body: a parathinking, an erotics.

As at that time, at the edge of this, the rumor was: the blood, the dancers, your moon-like form crusted over with translated men.

These bare windows, converging. This great silence evening and night.

In this body there is the earth property, the liquid property, the fire property, and the wind property.

Those deep blue creatures, saying "Good friend," writing the words on the forehead and round the corners of the mouth.

*I woke up feeling nervous and disoriented, thinking musically. Is this what it means to panic? I tried to imagine what it would feel like to reflect everything: the incredible red, with the green and blue. "It's all a matter of technique," I thought. I'd take the best of my dreams and grind them into poems, potential friends. Driving home it occurred to me that it's important to resist the urge to beautify, if that's what the situation requires. I can say now that I felt better as a result. Life whirled around amid the commotion. The sky blinked open for an instant, and I immediately felt sandy all over my skin.*



One can vary the metaphors. Just one straight rod of iron reaches this thing and that.  
And the heart: perhaps he crushes me because I negate him.

That the words, the smiles, the manias, the judgments, the tastes of the native are excessive, faltering, or simply unjust and false: he cannot imagine.

On a lower level, on the border between soma and psyche: day and night, awake, confounding.

It is as if I had done nothing, for it is outside myself, in the present but resting on the fossilized remains of a past life.

Not to be precise, not to move.

It is immediately internalized as part of the organism.

This centrally irradiated growth is a fist crushing the empty sky, dripping blood into syllables rekindled at journey's end.

Always mindful, he breathes in; mindful he breathes out.

Wherever the eye reaches gives the same pattern: here a rib, there a breast bone, here a shoulder bone, there a neck bone, here a jaw.

In those intervals of reflection all returns of the repressed are plausible, acceptable, and pleasurable.

*“Wouldn’t that be something,” I thought, “after all this time?” But that was it, that was life in the afternoon: a sense of paralysis, of the body locking up. It was like being in a house of mirrors in which every face is perpetually on its way, and it was pleasurable, deeply pleasurable. I was a person, a personality. I had a particular history and an audience in mind. “A self needs an audience,” I thought. “A self is a season.” After that I wrote down my thoughts in the order in which they occurred. I swallowed a lot of water, I was proud and ashamed of my pride. I heard the sounds of cars, of helicopters and the like, and for a while the world was sodden, but beautifully so, and life was an exorcism seen through to the end.*

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#### NOTE

The non-italicized passages of “Toccata and Fugue for the Foreigner” are made mainly of fragments from a number of texts, including Julie Kristeva’s *Strangers to Ourselves*, the journals of Henry David Thoreau, and the *Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* (trans. Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi).

The italicized passages are made mainly of fragments from a personal diary I kept from 2016–2018. They also include a few borrowed phrases from John Ashbery, Laura (Riding) Jackson, and Yi Sang.

“Toccata and Fugue for the Foreigner” is the title of the first chapter of Kristeva’s *Strangers to Ourselves*.



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**YL Xue** is a poet living in Red Hook with his dog Poopy Xue. He has thrown away his MFA manuscript and is trying to start fresh in multiple directions.