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FIELD #80: AN INTRODUCTION

When a student asked me, in 1968 or early 1969, why Oberlin did not have a literary magazine, I understood his point: there were lots of writers around and lots of writers coming through, mostly poets, so Oberlin seemed a logical place to locate a publication that would feature contemporary writing. Since I had no good answer for him, my colleague Stuart Friebert and I rounded up the other poets who lived in town and we began to lay our plans.

Since no one would be paid or get time off from teaching, we were cautious about the size and frequency of our publication. Twice a year seemed manageable, and a journal devoted just to poetry and poetics seemed a useful focus. We deplored the unevenness of the poetry in most magazines, and resolved to pursue excellence relentlessly. We also knew that good magazines could have agendas — kayak and The Sixties and John Logan’s Choice were admirable and lively — but we thought it might be wise to be more eclectic, more catholic, drawing on many schools or aesthetics. Thus it was that the first issue contained work by poets as diverse in their affiliations as Robert Francis, Gary Snyder, Louis Simpson, Denise Levertov, Robin Skelton, and Ian Hamilton Finlay. We have continued, over the years, to try to cast a wider net.

Editors have come and gone over these forty years, but our founding principles have remained remarkably consistent. We read without regard for reputation or previous association, and each poem we accept is read aloud, as a final test, before the editors vote. None of the founders, I think, imagined we would still be producing FIELD forty years later, or even thirty or twenty, for that matter. Longevity in such matters is mostly luck, and we remain mindful of the need to have new contributors, and especially young contributors, in every issue. We have also felt, from the beginning, that translation widens the magazine’s horizons significantly, and all translations are welcomed and carefully scrutinized.
Our prose features have evolved over the years into a fall symposium on the work of a particular poet and, in the spring issue, a cluster of reviews, mainly by the editors, of books from the previous year. We have suspended that spring custom for this anniversary issue, in order to present as full a complement of new work by poets as we could find room for. We thank all our contributors, in this issue, previous issues, and issues to come, for the opportunity to feature their work and for their friendship and support. We also thank all our editors who have served the magazine since its founding, at various times and in various ways. It’s been a good run, so far, and it looks to go farther.

David Young
Sometimes when the story is wildly implausible
the author will have one character say
*I have a hard time believing this*
and the other explains:
*it's the axle working loose,*
*the fog in the orchards,*
*controlled fires in the canebrake.*

Now we are resting at twilight
on a frayed floral quilt
and the dimity curtains open
in the wind from Orizaba.

Now the author has the characters undress
and sleep together, they are naked
as the space between words,
the lamp is unlit, the bed unmade,
the silence is absolute,
ocasionally a faint hiss of rain
or the scritch as the author
erases his own name.
EVORA

Maybe we may talk our way out of death
given that the I disappears so disingenuously
whenever you look for it, so does the poem,
leaving only the track of a snail
in the stucco alcove where we catnapped
in Evora, in late summer, scrunched
in the osier bed, before you knew me,
before I didn’t know you, when the future ended,
cracked sun in the mirror, when the finches
instructed us in thin scattered voices
to stand our ground against delight.
THE LONG STRUGGLE AGAINST THE MIND

It colored the oak: we unpinned the leaves. It invented the wind: a bowing, a resistance, a pressure, a rolling without an eye. We undid that labor: there was no wind, the wind was in the mind. It made us undress, stand face to face flushed if in front of a shy sorrowful mirror. It made us resist it, try to discover something hard and soft besides hardness and softness, a world, a room with a blue blue curtain, a small bottomless sky, a dog dish, a wineglass with a hairline crack, a center, a wife, a husband: then it unmade us: we were elms with zippers, who knew they would die, we were clouds who had no choice but to advance naked in mind-breaking silence toward that shining absent presence.
Christopher Buckley

SCIENCE, MATH, AND THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

Matter, where we are you and I...
As every star is moving.
— Ernesto Cardenal

The soul weighs
the same as a slice of Wonder Bread —
white light
keeps on going,
our atoms’ broken bones
unequal
to the equation
of space....
How we get from our electrons
to one grand abstraction
backing up
the whole production
beats me?
What a small music
holds the heavens up,
and what,
in the short run,
does it do for us
to know that?
The past
keeps coming at us —
we touch one end
of the harmonies
unraveling from the net,
the quasars,
after 15 billion years,
arriving
with their news.
Dead or Alive,
more of the same —
the universe is stretching
like a piece of lace, more nothing
in between the interstices and
light-stitched bits....
Who hasn't heard we are so many
envelopes
of common chemicals, sealed
with sea-music in us,
salt still on the tongue.
And who could be out there
beyond the ionosphere to hear
our blue quotient of notes,
to know the denominators
that will never tell us how many equal parts make up the whole?
I remember the '50s, arithmetic chalked across the blackboard —
fractions and long division, the numbers, the finite sums I could never work out...
that chalk dust rising forever into air as I clapped the erasers after school —
the white fingerprints on my navy-blue school sweater, the 2
small clouds of my hands
    held up
    against
    the indivisible
    night sky.
In a deep tomb he lay,  
a dark-hued pharaoh resting in peace.

In private, he shed grief-stricken tears  
for the honest mud where he was hatched.

Here he is now on a plate, arrogant, boiled,  
crowned with parsley, smeared with butter,  
solitary like a newborn, he who saved  
from hunger both the damned and the just.

Look, a thin knife cuts him in half.  
Look, a fork sticks out of his back.

But, friend, don’t be sorry for them.  
Don’t look darkly on the world of potatoes,  
since other saviors in sacks are sprouting  
hoping to see the polestar on a clear day.
SILENCE AND SNOW

The snow falls on the frozen earth. The snow falls. In the silence I think I hear the sound of its fall, the rustle of a cloth or the crackling of a fire.

In the silence as thick as billions of particles of an exploding Niagara, or the slide of some Himalayan avalanche.

In a photograph from Japan, swarming with snow there are monks in orange robes under umbrellas made of bamboo.

They were caught walking past a garden wall and some black pine trees arrested forever in the silence solidified by the falling snow.

This silence is eternal and never to be repeated. She’s the gentleness and softness of bird feathers, the bliss of October afternoon the color of honey.

She’s the dust from wooden book shelves, the yearning of an old man for the carelessness and the endless sweetness of childhood, Paradise, as fresh as the taste of just-picked strawberries.
THE RAIN WANTS TO KILL ITSELF

With its fingers the rain stains your window and mumbles. It wants to come in and kill itself. I see you are in bed and couldn’t care less. In the dark. Naked. Couldn’t care less. Your hair loose. Your thighs spread open. And there, in plain sight, black moss. Your left middle finger busy, busy! Villain, searching for the red crest. While golden honey already oozes. You call me from your delirium tremens. Me already changed into a crow. I fly down into your lap and peck, peck. And then in my beak carry the caught fish away, to go play cards and drink. While the rain with its fingers makes stains over your window and mumbles, counts its beads, wants to come in and kill itself.

translated by Charles Simic
THE CITY OF MANY LOVERS

Lunedì. Martedì. Mercoledì. It’s moon-day. Moon that strikes on the downbeat. Tomorrow, a day for Mars. And a day in the middle, which is a miracle. We visit your ex-lovers. Which is to say, the sense that you could leave me tomorrow. Not the most loved. The most new. What to count on? In the Japanese film, the Buddhist praises her god in each of his 36,000 manifestations. Of course, you like me. I am round. I have no edges. You can play with me, so can your dog. Then I crawl into an absence I have been re-modeling all my life, a crockery, walls smoothed with warm water. Moon Dreaming of her Brother Bronze. Cold Milk Moon over Lake and Fog Diptych. We have been here a month. I have left my people behind and adopted yours. I imagine I have made this happen. I imagine a tree falling and the tree falls. It seems both gift and penalty that I was left alone as a child. While you, in your city, learned civility.
THE INTERNET

If it is dead when you read this poem remember its many grassy ways,
its empty spaces filling with light.
It had such trees and lace-like roots,
such pools where ideas turned,
where its brain floated in broth.

I drank
until stars fell from the clouds.

Winter brought networks of static
from the curved glass sky,

the circuitry of ice on water,
snow deleting the fields.

I loved it so much
I couldn’t catch my breath.

If it has outlived me,
sit beneath its endless branches

and think of my empty mouth
turning to granite.
PRE-ELEGIES

And what have you got now? A mother? Father? Voices that pulse through the lines then falter, the phone’s emptying heart? They say they love you, but now they are hanging up. Early day, things to do tomorrow. And now they are maybe lying in bed with their magazines, now they are talking about someone else, no one you know. Lights out, now — it’s late, and they’ve grown old.

But both are still alive, and that’s good luck. They’ve drifted along with their lives just as you have let yours drift. And here you are, alone, half drunk on the couch, cradling your phone. The dark outside is gentle and insistent: Best to lose them slowly to their distance.
David Wagoner

MOTHER’S NIGHT

She’s celebrating it for me. She’s coming back from the place where she was scattered, from the place where she was introduced to medical students and their teachers and was slowly taken apart, back from where she lost herself among nurses, from what was left of her house, from her single bed, from her sink and her kitchen window where she could see the dead stalks in her garden. She’s coming back, her arms full of the flowers I gave her once a year in April, and she’s asking me to put them back on the stems in the greenhouses they came from, to let them shrink away from the light.
The surgeon has done all he can and the beautiful people on the wall-mounted T.V. smile down on me.

When the pain returns, it is slow, insidious. Intimate, even.

It wants me.
It wants my skin.
It wants my breath.
It enters the red silk lining that runs the length of my torso and closes its fist.

The nurse covers me in snow white blankets and checks my pulse.
DOWN TO THE COFFEE

The woman in a brown coat and red hands disappears behind a door. In the very spot where everything vanishes, it stays. The way that coffee date with my dad stays. I go there now and work my way to the pulsing at his neck, and to that part of his shoulder exposed by the gown. If there is the crack of knee when he stands (yes, I think there must be), I will go there too, and from there to his slow descent, holding, he’s holding on with both hands, to the chair, and now we’re sitting knee to knee, lifting the coffee in white styrofoam cups. If there are dark flowers with a single bright yellow bloom among them I will find those, too, and my question, in the way of all questions, will rise at the end. It’s been 12 years since I draped my brown jacket over his knees to warm them. Thanks, he said. I placed my hand inside his hand, and I was gone. And he was, too.
Elton Glaser

NOSTALGIA AS PROPHECY

Already the dead have forgotten us,
Noisy children who still need to breathe.

Widows in a stoop, men stretching their suspenders —
They’re playing shuffleboard beyond the stars,

Or sitting hollow-eyed on an unmade cloud
Like mopes in some Hopper knockoff.

Down here, with sunlight surfing the leaves,
We keep the little things close, fetish and relic —

Corncob pipe, hairpin from a cold pillow.
We look behind at the backdrift, ahead to the dark.

There’s never enough heaven to go around,
But the grave won’t take no for an answer.
ERMINE NOOSE

Mink runners up the thirteen steps, mink
the hangman’s hood
and black marten his gloves. The priest’s cassock
mink, his crucifix chinchilla, each hair combed
to catch dawn’s silver light, his black book gilt-bound.
Some can choose
(pay for) the noose
to be softened, lined
with ermine,
but when the floor-door’s latch unsnaps
they drop
as sharply as anyone,
or more so: softer nooses tighten faster.
A comic in the crowd
holds a lifeless mouse by its tail
(or might that be a baby mink?)
which he tosses
into the open grave
in the graveyard
adjoining the gallows’ ground.
Lux: Bohemian, un-Anglicized at Ellis Island. The old-timers pronounced it *Lukes*. Not a common name but not unheard of either.

Lux: Henry Lux made the boots John Wilkes Booth wore when he murdered Abraham Lincoln. Lux was not implicated in the crime. No relation.

Lux: A small town in Southern France. No relations there.

Lux: Lower case lux: the international unit of illumination. Ditto no relations.

Lux: THOMAS LUX SUXS MORE THAN LOUISE GLUCK, website unaware that Gluck is pronounced Glick.

Lux Soap: Detergent, dishwashing liquid. No kin, unfortunately, though the speaker was called Lux Liquid sometimes on childhood playgrounds.

Lux Ave.: A small street in the speaker’s hometown named after distant relatives whom he never met.

*Lux et Veritas*: Light, and something else, a rare, singular thing.

Lux: The name of a dog — third cousin to the speaker — in the household of Anton Chekhov’s niece, Olga Chekhova.
THE UNINOCULATED,

the nonimmune, line up
and lie down.
There's not
enough medicine
in the world
nor enough needles
to deliver it. See
that white box
with the red cross
painted on its lid?
So much depends
upon its emptiness.
Christopher Phelps

THIS IS YOURS

Wish I knew how to say no to nothing. Nothing, though, has a persistent charm.

The lonely set of stairs and the trip they invite. The dead air, televised. Walks along fields

once farmed. Hope hung up too long to dry. A postcard to God returned. Only

I didn’t write a return address. Which means, doesn’t it, something? Someone cares to say:

This is yours. Keep it a while longer.
The afternoon in a puddle.
One step and I'm

done with it. Outside,
the apples are dripping

with ice. Some neighbor opens
the door to a car, roadside out,

and gets swiped by a speeding truck.
This is happening. Some of us gather

by a curve of new black road.
No, on the hill

leading up. We can't, any of us,
get our footing. Cars are passing

out in ditches. No one tells the children
with their sleds to come inside

and listen. At least it's a beautiful
road, someone says. We ride a long way

in a car that never overturns. Of course
I'm the child, of course,

and the old woman suddenly
new in her quiet. I could raise her

arm and watch it
clatter down. Selfish, selfish child.
Lottery tickets,
examined by pachyderms,
mottos of master sergeants.

This, oh friend, is my poppy.

Verse metrics won't last.
No fun queuing up anymore
for the right to visit
invented lands.
Better to up
our antes, bullet and rope
are reliable, the barred
windows, the flecks
of color on paper
and old eyes
a sure thing.
IVORY

Time for us
to celebrate our farewells
inconspicuously,
we’ll go single,
tenderly, no
showing passports,
let’s travel, let’s,
and always
to Friaul, to Gradisca,
absorb my sighs,
that’ll help, my tickets,
the entries
in summit-ledgers, the words
whispered in huge
flabby ears
or grasping trunks.
Have gone,
have gone like birds, —
who went, who flew,
comma, chickens,
birds on foot, who went?

Have gone,
have swum like chickens, —
sickly colored, down the brooks,
who went, who swam,
fishes, strangers,
semi-colons, who went?

Have gone,
have flown like fishes,
who went, who swam,
who’s died,
chickens, inconspicuous clients,
question-marks,
border crossers, who went?

translated by Stuart Friebert
Michele Glazer

PART OF WHICH IS REMEMBERED AND
THE OTHER PART IS NOT FORGOTTEN

[Middle English, from Old French, from Latin musculus, diminutive of mus, mouse.]

in the naming, as in the matter of
in the naming muscle,...

The path was made of things cast off
too, and ground down
to be mute, indistinct.
Bark-browns sifted with cellulose and insect bits.

On top, plain sight, you were a thing
intact in miniature

of toenails, whiskers, naked tail the color of birth.
Youna said pink and I said scrubbed.
But you were even before scrubbed.

Slid onto the cardboard back
of a pad of paper, stiffest thing around,
you came alive. Who was more startled?
How could skin the light sees through hold something in?
Soft without cushion, soft in its surface, hard depths,

smell on my fingers the smell of what birthed you the smell
of your skin
the smell of inside of her.

It presses itself.

Little bent knuckle,
you were tucked.
You were new and then, the skin on your back
stretched to translucence.
Shiny so an eye looking in might see it self.

In the folds your surprising extremities gathered as in arrangement for intimate conversation.
We talked to you.

You were new, and then from the rudderless ground
you were lifted.

You were nobody’s business.
*We’ll keep it, save it.* Matchbox, shoe box.

Someone runs past, on the path, and the motion of muscles is the motion of small mice running back and forth beneath the skin.

It might be the beginning of any number of animals in our minds and all the time it is only one thing, perfectly formed and indeterminate.
G. C. Waldrep

THE FORTUNE-TELLER, or
CLASSICAL RUBRIC IN TIME OF WAR

A crow was in the hospital. Not as a patient. He had flown in. An open window. And perched; this is the way of crows: on the metal rail of a bed. That bed was empty. The bed next to it was not. And the woman in the bed next to the bed where the crow perched was sleeping: this was the way of the woman, this particular woman: or of her illness: and so she did not see the crow, as it perched on the metal rail of the bed next to hers and ruffled and unruffled its feathers and cocked its head at several different angles and even raised a claw as if it were thinking that it might be worth its time to make some more elaborate or sophisticated gesture. But did not. The window had been left open. By a nurse. Who, down the hall, steeped in her own cares at the nurses' station, did not see. The crow, or the woman. Sleeping. So that when the nurse did return to the room, the room was empty. Of the crow, at least. And the nurse closed the window. As if nothing had ever flown in, or out. And the nurse — who, after all, was a good nurse — smoothed the covers on the sleeping woman's bed before she left again. And the woman in the bed next to the bed where the crow had perched kept sleeping.
ELEPHANT SEALS

Muffled thunder like clouds rolling over
in sleep, and mirrored underneath —
gray sodden bodies, enormous slugs

with Spandexed buttocks and thighs.
Under rain, under pencil-thin strokes of lightning,
one, with his long dangling nose

like something lunar, tumorous, lumbers
across the sand, nudging through others who arf,
who rise on fins, then belly-flop down.

Easy to argue from nature anything
at all — dead ends in evolution’s maze,
or evidence of God’s wild earthy wit.

But the bulls argue over their harems,
one youth galumphing toward a battle-scarred
alpha who rears and roars, till the upstart

backs off, biding his time. Around them
the sea sputters, rain pocks the sand, the pod
piles up. If this is the utterly other,

still, when one drowsy-eyed mother,
lolling as her baby nuzzles in to nurse,
lifts a fringed, finger-like fin to scratch,

everyone watching feels an itch.
SELF-PORTRAIT WITH CATFISH

Stately is the catfish in its electric suit —
silt-filter, river-drinker,
bottom-squatter in its sleeve of mud,
tail fanned into a winning hand of poker,
and lips closed like the curtains of a confessional.

This is the fish that hears the fisherman’s heel
at one hundred yards,

the fish that listens, unseen, beneath
mirrored waters, in the mud dark,

the fish of bayou and impoundment,
of lake and slew and bottom:

chucklehead, mudfish, fiddler,
polliwog, butter cat, greaser.

Legend says that a catfish holds up the world.
   I believe it.
I believe the stars are glimmering fry,
the Milky Way the milt of ten thousand catfish,
the moon a doughball closed in a bullhead’s mouth,
and the folds of space as smooth as a catfish that slips
the hook and swims away. Yes, I believe it.

Tomorrow, let us awaken as catfish.
Tomorrow, let us touch all that we know
with our tongue-skins.

Magnolia petals taste of cardamom,
and Lonely is the salt-blooded tinge
after a tooth is pulled.
What is the sound of ten thousand catfish swimming in a levee pond?

How long would it take thirteen catfish to circumnavigate the earth?

A catfish dies knowing wake and wave and wefts of light, knowing electric shimmer, the tremor of tectonic plates, and the odor of a body adrift in the waters of Lake Pontchartrain.

A catfish dies knowing that longing is barbed, knowing the feeble shelters we make beneath drift and wreckage, and how easily everything settles, drawn downward by insatiate mud, to be swallowed by catfish and made into flesh that will rise again, slowly.
Tadeusz Różewicz

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT ON THE SUBJECT OF ANGELS

Fallen
angels

look like
flakes of soot
abacuses
cabbage leaves
stuffed with black rice
hail
painted red
blue flames
with yellow tongues

fallen angels
look like
ants
moons wedged beneath
the green fingernails of the dead

angels in heaven
look like the inner thighs
of an underage girl

like stars
they shine on shameful places
they are pure like triangles and circles
with silence
inside them

fallen angels
are like the open windows of a morgue
like cows’ eyes
like the skeletons of birds
like falling planes
like flies on the lungs of fallen soldiers
like streaks of autumn rain
connecting lips with birds taking flight
over a woman’s palm
wander
a million angels
devoid of bellybuttons
they type on sewing machines
long poems in the shape
of a white sail
their bodies can be grafted
onto the trunk of an olive tree
they sleep on ceilings
falling drop by drop

translated by Joanna Trzeciak
Gust, suck the curtains out the window. I want you standing in a hot shower with an apple brandy perched on the edge of the tub.

Two stories up and three doors down, between my palms, feet hip-width apart and no one counting the breaths. I want a new tattoo, a fresh shake of salt, a few too many cooks in the kitchen. I want all my eggs in your basket. I move within a half syllable of time and you, you watch me do it.

Snowpack and dewpond and kitties in the cupboard. Your clean clipped fingernails, your indecision, your hard to get, your limp tendrils, your darkroom door flung open.

Seattle in the winter and San Francisco all the dog days of summer. Every city on every map reveals that we live there. Call me Martha. I’ll call you precious and hot cakes and Lucy on the sly.
Cynthia Cruz

JUNK GARDEN

Sweet narcosis of blonde
Beers and the recurring image
Of your face.

Annihilating daylight.

Sickly hopeful
In my new black skirt.

Once when I was a child, I called out your name.

Meanwhile, the exterminating had begun.

An old little girl, I am
Dumb in its blinding.

I move my body but
I never leave this room.

Death row of the
Soul, dirty train ride.

And I will never

Come back.
This love, trembling —
Soon the ambassadors from the Netherworld
Will begin

Their descent. Death,
Disguised inside me, already,

As sleaze.
Grime and her magnificent seed.

Brother Michael, clutching his Bible
Hallucinating helicopters.

Brother Michael, child-like and
Wrecked.

Infamy, and the cosmology of chronic
Raveling and unraveling. Or,

Displaced insanity. Dirty Cindy, little
Glitter of her father’s

Spit: unseeable androgyne and fragment
Of his, discovered on the bottom of his dream chest.

Draped in my black cape of smut glue and
Subterranea, they mistake me for

Some guy in drag in my nasty
Boots. Why, just look: a manifestation

Of Sterne. Or, appoint me hustler of
My brother and his kinky noir

Scheme: me, at thirteen, on the beach
In candy-striped bikini.
Inside or out
Of time, Heroine Glamorine.

Groom of the Underworld, please
Come with me

To the discotheque at the end
Of the world. Piss-

Elegant at the halfway
House for the trashed and gone galore.

Meet me in the love-
Burned orchard

Where the doomed to beauty
Meet at last.
WISH FULFILLMENT

Finally,

On the crimson leather
Back seat of a rental,
Parked in a locked car lot,

My very own Club Utopia.

I just can’t wait to die.

Everyone has a secret they need to
Talk to.
ROSE IS DEAD AND CRASHES THE PARTY

My miscarried sister wants to be an owl —

At the costume ball, she’s pressed against my basement’s white wall, raises the fluttering

mask of an io moth
to the would-be

of her cheeks, her not-yet
nose’s Swedish hook

sharp on the scent of the before and afterlife.

Some people
have all the luck. The glut of her look’s

pure-helium-and-paper bird,

startling some brief
mardi gras

each time the sun strikes. This is the part of the ball

where no one
asks me to dance, and I sip my wine

like it’s asking for it, like lips
are the right answer. By now, I’m mean

and drunk and say,
Some owl, sis. Christ.
I say, Get a life. When she flies off
the whole room
watches her eyes, heavy-lidded and green as sweethearts —

I’m damn jealous. Her face, painted in god’s
near-perfect drag,
comes close to the real

thing, but still the tongue-tied animal.
Near you beside whom.

Again, when you left off carving and sanding a profile meant to swing towards-and-away: that place where the hinges would go.

By way of once in Ohio, sharp light in my attic room swearing it would be long ago someday, even then —
THE LEE SHORE

I want a darkness I can remember

Here
Even this

lip of the continent
this garden of whales
this nightwater

foam arrives mottled like the hides of harbor seals
like the moon clouded over

It doesn’t matter what I want

*

I watched the oats in the pot
breathing

like a man’s chest
rising and falling as he sleeps

like the heaves of hill upon hill
making shadows in the yard

How does it feel
that last breath that turns you
into night
into ocean salt
into coral

*
Or did the twin sparrows on your chest
bear you the miles home
to the foothills

where your brothers found
black veins in the earth
new light

*

At the bottom of the sea there is no light
no lamp to read by

Just the memory of white lilies arranged in a milk bottle
by an open window in July
STAKES

Playing cards, God where are you?
In the water glass bedside.
Behind the thick curtain up my sleeve.
Under my teeth, the shallows of my neck,
edge of my tongue pus of my finger.
Wen, sore night.
Spasm son
in a follicle, crease, sputum. Come back
to the table you sat at when I bluffed
and you dropped out sweeping
my small stake in. You owe me. Yes, you do.
LINEN

Those who strain over linen
sleep on straw.
We love muddy feet
from the marsh.

Their tiny cuts, blisters of white peonies.
It doesn't matter
if you have skill
at anything but walking.

John Amorosi. 1948-1952.
There were no deals,
one dies soon but we’ve
become one walker.

Little brother,
I’m a bit dead you
alive in linen white blister, alive
in my staring at straw —

my skill at nothing.
ELEGY FOR LIAM

Insert the rain in this picture
so you can feel the full weight of the words;
insert late summer evening:
that particular failing light, so heart-breaking.

The neighborhood grass is green for this late in summer;
so much rain, we never saw before. Insert the river
that runs in the direction of nowhere, where time is,
and where we stood on a rock inside the water’s hushed words.

How can I say this? Everything is dying around us,
and everyone, including some at the ends of pistols
held by their own hands. What the hell
happened to staying around.
THE DEER CAVE DRAWING IN SOUTHERN CHINA THAT THE CHINESE GIRL DREW ON THE NAPKIN TO SHOW ME EXACTLY WHERE THE CHARACTER NOW USED FOR THE WORD DEER CAME FROM

Her black hair hung across her face at the angle of repose, a midnight sheen, and then I’m on the river of her eyes; have you ever seen that? Dear god.

I have been so near beauty, I will never be the same.
Constant: The bones beneath
the house of childhood are
like ribs of a small child
or dog, the one heart gone.

Variables: On cheap
butcher paper in big city
classrooms, watercolor blues bleed
into the green of grass

and red of rising sun.
Is this the enemy of truth?
They fail because of no breakfast
because they got no sleep

because of shouts and fists the night
before because they fail because
of work linked to food linked to school
linked to work and before that and after.

Analysis: You stand
in rows with your sorrows,
my children, orderly,
your mittens abandoned,
collections of stickers

lost. As statistics, you must be
one thing, the same thing, not
the ones you are; so I can chart
the causes of suffering
and account proportions of blame.
Dream: Weeds grew from the tops of my thighs, roots running down through veins. I wanted but was afraid to pull.
BOND

It was not cousin Harry,  
home from the war.  
Tipsy, silly,  

he liked to twirl alone  
to the music,  
wagging his finger  
in the air  
to boogie woogie.  
No, someone else  

took me in his arms  
and led. Balancing,  
I focused  
on my stocking feet  
not slipping off  
his shoes. Surely  

there was laughter  
as we danced?  
I've erased his face,  

his voice, but not  
the scent of wool  
and danger.
I. Dawn Aurora

The nothing you know is as immaculate a knowing as any moment moving from a distance into dawn. All of the awakenings, or the old unconscious lies... I’d waited all night, holed up in Selene’s derelict houseboat — drinking tea, drinking scotch, thinking of the rain that night in Camden Town when she went missing for hours, coming back only to say, Sayonara baby; thinking of the way so many things touch their own fates. The motorcycle heads for the cliff, or the bus stops just before the bench. Everything seems more shabby in the dusk; everything glorious holds its light. Look to your sons, look to your daughters. Look to the blades rising out of the dark lawn. Don’t worry; each of your myths remains emblazoned upon the air. The way the wind moves across the vellum of the mountain, as the silence lifts its chords from the old piano. In the still dark & still uncertain dawn, there begins that slow revelation larger than the mind’s, as the light grows coronal, & the house fills with those elaborate agendas of the day. The monastery & philosophy — this morning, both seem so far away.

II. Lago di Como

The blood of the visible hangs like blossoms of bougainvillea as they turn & twist along the lattice of limbs shading your terrace, stretching like a ruby squid across one corner of the stone villa above the lake. We sit looking out over the unqualified excellence
of the morning, & there is nothing you might desire to recall. You believe in a space that is as large as logic, that is as logical as the word.

Tell me. What is the “beautiful,” what is the “lost,” & what lives still, just at the edge of the sound of the trees? It could be the syllables of habit; it could be a single phrase of gratitude... or an unbroken prayer. Tell me.
What will stay, & what will hold its grace & lasting ease?

III. Autumn Aurora

The illusionist steps to the stage. Everything he claims will be, will be. I know because I’ve watched him before the curtains began to part, & I’ve seen he is not just one man, but he is also a woman. He is as multiple as the rain. He is all children in the future — those children both the woman & the man he is will bring from their couplings, their embraces, & those silences of the clasped plural of their nights, their individual nights. How have you left me? You have left me with my hopes. How have you dreamed of me? You have dreamed of me beneath the cool of the evening. There I am, holding my dulcimer, holding my mandolin. There I am, singing to you, always, singing to you, always, across the blade of time. In the monograph of dawn, all of the tendencies of shifting light... & now the bells are sounding. This evening, we will discover only the fragrance of the October moon.
IV. Florentine Aurora

I saw what would proclaim itself as beauty-beyond-surface. It was the rarest of days. I’d walked directly from the train station & found the gallery empty, yet filled with a golden light as if dozens of gilt bees rose lazily to the eaves, each a reflected particle of the afternoon. It was a whole universe lifted by the painting; it was a universe that mirrored the afternoon — & its singular burnishing within the painting — & the young women, articulating the angles of desire, the hopeless erotic fortune that proves itself in beauty. The shell of the day unfolding, the perfume of the moment filling every pore we call the imagination. The day, today, seems inexhaustible. This is my praise; this is my proclamation. This is the apple I place on the white plate, before you. This is my metaphysics of possibility. This is the fury of the present. This is the memory of the questions I offer like pewter goblets. Let us share what remains, while it remains.
The summer I learned how to make a successful jam, I felt full of secrets. All the flakes of fish food I tapped into a bowl deliquesced at the surface. I forgot: no fish. A man said to me, I am the only exile of Switzerland — you must love me tonight. The water on the bar was a maypop vine leading me anywhere but this smoky scene and initials keyed into the leather of the greasy booths.

— Where is the bloom?

Instead, I flew a thousand miles to Florida and could not begin my tour of rest without a walk with my mother to check each fruit tree in the back yard: each seedling, each bud and redburst. Fire ants waited for me to linger too long while she told of the fruits fallen and given to waste. Or canker. Or blight. We bent to check the bottom branches for heavy swells about to fall into the moldy sandscape. *Ixora blossom and strife. Blossom powder and pistil dust.* The wild and twisty leaves of croton shrubs teeth through the gummy soil. *What a smile, what a smile.* When I returned to New York, to my fiancé — I only offered him a single gift: two pieces of mango taffy. Of this he did eat and eat. He kept the wax paper as proof.
Jane Downs

FLIGHT

Scramble of buckeye. Leaf buds hatching. The empty swing. Every year the same as if nothing has changed.

My hands the same ivory color as the piano keys. Music floats into the peach trees. All those hammers, frantic beneath the polished wood.

Iris, violets, and bursts of dogwood.

*You touched them.* My father scoops out baby rabbits with a garden spade and crushes them in the trash can. *They would have been abandoned.*

He caught me staring and cross-stitched my eyes shut. He caught me and shook me until my bones turned to sand.

I move out of the breaking. I am touched by air.

I leave a path of little sacrifices.
I KNOW WHERE THE COLOR WENT

The forsythia, not pretty
was in the third day of his bruised knee

bird-foot violets huddled under
a decaying log

they were
under his eyes and at the elbow joints.

The blue of the colorless sky
was not really blue

so it was his blood
not really blue

and what had spilled
was
the cardinal out back
that cocked its crest at me.

I get how green begins everything.

He lay twenty feet from the car
in the embankment woods

not really a place at all.

When the sun was finally low
it greeted me head on

and then I did
figure out the orange.
B. K. Fischer

INTERRUPTION BY ARCHANGEL

The angel is adamant,
rat-face mean — up yours
says the finger and so it happens,
the whole run of luck
from the almost-stoning to the stone.

Can’t you see she’s trying to read?
She keeps her thumb in the book,
thinking she’ll get back to it,

but there’s a smudge on the edge
of the elongated outline, a fuss
where the doves were erased
except for their crossed tails,

a cornice of sorts that crowns
the usual portals with six or seven
inscrutable characters.

He clears his throat. She
clutches her collar shut, as if
that would do any good.
That alleged yes.

(Simone Martini, Annunciation)
BLUE NUDES

As if she were a rind pulled back
from a dried-out fruit, crouching with her face on her knees, her
flesh etched and streaked, as if she were disconsolate or
drowned, bobbing by the moorings in a yolky light, her head
dropping below her shoulders

as if bending to wash, a breast hanging beneath her like a bag of
coins, one day shy

of a year since she saw him last, naked on the settee, ready to
yield to the shadows, the leaf and shag, as if she were

found dead, fifty feet from the berm between the quarry and the
neighborhood, her skin mottled and bruised

as if he gripped her so the flesh blanched, then suffused again
with deeper pink, as if

she heard someone come in downstairs and set her book down on
the bed,
cornered, her body a curve to contrast the entablature, as if she were

woken in the blue hour, sweating cold, rising again to attend to a cry,
exposed, only an arm to shield herself, or
cut, torso from limbs, then scissored into shapes — megaphone,
hambone, fortune cookie, tadpole, melon, drumstick, udder, fin
— her body

printed in error, pressed with punctuation, a nipple and a navel,
as if she were
turning an ear toward the door, letting her mind stray
into the afternoon, into an old argument, as if she were
opening her mouth to speak, starting to form
an answer to an unasked question, as if she were
ready to get out and towel off, reconsider, reach over
to straighten the lamp, catch a glimpse of herself in the globe, as if she were
about to sit up, remember the time, refuse, seize
the pieces scattered on the sideboard, gather her hair again in a quick twist, as if she were
opening her mouth to absorb the shadow and press it into syllables, ready
to get off her knees, rub out the stiffness and steady herself,
stash a few things in a satchel,
shake off the chill, as if
her body were tensing to rise, as if
she set down her book and turned to hear who was coming.

(Pierre Bonnard, Blue Nude, Nude Crouching in the Bath; Picasso, The Blue Nude, The Blue Room; Matisse, Blue Nude I, II, III; Roy Lichtenstein, Blue Nude)
1: light

Once scholarship postulated that light emitted from the eye of one who sees, illuminating what is seen.

Approximation was merely distance. And absence? Not lack of presence. Lack of light.

2: city

I am inventing the city. It is not like building but moving into a darkened room.

Or like the space of a body as a void beneath clothes; unmapped continent postulated to teem with strange plants and people.

If I tell you never to look upon my feet how is it I stand without them?

If I ask if there is a city behind me as I leave it, the answer is always yes;

if I will not turn to see one who calls after me on the street, I am still called.
Once scholarship postulated that light emitted from what is seen, entering the eye of one who sees.

Sight kin to consumption:

Cathedrals glutted to the clerestory, whole towns pressed in and jockeying not for acoustics but an unbroken view of where the host would be held aloft.

Seen. Therefore eaten of.

What is seen, made material. Capable of being acted upon.

If I look at you, you are made real and consumed in the making.

When I tell you to look at me, it is an act of prying open.
But when I came to what I’d been told
was the zone of tragedy — transition — it was
not that. Was a wildering field, across it the light
steadily lessening, and the tall grasses, waving,
deepened their colors: blue-green, or
a greenish blue...hard to tell, exactly. Was like
when the body surrenders to risk, that moment
when an unwillingness to refuse can seem

no different from an inability to,
though they are not the same — inability,
unwillingness. To have said otherwise
doesn’t make it true, or even make it count
as true. Yes, but what does the truth
matter now, I whispered, stepping further inside what,
by then, was night, almost. The tamer animals
would soon lie down again, and the wild go free.
And suddenly — strangely — there was also no fear, either.

As a horse in harness to what, inevitably, must break it.

No torch; no lantern — and yet no hiddenness, now. No hiding.

Leaves flew through where the wind sent them flying.
LANDSCAPE WITH ONE OF THE EARTHWORM'S TEN HEARTS

and also a small boy with a golden crossbow,
and a white rabbit full of arrows.
Also snow. And the sky, of course, the color
of a gently stirred winter soup.

I am the inert figure behind the barren apple tree.
The one who wonders for what purpose
the real world was created. I ruin everything by being in it, while one
of the earthworm's hearts, deep in the ground, fills up the rest
of the landscape with longing, and fiery collisions, and caves
full of credit cards and catalogues. You can tell

I hear it, too, by the look on my face:
That inaudible thumping insisting without believing
one is enough is enough is enough.
Yesterday I asked myself again if life can be corrupted by what you don’t remember. Greg was on the phone waiting for my steel cut oats to simmer for the minimum half hour, to collapse and dissolve. When he told someone she likes the oil paint version of oatmeal and I like the acrylic I thought it might fit into a morning poem that spoke about the Steins’ long-haired trophy cows, how the puny straw-colored cow had looked like she’d just woken up, the forelock veiling her amber eyes and clumps of coarse hair stiffening all over her torso into peaks pointing different directions, whipped-hard egg whites, and me sliding past the field on the way to class comparing the car clock to the clock on the tape deck to the wristwatch, each set ahead of reality in varying degrees. On the winding road I tried to remember how easy it would be to kill someone accidentally and how the time I did I hadn’t been in the car at all and it had been empty, slowly rolling heavily backward and she much older and perhaps not hearing it at first, walking away outside as I was reaching for ice cream, for a loaf of bread. How she hadn’t looked dead but only pale and almost naked as they tried to save her with their bare hands, then with a kit of blade and sparks, while I watched from a few yards apart as she lay still and more still and more still.
FROM "SINDBAD"

On the twelfth day it seemed to him as if the waves washed his body ashore, as if his hands grasped at roots, as if a grin came over his face, as if all were finally still inside his skull, as if he staggered along the beach with outstretched arms, as if he heard now only his breath; not the calls of the men that bore him into town, not the voices of the doctors who stood round his bed, not the wheels of the cars in the street, out into which he seemed to step, or was he still swimming in the sea, or did he still exist at all, who then was the woman, with whom he there or here or wherever seemed to stand before his house, who put her arms around his neck, who spoke to him, but he didn’t hear her, he heard only his breath, that at least seemed sure, what then was the rest all around him: the faces, the wedding, that seemed to be his wedding, the furniture, that seemed to be his furniture, the money, that had to be his money, who was it, who held it in his hand, he or not he in a house at the window and where was the sky, it was no longer there, so the images had to be his death or salvation.

translated by Anne Posten
FLOATING TURD NEXT TO THE DEAD FLOATING SNAKE

Bone black, bone char —

what is ancient
of my name means princess. Hagar

is Egyptian for fugitive, or flight.

Together, would they become the color
that is made

from the burned bone? The black

and white rivers meet...
run separately in two colors, then blend

toward the sea. There, the sea lavender will flourish —

and then falsify

where we’d made love that morning. Your nightmares, Love,
in Manaus. The Hotel Continental —

below the chandelier at the confluence

of massacre. No,

we don’t overlook
the plumbing for the latrines — a creaturely
plastic piping

straight to the river. And we witness
our hopes of one another — my dream, in Manaus, of a hatchet to my skull —

its tip, wedging gently open,

and that relief.
DAWN-SICK ROSE-SICK WORD-SICK WORM-ROUND

Dawn-sick rose-sick word-sick worm-round,
The good body knows to float down
To the tire-smoke roads to the chain-sing scene
Of work, work, his darling, his lust and his leaning,
And steep in the green-shock of screens and un-screened
Calls, of all day screen-green call girls.
O but toward home soft clover bristles,
Near sizzles with motion, and what’s cordial,
Immortal jiggles below it and through
And through the raw fellow of the good body.
And he comes down the walk, warm,
Down, down the walk, and sings to Emily,
Sings I am the angleworm, I am the dew,
I am the bird-shine, the caw,
The step-aside robin that eats the fellow raw.
I HAVE SEEN, LOUD GOD, THE CRACKLE
AND SMASH OF STREAMS

I have seen, Loud God, the crackle and smash of streams.
I have seen the mornlight burn red in hedges.
How after rain the yard’s pulsing worm face
is tender, after your manner, Loud God,
and dangerous-naked, ripe for the pluck
of bird-beak, the foot-fall crush.
I have felt the blindness of pine smoke,
Loudness, how the fleshcups
of peaches swell up around pits,
how the fleshcup of the good body
swells against its pit-red heart.
Loud God, Long Lord, Longing Glow,
when I fall like a stream, when I bleed
like a lit-up hedge, when I pulse, Dangerous,
Naked God, then I smell you: the tenderest, blindest smoke.
Mary Ann Samyn

OCEANIC

A scream on the floor.

I’m picturing hard wood and sandy bottom.

Leftover rant. Sound like a skid.

So that was October, for whatever it’s worth.

Everyone said when a lake is this big.

— You did it and you know it.

I smoothed my hair and told myself.

The alarm was set to go off.

Always, it seemed, in less than an hour.
SOMETHING ABOUT VULNERABILITY

— Remember the drawer of birds? Neither do I.

That was so many field trips ago.

Honeycombs meant you could do it in stages.

I didn’t press my face to that window.

A tag around the ankle teaching exactly that.

Is it true that places where I’m not don’t exist, for me, just now?

If so, I’m fucking heartbroken.

And if August is a myth, don’t spoil the ending.

I’m going as slowly as I can.
Some things need to be done
in the dark by yourself.
I’m not saying it’s right.
In the greenly-lit restroom
I looked pretty ill, like
a vampire locked in
a confessional;
the drug had no effect
whatsoever, maybe
slightly more arctic and fearful.
Angel of meetings
long despaired of, poor girl —
we could put something together
to eat, or
watch an old movie,
you and me
friendless
in this winter city
glimpsed for a minute as far off
lights passing under the wing, just
two more cripples Jesus
never got around to.
One theory says
we won’t remember dying anymore
than being born.
Where can you go at this hour,
stay with me.
On Calvary Street in October
we have not done nothing with our lives —
walking along still honing some words
to a bright and anonymous
saying.

Across the Marist Sisters’
crowy hill, the source
of the perpetual
stillness
we alone hear.

Down Calvary Street, where
I know the hidden
footbridge
to
and over you;

Calvary Street
where we go to visit
our family the strangers,
and nobody asks us
what we do.
TO A BOSTON POET

Personality changes: astonishing, even
voice timbre and handwriting
altered, the face too
to a degree

though perhaps I hallucinate
that (but
if so
then which I)

These are good words
They were here first

Crimson twilight crow
November mansion desert snow

Aldebaran
Now rose-gray winter Fens, the

room
overlooking the end, that

knee-high mound
of dentures —

Toward the conclusion the music speeds up, then
slows

into eternity
which

having arrived, the time being
(once again) now
about five in the morning
I changed

into my very worst clothes
and heading east set out on foot

At this point the narrator’s
faced with a decision

Retain his super powers
or take the medication, or

if we are travelers
and clearly we are

all homeless travelers
to follow the poor

shade of John Wieners up Joy Street
and into the white morning air.
MY BROTHER'S INSOMNIA

A boy ties (but will not remember how)
An intricate knot that slips at the slightest tug.

He remembers reading that drops of blood
From Medusa's lopped head bred cobras and asps.

He cares little for snakes, but fears spiders more.
The recluse spider is his least favorite.

Some nights in bed, he holds his breath and is dead.
Some nights in bed he holds his breath and listens

To wind rattle at the unlocked front door,
To time rustle and scratch in the attic like mice.

Some nights he forgets if it is summer
Or winter, if snow or a wren pecks the window.
EDGE OF THINGS

I wait at the twilit edge of things,
A dryspell spilling over into drought,

The slippage of shadow silting in,
The interchange of dusk to duskier,
The half-dark turning half-again as dark.

There: night enough to call it a good night.

I wait for the resurrection, but wake to morning:
Mist lifting off the river.
Ladders in the orchard trees although the picking's done.
DISTANCES

Despondent, I ponder the larkspur
But hear only rhyme:
   *ark, err, lurk, spar.*

Far off: sluice-clatter on rocks,
A slipstitch of rapids and flash
Before the shallows.

I hear the wind speaking its riddles —
Each word snuffed before I can write it down —

When all I ask for is a straight answer.

The dark repose of distances,
The future always closer than the past,
But neither on the map at hand,
The dark repose of distances
   nicked by headlights:

Dark matter fills in the spaces.

Another day. Another chapter
In which the plot is postponed.
I made a wrong turn
   and ended here.

My father said I’d come to nothing.
I do believe I’ve arrived.

Two horses, heads down,
   consult the sweet grass.
Then one looks up as if to point the way.
PULLING OFF THE HIGHWAY ON THE WAY TO A DEATHBED TO VISIT A WORKHORSE AT REST

for Amy Stephens

We are no more than matter, our hair on the wind off the foothills will not even be

ash hovered above a collapsing wave off a coast harsh with gulls; still, look how

Levi the aged Clydesdale bends his stupendous neck, his braided mane tangled with sunlight,

over his mess of hay and oats; look how his hips, shuddering with arthritis, are sturdy enough
to walk the corral’s perimeter, completely ignoring us, noble no longer, his gorgeous red hide flicking nothing away

but heat, his fine pale fetlocks muddied by urine and dirt, his hooves

that worked the acres when we were young imbedded with pebbles. And still, look how his venerable, achy legs,

hour by rainless hour, with all the gravity once entrusted them, keep on stamping the dust in front of his water pail.
THE URN GARDEN

They slid you free of the hearse
in a cardboard box shaped just like the boxes florists use for their lanky roses,

but this box big as a man
with a night-green wreath where the face belongs. I came because

I needed to know the right father had died; to cast the borrowed coat of my mercy down.

It takes four hours to burn a person. I didn’t know that. Father, I might have shopped,

or wept, or practiced naming the rowdy morning birds by their calls but I sat instead in the chapel,

made lists on some Kleenex, then slipped loose at last of your vast cold sleeves,

and wandered the young summer day bare-armed, heavy with life, a daughter no longer.
THE LAST VISIT
(for my father, 1939-2008)

Streets opened onto streets, doorways onto doorways. And there:

a courtyard of orange trees; and there: the Ukrainian bar — one stubbleface tipped forward over his tumbler. So we passed beneath the windows of deepset rooms, their bookfilled interiors — that honeyed library light. And farther, steam rose from the sewer grates, swelled from the candying peanuts, the chestnuts fleshy and charred.

Linger before the tankers in the harbor, the cavernous nostrils of horses; I’ll wade through the pool of pigeons in the square, they’ll rise before me as though I were wind.

And the fan turning in the wall behind the hotel, and the two subways riding forward together, their lights joined in the tunnel — then sharply veering away. We continued
down the steps, past pawn shops
and surplus stores; a man was sailing
tinfoil boats on a silent fountain.

And then the streets grew narrow,
thin terraces hung over us, — voices
like branches, like bowers of leaves.
A boy was selling spices in bags,
icons from a folded church.

Then a lovely face at a table —
we nodded hello — then a railing
and nothing but sea.
ONE SOLDIER

(after Capa)

Sealed by the City
in the hollow of the machine

to be held upright there
as he is still:
arms thrown back

and thumb barely
yet stamped to the rifle,

the weight of his body
no longer on his feet, but now
in motion backwards,

and the bullet:
an invisible thread

passing through him
— through the instant —
held in place

by the shades of gray
inside him. Here,

today’s light rubs against
his stark shirt and black
bandolier, the bruised valley

in the deeper distance.
His life: an invisible
thread passing through
the upright plane
of the picture —

to disappear

like the bullet
on the other side of it.
They didn’t trust the other country’s water, the crystal ropes uncoiling from the faucets, so they brought their own in plastic bottles that vibrated on the cargo plane — cases mounted on cases mounted on pallets. In five gallon jugs they brought their own, shouldered and flipped into a cooler where the water babbled and released ghostly balloons whenever a guard was thirsty. Once it was snow until the sun pummeled it down the mountain face. As witnessed only by monumental pines, the water stretched cellophane across the skulls of boulders. It drove the fish forward — bug-eyed arrows. The guards drank their own, but showered with the country’s, mouths clamped against any bacteria that fell upon their heads. Some were even skeptical of the water that boiled over the burner, of glistening peas, the nubby, nail-less fingers of carrots. Some believed the water was good for one thing: to drench the cloth
pressed against the prisoner’s face. The water seeped into the nostrils,

the flinching lungs, until a human voice sprung from below the hand, saying anything.
EVANGELICAL FUGUE

The whirlwind, for one night only, in the Thunderdome? If we can find parking, Amit, we can find religion.

*Ours is money-making, not money-minded business.*
Mammon backs the religion. God’s behind the business.

Girl’s got to put *something* in that Vuitton purse. The whore of Babylon is eyeing religion.

The business of religion is not-for-prophet. *God, says Pastor Mammon, is my kind of business.*

Folks can’t see a burning bush, not from the nosebleed seats. Ask your prophet for a better designed religion.

The Lord’s evangel reclines in a first class seat. The Lord’s archangel is stuck flying business.

*What saved you from despair, afterwards?* The blind soldier paints a picture. The deaf soldier signs *religion*.

Our cleanshaven prophet wears a three-piece suit. *Thine is the kingdom, it says, mine, the business.*

Think of business as a semidivine religion. We demigod-demagogues wine and dine religion.

Are you evacuating everyone? *Only the righteous.* You may see some flashes to the east, Amit. Mind your business.
HYSSERLIK GHAZAL

Each Troy churns under to fertilize the next Troy. Welcome the ships. One less sack would mean one less Troy.

The Ilion Homer’s hexameters brailed? A layercake ruin, a palimpsest Troy.

Blind fingers read the rubble and rap a rhythm. Look there, in the bonewhite playpen of Troy’s chest: Troy.

Dig with spoons, or you’ll fling one over your shoulder. Next time you smell ash on the ocean wind, guess Troy.

Iliads soaked the soil and sprouted this ghazal. Rot is reborn as the root, Amit. Troy begets Troy.
EURYDICE WHO GUIDES

Eurydice who guides     Orpheus who guides
who first has to return to death
the one who sings
the one who opens first
of all the animals his
mouth to her song
her thirst his thirst
the ones who nurse each other

Don’t be afraid the blackened saucepan said
I met them in the country by a well
and once I drank from them
I never thirst
FIRST ELEGY

Frédéric Chopin, 17 October 1849

On all the world’s mountaintops, no love...
A body cachectic and blotched
with the world’s wear and tear.
Where had the heart gone?
O voices of plain-chant
O real
rising toward eye-blue stained glass where a dove
spreads an enigma’s wings
between two discreet roses!

The body had been profaned
its viscera studied nocturnally
by a band of medical students
come from the east
they had come barefoot through the dust of Silesia
humming old ballads

The heart torn out
embalmed
hidden in a basket of eggs
and taken across the border river

lost in the snow one day then found again
filched by God’s conjurors
presented repeatedly by charlatans
at county fairs
before disappearing

sole passenger
and cargo of a vessel on the high seas
that was the body loved so often by the same hands faithful
to each member

the multiple body rain-battered
at the song-thrush’s flight
TOWARDS BUXTEHUDE

He kept walking
between the poplars and the tarmac
went by farms fields
power stations
cars passed him
black inside
one rainy night he put his foot on something
crunchy and soft:
a run-over hedgehog
thrown by the impact’s violence
onto the road’s shoulder
it had begun to snow very early that year
but that didn’t discourage him
slowed him down a bit at most
he would sing a psalm or canticle
and had the impression
that a fur shawl
had been wrapped around his shoulders
the innkeepers
unused to seeing clients arrive
at that time of year
made him welcome
he would have a meat pie and a piece of fruit for dinner
sleep in plushy beds
all for a few coins
then would depart again at dawn
across the sleeping white-roofed villages
having forgotten for quite a while
the music that had set him
on this road.
MISTER NOBODY AND THE THEATER

If he could, Mr. Nobody would have written plays, would have done nothing but that, ready, he tells himself, to drop everything, his family — reduced, it’s true to a sister living in another hemisphere, the hydrangea on his balcony and his beloved translations from the Aramaic. Characters appear to him, then disappear to be replaced by others, some return; all these strangers are now — and really, from the moment they take shape in his mind — well-known to him, more than that, are his children, at once his doubles and unlike him, children who will never change, will perpetually wear the same clothing, whom nothing will dislodge from the park bench, from the window, from the parlor of an inn or from an empty neon-lit room colored only by a red blind — he sees them do outdated dance steps, he hears them quarrel and reconcile, evoke their memories, exchange impressions, tell each other the world’s news, sometimes a joke, strike up sea-chanties or marching songs, and love songs, especially, with flowers, birds, fountains. Oddly, he never invents plots for them; he puts languages in their mouths which feed his fantasies, Italian, Danish, Polish, and, when you think of it, it is his dreams as well as theirs woven together which would best animate (or perturb) the unwritten works that he sees as clean sheets hung on a clothesline above new grass sprouting in a springtime garden.

translated by Marilyn Hacker
THE EMPTY MUSEUM

Plumbed from a cadaver, the brain
inside a jar is a cloud of coils
and magnified, the way a fish
when it swims to the corner of a tank
looks inflated. I think of a government
that’s lost its country, of an eyeball loose
and trolling the dungeons
of the sea. There are people
who love the color pink so much
it defines them. They wear pink
sweaters and purchase pink cars
and juice them up and down
the highway. The brain is the color
of the road, of the Midwest gloom
that hangs in the spindle left of trees
past winter. I carry that hue inside me
like clay-scented air. I was raised
there, and it’s one kind of tether
and sometimes inside my dream
as the day heats up around me
it’s a rustic sort of place that I can’t
back away from. The guide says
the self is elastic, it fogs over, twins.
We engineer a filter and backload
a story. I ask if I can touch the brain,
maybe hold it, and when I do its weight
tests the give of both hands. I think of bowling
and watermelons floating in a pool, an infant
translating the blast of shadows
that enter a room. I forget and I remember
and I can tap a memory of boy in his yard
carving a moat around an underground animal
making noise with its teeth. I think of summer
still as an entrance to the palace
where the sun actually lives. I bused north
growing up, to a green/blue place
where a herd of us smuggled
an orange life preserver through the woods
without getting tagged. There was a girl
who would die in college, I see her
by the boat launch, in a towel like a cape
hair dripping with lake water. When she passed
the songs we learned with God in the chorus
stopped living in her brain. A person travels
with a net collecting for the factory.
A person passes a window
and feeds on the view. Under a large
and unfamiliar hat a person
lifts her chin at the mirror
and tilts her face to the side, then looks away
and back again, her whole life
the same question: I’m not sure
if this is me. I shake the brain
carefully, wanting a file to slip. A him
or a her knitted in the tissue, odd muzzle
behind fixative. If this pile,
folded, inscrutable, were alive
I imagine a table littered with jewelry,
and the light jumping all over it.
There’s always a light at the end of the tunnel,  
but I’m not in a tunnel, it’s a train station,  
and that isn’t a light, it’s my dog sneaking out  
the screen door, but as I run to get closer,  
it isn’t my dog, it’s something skittering about  
like a napalmed bar napkin with writing in a hand  
I can’t decipher, except I’m not running,  
no matter how I pump my legs, my knees clogged  
with thumb tacks and peanut butter,  
I’m thumping along like a ninety-year-old,  
my mind still blue heat like a GTO’s muffler  
but my body an anthill eroding in Kilimanjaro —  
Kilimanjaro a word I long to spell out sing-song —  
but now I’m at the tiller of a sailboat  
and I’m sobbing as I sizzle down a highway  
lethal as an alley in a kung-fu movie,  
I see bottom, every life-wrecking rock, every sunk  
tree trunk, yet the keel slices neat as straight razor,  
I skate over faces crying up at me, veer onto  
the shoulder sometimes, but it doesn’t matter,  
just as it didn’t when I peed on stage in kindergarten,  
I’m going to make it, nobody will notice,  
then — wham! — it’s just me in a room  
with a silver stand, shimmering like a candelabra,  
a single sheet jammed with notes in the bass clef,  
but I never studied the bass clef,  
I played clarinet, here it is melting in my fingers,  
if I can still be said to have fingers,  
and there’s this clicking, maybe a tongue clucking,  
maybe a hand flipping a light switch over  
and over again, and every face I’ve ever loved  
is watching, breathless for the solo I see now  
I should’ve practiced every second of my life.
ALERT

Night sweats, sweat between my breasts; the sheet slick, my mind a mattress left out and pecked open,

stripped of its stuffing by magpies battering their nest high in the courtyard's cottonwood.

2 A.M., 3 A.M., 4, I watch your mother’s paintings process their basement archive single file, see how narrowly they avoid

the boiler, the stacked and vacated steamer trunks. In the sunroom a gessoed canvas clamped to an easel,

clean brushes furred to the taboret. _Don’t miss the bus, don’t miss the bus,_ my father talmudically warns

from beyond his freshly tamped grave as an owl’s twin searchbeams exhume the dark. The nightly raid begins with a series of hoots. The sheets are soaked. The heart I gave you, the one currently

confined in me, fibrillates non-stop like a tin spoon banged between iron bars,

self-celebration morphing into solitary panicked protest in the shadow of the owl’s launch.
Traci Brimhall

ROOKERY

1. (n) Colony of rooks.

Or ravens. Or crows. Related to the passerine order of birds. Family Corvidae. Kin to magpies and jays. Hatchlings fall onto bricks, and a woman buries them beneath the crocuses. She wonders why her husband doesn't come home. Why his fingers curl into questions. Why his hips are as brief and hard as June thunder — her own body a chimney full of rain. One night she dreamed him in a basement stroking dead jackdaws and whispering someone else's name, and when she tried to brush his singed hair and ask why, he licked salt from her eyelids and whispered Don't look. The cradle is on fire. And she looked into the darkness and the darkness looked into her. She awoke, and the bed was full of feathers. Black feathers. Hundreds of them.

2. (n) A breeding place.

Open nests of crows. Colony of seabirds. Harem of seals and their pups. Hawksbills bury their clutches and crawl back to sea. A mother and daughter walk the shore dropping starfish into a pail of vinegar. It's unlikely they suffer the mother says. The daughter looks at her, eyes like wood wet with rain. The mother finds a pale, capsized Medusa, says The only immortal animal is a type of jellyfish. It matures and then grows young again. Over and over. It will live forever unless it's killed. The daughter brings it home, goes to her mother's sewing box and removes the pincushion pierced with bloody needles. High tide brings the dead to shore — auklet, fiddler crab, a school of herring. A blowfly circles and settles on a flounder, wings twitching, she sings to her eggs as they leave her body.

3. (n) A crowded tenement house.

Dilapidated. Packed. Rooms and rooms teeming with the crush of people waiting for the war to be over, to pull the world back out
of the dragon’s mouth. Pilgrims of blind alleys. Sojourners walking backwards into the future. Blazing trails with graffiti of cinderblock saints and copyrighted love poems and prayers for apocalypse, knowing somewhere Christ is preparing a new city for them. There are dead oceans on the moon and a storm on the sun. The earth circles its star, one celestial body around another. One revolution. Two revolutions. Three. Four. And God comes down from the ceiling, bites the ears of everyone awaiting rapture, says I can’t see you. Set yourself on fire.
ALYSSA'S 7TH BIRTHDAY PARTY, WHEN HER MOTHER RETURNS TO TOWN MAYBE FOR GOOD

We're all out back and her mom is reading by request the Mad Hatter's tea scene from a cheap and beautiful gilded volume of Carroll. She left four kids here for the ostensibly rich man in Portland.

We don’t have answers. I’m looking at the mask of make-up, The dark roots. Alyssa’s mother says quietly mid-sentence “Here Is a word I’m afraid I just don’t know.” Alyssa frowns, kicks the picnic Table, slow-thawing tarts slide. I set down my mug of no tea, go around

To her mother, lean over the thin page and I say Treacle. I say it’s like a syrup.

Where the book says nothing makes sense. Alice is grumpy, headed For tiny. Alice is kind of a nightmare. Alyssa says she isn’t bad and She wasn’t bad in the movie, either. Her Mother says Never? Her Forehead is dented. I want to press my finger there gently, as though To fill in. One of the aunts says “It’s trickle. It’s British.” And Lewis Carroll raises his hand to say See how confusing it is, these eight year Old girls, knowing what to do? But I always know what to do, I always

Know who dreams of horses, who dreams of cigarettes, who dreams Of rivers and who is just pretending she is at a party for a girl.
He kept his good leaves all Winter. When you’re leafy
And a man, you see the big Picture: centuries are moments.
He added up, he didn’t add up. (All that aggression, un-mounted
Makes an exact translation Impossible.) But I brought him in
To my city, my soft house, my calico Forest. He delivered tea, stones,
Gently sautéed morels to my bed; then Tripped my dog; tangled my hair; his Branches broke through my roof.
With him I slept as if sleeping Outside under stars. And in him There were two bad breaks, a split, Black knot: scars same as mine. Some say that’s disease; he said No Good is always green but Death must Also grow. Then one night I woke: a young woman screaming For help down below in the street. He didn’t put on clothes. He didn’t see. He didn’t seem like an oak or Even vines then. I called the police.
He was gone. She wakes me up Every night. So many false alarms.
From the fountain of drool that is dog
and the languor of bathrobes.
From the humility of cereal and fall weather
and the starless light of the fridge
where I stand, hero, god in underwear.
From where I ride in the car’s worn lap, passing
into one future then another,
like the magician’s assistant sawed
in two. From the pillow
which sets out my dreams like a rope of
paper dolls with fire.
From telling my students it was Wittgenstein
or Heidegger or quantum mechanics
that said anything we can imagine is possible, is.
From tubs of old soap,
the ankles of my future children,
tented ears of the cat.
From the suburbs of rust, houseplants
that won’t die and my boyfriend who will.
From the great assembly of mushroom and wood,
the metronome of tennis courts,
electrocardiograms and
my voice made of the old skin of water and wire.
From the surprise of fingers touching down,
delivered on a bad day to the lowland of my back
and the chair pulled closer to mine inevitably,
we, with mouthfuls of food,
hurting through a moment that has only
wind and open windows.
To be remembered for loving avocados
and fog. For loving four legs and not two.
To communicate like the secret language
of central air. To be a song
with broken arrows, a woodstove making ash
of yesterday’s news.
So you know what it’s really like: Cindy almost blind, her daughters twin shapes on the grass. A bee stings one and both scream. Her fingers wade through their tears, feeling for the welt, the stinger. In a flurry of blossoms, hummingbirds dive for sugar from a giant plastic strawberry. I am tired of seeing how tired of seeing you are, tired of good advice misapplied: stay by the wreckage, drain gas from the wings of the plane for fire and wait. Look for help and you end up stripping naked by a frozen stream and lying down in snow. I know a business that will turn the ashes of loved ones into beautiful jewelry. That’s all I want now, the only ring I want to put on.
I had a little cat who slept under my lamp all night as I read Emerson in a stiff-backed American Library edition on a hard-backed chair, with a pencil in my hand squirreling, in the margins, insights as embarrassing as my intention to follow him through the snow, bare-headed on the Cambridge Common. Not out of love, but because I wanted to nail him into the body of my comprehensive exam, in the section before Melville and Emily Dickinson.

The cat had brindled paws and the most intelligent eyes of green cracked marble. She was young then, but she would become ancient with me, nineteen, dreaming on sheepskin by a window or watching through rheumy half-blindness the shadows of crows chasing a hawk.

We were penny-poor, the cat and I, and thin. Each night I broiled one chicken leg and one sweet potato under the gas fire in my Somerville kitchen. She got the skin, grew a glossy coat, and slept while I read what we all read in the late 1980s: Freud on *Hamlet*; Derrida on Poe; captivity narratives. It was like happiness but it was not happiness. It was concentration, a pool of light, inwardness, loneliness, the patterns of all readers and involutes.

Those who don’t know it will never know it. Those who do, do. A waste of time; a way into time; both.

Remembering the past by what you had been reading, and where, and what it felt like, and what it always feels like.
Mister Morgan of South Carolina is my teacher. He took the cook house for our school. I write these words in a book he gave me:

Consort is a husband or wife. 
Concert is a harmony. 
Disease is sickness. Decease means death.
Foul is filthy and fowl is a bird such as those we have at hand in the camp but can never grasp: wild swans, big by half as a man’s body, gulls that are wilder still. Peahens we have none. Quail seek higher ground than what we lie on. 

This is a strange ambiguity.

We are 16 men to a tent, three men to a blanket. They say we number 18,000.

The 6th was cold and cloudy and we had nine men to die at Hospital. The 7th was very cool and a small snow fell. The 10th was nice and I saw the man who makes the coffins. The 22nd of January 64 was a very pritty day and it was my birthday, which maid me 25 years of age. I feasted on crackers and coffee.

Toward evening the air changed and the night was very cold. Five of our men froze to death before morning. Two was so hungry they caught a Rat and cooked him and ate him.
Last night. I dreamed of Mrs. Greenhow's escape from the Old Capitol Prison. She was flying far above the Chesapeake. When I reached out to touch her she wrapt me in her skirt.

I have not got any shoes.

I was borned in the Year of our Lord 1838. Raised and graduated in the Corn field & Tobacco patch. The first day of July 1861 I left home.

Earthborn is to spring from the earth. Earthbound to be confined by it. Erenow I was nobody. Ereelong I will be nobody still.

I would tell you my poem of the breach, how we escape like a sip through straw.

Whether you believe it or not, whether or not you believe, we slip through.
In fall the forest turns metallic: gold fading to copper, falling to quiet, until all that remains is the scrape of baser metal — the oak who denies her leaves but holds on to give them grief. Her brand of alchemy: gold into iron, daughters into a rattling sweater of rusty cans for the wind to snatch at, swiping with his hook.

Mother, forgive me, three years gone, and I’m still rattling in the shadow of your death. Tramping these woods, I find myself looking for substitutes. When I was young you used to sing to me, but all signs of a pebble-murmuring brook have dried up. Roots too — for you were mine surely — and see how these roots shrivel in air dangling over a dry culvert. Now you look back from this forest mirror, not what you were but what you became. A stony thing. And there I am, still pushing your chair, singing I’m Just Wild About Harry, trying to bring you back. That was always my trouble, wasn’t it? Even now, stuck on my umbilical twig, rattling the dead for a kiss.
DERMATOLOGY

Beneath the white,
polar bears have black skin
to absorb what heat there is
in a world of chill.

Never mind the designer cashmere
catching the eye. It’s skin
that counts. The necklace
riding the breath registers
nothing of the oily touch
fumbling with the clasp.
Only the delicate nape
grasps the whole under-
story, there where the fine
gold hairs read Braille and
memorize.

Peel a sunburn.
Under is the blush of all
your old embarrassments.
Even soles, shy in shoes,
are tickled silly with
what’s afoot. We take in
through our skin. What wife
doesn’t know that?

Each night
when he comes home, I lean
in to him, unbuttoning his coat
to reach the warm. I hush him
with my mouth. I am reading
the news. Lip to lip, skin to skin,
what slights he has endured —
what little murders.
CURRENCY

It was in between all seasons I had known.

The bottoms of my soles worn flat.

What else to conceal?

The restaurant check came back.

A dollar less each time.

He who paid me twice what anyone’s worth.

Till I was eating off of him for free.

His tongue all coin.

His mattress stuffed with specie.

Spindled regrets.

Sending me downriver on his makeshift raft.
AN ASSIGNATION

where our initials remain

carved into the trunk
of an American beech

come loose — words

only lovers could inflict
on a landscape gone

to seed — staggerbush

wherever snakeroot
spread beneath the shade

of false Solomon's seal —
Big bluestem and slough grass brushing against his sunburned neck and unusually long armhair, he walks the mowed path through the center, toward the fresh firebreaks, and imagines white smoke, the slow crawl of an ignited line across the scrub. Tomorrow, if the high pressure system stays put and the wind is flat, park officials will set fire to the seventy-four acres along the gravel road, a controlled burn of the last remaining prairie in the county. Last night, typing into the blue-framed chat window for hours, he and a pulseless stranger wrote — back and forth, with intimidating detail, all in lower-case — an elaborate story involving their bodies.
MINDFULNESS

[FOURTH LABOR]

There's no grave enclosed with a silver fence because I've never had a body, never been illustrated in an acid-free book of books. I pass through folded laundry, every hesitant keystroke, the entire experiment — humanity —

that for now continues, and look and look at you, through you, feeling nothing, all the deck hands scrambling to restore steering to the rudderless vessel glued inside the sideways bottle. Their shallow breathing's neither bad nor good.

Join me here, in the untherapeutic everywhere, and see the futility of revision, self-promotion.

Of going on about freedom, the holographic boar you try to net and subdue in the shoveled snow.
Jennifer Atkinson

CANTICLE OF MORE WISHES

For the dusk, salt, sour, summer-earth flush of your skin

For oranges twisted and plucked from the tree, the silvery rustle of leaves — that taste

For gnocchi browned in brown butter and sage, braised fennel with pecorino, broccolini with garlic and crushed red pepper, for unsalted bread, the lonely savor of penance

For a balm to be set on the torturer’s tongue — ripe pear flesh dripping its honey

For a balm to be set on the prisoner’s tongue — ripe pear flesh dripping its honey
CANTICLE OF THE NIGHT PATH

I want the moon to overfill, spill over, and drown me in dust light.
I want whatever happens after that.

I want the barred owl's one note to lull doubt to sleep.
I want to walk the night path.

Let the deer leap, the creek sing, the ferns open their damp infant fists, I promise I won't look.
Let the stars open like time-lapse roses, I promise to close my heart.

I want to taste the ozone, the fire-cleaved air, the acrid certainty of terror.
I want to be picked up and shaken.

Let day's slow fall, resistant as a single feather, be done.
I want what has nothing to do with wanting.
CANTICLE OF STONE

An almanac of storms, spent rains, snows snowed and summers quenched;

A ledger of debts and excesses, each ten billion lives compressed to a mineral glyph, a serif;

A glossary of mattes and glints, sift and flow, clench and thaw;

History told backwards, the score, the gospel of evolution, sutra of change, psalter of ante-, ante-, ante-;

Unplotted, un-authored, all ibid and op. cit., an endless dissertation on on.
SONG OF MYSELF

Who gets the god’s drink pure & who gets just a sip diluted with spit or human sobs

only Heifitz could’ve played into a Paganini encore? I’m taping up my torn Whitman,

already crackly with tape, in more tape as I metaphorically rewrap the Clark St. book-stall

where Whitman was wedged with thrillers & Harlequins. I began writing my bad Whitman

in the book next to his, riding the Lake St. el & trembling because each person on the train expected

the poem-word that would turn away suicide or cure flaccid love. I was exultant too

with the train at third-floor level past grimed stock-rooms & secretaries maybe

flustered their first time in poems, but their faces lit with nuance thanks to my inadequate Whitman.

Seldom a comarado, never an imperturbe, I’d channel Whitman in my Chicago coldwater flat,

its wallpaper pimply with roaches I’d smashed impasto & gritty in crockery pieces.

I chanted Whitman until my breath was a runny glue of whispers. Then, in the shower’s
hot clouds to ease congestion, linoleum slick,
I’d be a tenor, his lips in a memorized zero,

with all his 300 lbs squeezing out “addio.”
But drinking water out of the toilet or barking
at other strays doesn’t make you a dog;
you can’t learn levitation — only Whitman

was Whitman.
TALKING INTO THE MONSTER’S HAT

but not daring to wear it, I’d whisper
*let me be your Igor*, talking to the Nazi

who’d worn the hat all my childhood ago,
a Frankenstein my uncle tried not to be

in a war he’d fought until he’d finished,
liking beer too much, tight-lipped about
deads for which he’d volunteered.
The hero version has my bloodied uncle take

the hat wet from the head of the man he’d killed.
But it’s a Wehrmacht dress hat, the Nazi

buff or collector I sold it to sighed, & not
the Luftwaffe hat your ad said. Your uncle,

he said, bought it with cigarettes from his opposite
in the long line of the Nazi uninjured that

films show us. Or the hat was trophy from Alps
of captured stuff the Allies bulldozed as the first step
to German forgetting. See how all of us play
at the evil, rub ourselves in it, eat it second-hand

in spit-up — what metaphor says enough —
dipped in fixative, my uncle flapped & writhed

on a pin of conscience? Or, my favorite image,
the prancing Igor of the movie, who, dropping it,

almost stepping on it, finally gets the bad brain
back in Frankenstein’s lab basin?
Charles Wright

APRIL EVENING

Spring buzz-cut on the privet hedge,  
   a couple of yellow cups
Down-drafting from the honeysuckle.
One bird in the hapless holly tree,  
   giving us lift-off and glide.

It is amazing how beautiful springtime can be,
Bell jar over our ills and endless infirmities,
Transparency into where we know  
   the light will never reach us.
NO DIRECTION HOME

After a certain age, there's no one left to turn to. You've got to find Eurydice on your own, you've got
To find the small crack between here and everywhere else all by yourself.

How could it be otherwise? Everyone's gone away, the houses are all empty, And overcast starts to fill the sky like soiled insulation.
MUSIC FOR MIDSUMMER’S EVE

Longest day of the year, but still, I’d say, too short by half.
The horses whacked, the dog gone lost in the mucked, long grass,
Tree shadows crawling toward their dark brothers across the field.

Time is an untuned harmonium
That Musaks our nights and days.
Sometimes it lasts for a little while,
sometimes it goes on forever.
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The editors of FIELD are pleased to announce the thirteenth annual FIELD Poetry Prize competition. The contest is open to all poets, whether or not they have previously published a book. Unpublished poetry manuscripts between 50 and 80 pages in length will be considered. All manuscripts will be read by the editors of the Press, David Young and David Walker. Oberlin College Press publishes the winning book in the FIELD Poetry Series and awards the author one thousand dollars.

Manuscripts must be postmarked during May 2009. The contest reading fee is $25 and includes one year's subscription to FIELD. Please make checks payable to Oberlin College Press.

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Oberlin College Press
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Oberlin, OH 44074

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Detail...far right panel with balloon -
*Hot Air Balloons in an American City* (detail). 1867.
Utagawa Yoshitora, Japanese, active ca. 1830-1887.
ō-ban triptych woodblock print: ink and color on paper.
14 3/4 x 29 5/8 in.
Collection and photo courtesy of
Kobe City Museum