

SHEARSMAN

91 & 92

SUMMER 2012

EDITED BY
TONY FRAZER



Shearsman magazine is published in the United Kingdom by
Shearsman Books Ltd
Registered office: 30-31 St James Place,
Mangotsfield, Bristol BS16 9JB
(this address not for correspondence)

Correspondence address:
50 Westons Hill Drive
Emersons Green
Bristol
BS16 7DF

www.shearsman.com

ISBN 978-1-84861-217-4
ISSN 0260-8049

This compilation copyright © Shearsman Books Ltd., 2012.
All rights in the works printed here revert to the authors, translators or original
copyright-holders after publication. Permissions requests may be directed to
Shearsman, but they will be forwarded to the copyright-holders.

Subscriptions and single copies:

Current subscriptions—covering two double-issues, each around 108 pages, cost
£13 in the UK, £16 for the rest of Europe (including the Republic of Ireland), and
£18 for the rest of the world. Longer subscriptions may be had for a proportionately
higher payment, which insulates purchasers from further price-rises during the
term of the subscription.

Back issues from n° 63 onwards (uniform with this issue)—cost £8.50/\$13.50
through retail outlets. Single copies can be ordered for £8.50, post-free, direct from
the press, through the Shearsman online store, or from bookstores in the UK and
the USA. Earlier issues, from 1 to 62, may be had for £3 each direct from the press,
where they are still available, but contact us for prices for a full, or partial, run.

Submissions

Shearsman operates a submissions-window system, whereby submissions are only
considered during the months of March and September, at which point selections
are made for the October and April issues respectively. Submissions may be sent
by mail or email, but email attachments—other than PDFs—are not accepted.

We aim to respond within 2–3 months of the window's closure.

CONTENTS

James McLaughlin	1
Nathan Shepherdson	4
Sam Sampson	10
Karen Lepri	16
Melissa Buckheit	22
Martyn Crucefix	26
Linda Russo	31
Carrie Etter	34
Catherine Hales	37
Jennie Osborne	41
Jen Campbell	43
Fiona Hile	45
James Bell	48
James McLaughlin	51
James Midgley	55
Nikolai Duffy	57
Lynne Hjelmgaard	60
Robert Vas Dias	62
Patricia Debney	64
Amanda Ackermann	66
juli Jana	68
Nicholas YB Wong	70
Rob A Mackenzie	72
Gary Hotham	75
Alexandra Sashe	77
Paula Koneazny	80
Camilla Nelson	83
Steven Toussaint	89
Ian McEwen	93
Steven Waling	99
Charles Baudelaire	102
translated by Jan Owen	
Biographical Notes	106

NATHAN SHEPHERDSON

ten acres of silence

you sold me
ten acres of silence
telling me
i could plant our thoughts
in rows that match
these potato-stamp lines
on our foreheads . . .

weeks later
i am not surprised
to find the fruit
are vertical replicas
of your uninjected lips
capped in lace chlorophyll
and inside each
is a saliva capsule
containing what will be
on another day
two red commas . . .

the taste
wires me instantly to the day
we took a complimentary butcher's calendar
off your mother's kitchen wall
and put white sugar mounds
on our respective birth dates
swapped chairs
closed our eyes
and trying not to laugh
with our tongues hanging
impersonating new drooling limbs
we move as slowly as possible
towards what we know
^ is there ^

SAM SAMPSON

All the Everlasting Cataracts

After John Keats' Hyperion

near at hand
rip-cords surround the centre
gurge of pulse
on / oft
to sometimes detect
actual remnants
to look up, and tell of this fractal shape
one gradual solitary star
which comes upon silence

...

fragments _____
that word startled up
filled in, in pencil
a transcript: the story dawned outlines
nerveless, script-less, dead-
ends felt in every feature
eyes closed: bowed head listening to the earth
to an ever-revolving spiel

...

trace : tracer

one of two great circles

intersection: right angles at poles

nadir: the low

zenith the high

circles and arcs

broad-belting colure

sages, keen-eyed astrologers

earth-bound evangelists

they study the sky

study the fault lines

(the god and sunrise)

both, and both in one

all along a dismal rack of clouds

upon the boundaries of day and night

a drifting mass

cloud

on

cloud

the sky in-

verse

...

nineteenth century

slow-breathed melodies,

like a rose in vermeil tint and shape

enter, but who entertains?

effigies, visions, extras...

opaline forms
amorphous

: pictures of intimacy

all the everlasting cataracts

... pools

loops these crystalline pavilions
pure fields mantled by sea salt

...

re-cast the self-
same beat

in hollow shells

in the cadence of time
where a dead branch fell, there did it rest...

reset to follow, to turn and lead the way

a stream went voiceless by (streamed)

mountainous: no shape extinguishable

when the bleak-gown pines
when winter lifts his voice, a noise

the mysterious grate of wind in trees
whether in calm or storm

(the same scene)

god of the sky : bookish séance

that old spirit-leaved book
sifted well ... from the ion-universe

...

flames yield like mist

all calm through chaos and darkness
from chaos and darkness

the extraordinary

the constant...the inter-
nal law and how

I

whether through conviction, or disdain
in this expressive line
quicken the patter of beads

(pearl beads drop-
ping from their string

ele-
mental nature
powerful similes

ponderous millstones)

...

appearance of strength
a deception masking real weakness

essence in its tent

before the winged thing

silver wings of dawn rising
now a silver line hints at this approach

in each face a glint of light
see how the light breaks in with this line

(haphazardly)

till suddenly a splendour
like morning

the horizon in noise

...

at the set of sun
light fades
first from the eastern sky

to one who travels from the dusking east
attributes of the wanderer

wondering in vain about
the inventor of god and music

of light and song

soft breaking noise
white melodious throat

a name signifies memory
would come as no mystery

pin-pricks of the world ... name-sakes

for me variance
by knowledge only

the above and the below

gathering all things mortal
this endless commencing

this still,
steady light

brilliance
of the moon O

independence
acknowledges no allegiance.

KAREN LEPRI

Curvature

Your hand cups
space, the shortest

distance no longer
an option: black hole's

Eros

Animal, fallible
we scenic slip
round each

Necks of

Light
bowed when
the gasping

Stops

Is it getting bigger
or smaller,
she

Asks

Warping toward another

Dust

& your body
nests in the house's
corners. Shuttle-cocked

when the door opens;
dreamdregs bound
in unbinding

form. Rest
a handful over one
then a mouthing. I

lash down, saddle
back, shuck the rough
unholding you.

MELISSA BUCKHEIT

Narrative

Across the wide sea
I came
and you did not recognize me
for what I appeared to be:
the rust and gray water
with its broken remnants of seaweed
rocking, slapping against the side of many pilings anchored
in the vast and realist Atlantic,
which never lied to a soul
who drowned in its waves
or pretended to be anything
other than it was—
barren at times, welcoming, others
—a challenge to the people
who settled there.
Dismal, everyone thinks we are,
like Emily Dickinson was
apparently a depressed character—solitary, too;
the weather will do that to anyone.
Inside the vast sea,
I existed for centuries,
until I came to be born
and landed on a narrow
expanse of island—as after a long trip.
We were waiting to come to America,
my parents and I,
and so the sea was our home
lodging broken remnants of ancestors' suffering
in its cold depth, like
jagged rock loose from the shore
held on our backs, then swallowed by liquid sand with the tides.
We slept there a while,
hoping we had left luggage or broken furniture behind,
useless to carry further ashore.

We came up through the Atlantic
but we were changed
and could no longer speak,
we had to learn language again.
Our sounds were rough and harsh to unfamiliar ears,
but with each other, intimately
we were shyly gentle,
our voices soft like honey.

Neva

I'm not human for you, smallest side of a pin
whom I love. Summer in Boston. Water
of the lake, blue and cold at the bottom. Akhmatova
said the cold fire of the heart. I will quote her.
"Remember me".

I am alive like the coathanger twisted for abortion.
That is not the truth, Akhmatova would say something
subtler, something about the mildness of the Neva
in winter, how her love is a shadow at dusk
moving across the sky, as it dies. My love
is not like that. I am like that
as I disappear.

MARTYN CRUCEFIX

After reading Hass on Miłosz

... if he meant "Oh!" or "O!"

But I'd be first to agree
Oh! is longer drawn already beginning
the button-down of understanding
that well-I-never

with its freighting of verb tense
and identity—
whereas O! is sudden more urgent
a rapture surely a moment rapt

when we are prised open by desire
as I am here in 'Nicolas'
where I've chosen this bottle of red
I'm not buying for myself

but for my daughter's cello teacher
now she's to be replaced
by another more challenging
or at least they say he comes trailing

an Eastern European name
like Vaclav or Pavel or is it simply Pal—
and as I stand here
handing the dark bottle across

to the assistant in her maroon vest
I hear the loose-limbed clatter of jazz
on the speakers though
it has been there all along

Ornithology or *A Night in Tunisia*
and she stares at me

with no more than the desire to serve
and sees my eyes widen

sees the tiny up-tilting of my chin
and you'd forgive her
for thinking she was the focus
of my arousing when really

she is a fragment
equal to the others no more
though no less than the fragment
I find myself smilingly O!

Apology

Tired is a frail portmanteau word
for being wound to such a pitch
as this all day tail-spin
of disrupted routines
this driving to make connections
this anxious waiting in case ourselves
and our reference details
might fail to correspond—
that our seats will or will not be vacant
our monies valued rightly
our neatly labelled luggage
man-handled on and off
the right plane no rip off no
rip off—that the hire car's OK
and of course it's not
and the boy's already burning
his ten-year-old fuse
to be slumped now and weeping
in the back seat in the dark
of what was planned to have been
our lovely sun-down coastal finish

and it's his father's tongue lashes out
to skew these closing hours
and maybe these months these years
of shame but say nothing
no more say it's nothing to him

On trust

for Milena

In lilac-blue of ageratum
the heads of tawny-black bees
delve in the dusty mouths
they see it in German

as she says *the now's today*
it is a phrase they use
the slow sikh with *tremens*
brought to table with his tray

toward an empty garden chair
the word *pigeon* flaps down
they see it in German
crumbs scattered everywhere

the pink top on her phone
the couple at their crossword
the perm eating cake
a young woman taking notes

she plumbs the English line
how it sounds in German
hearkening through a sheet
clear blue water between

the feel of fabric on her tongue
murmuring beneath a sheet
beneath a sheet the wink of eye
they see it in German

from Flitting

Short Crisp Chip

flight call is a sharp, distinctive plick
 what is happiness?
driven out into the rain, not an ordinary rain
but the rain of unselfconsciousness
studded with letters of introduction

I am thus connected, the human right or rite
 of many centuries, a spectacle
which seems to be in conflict

the call is a short crisp chip rich with possibility

I react to people one way
 but I could react that way

Chipping

you're twirling in song or chipping, or cawing are we
speaking the same language your flat note of
inattention what brings us to this place? your see saw
your caw, your hum, scribble, your chip, your wall
of branches, you goddam three dogs barking at it all

*

what writing is indigenous to a place?
The birds punctuating the grass, perhaps
the squirrel punctuating the branch

*

the problem:

all is awake in its own drama
announcing my folly in this
thing for my yard
though it's good to see
you green things I tended last spring
sprouting

the lesson:

wait

First Little Peeps

shall I go or no, how
 shall I live my life, this
collection and dispersion
 energy, the first little bird peeps arrive
with a dousing stick

by *my* I mean all that accompanies

Bird Saw

like mobile weeds sometimes
 birds chatter in the yard
growing awareness almost time for lunch
 bird song, bird saw
sunwarmed distant visual vibrato of leaves
 bird saw, bird song
left weedy

Orphan/age

On this hill, the grey almost palpable with.
Moist, the day, on my brow. Head down into.
Grief accumulating to what. She fell on the ice,
broke a wrist. An influential event. Hold out for
an attached garage. Down into my little city.
Large enough for anonymity. If I play it.
I think myself nondescript. I almost want to.
Break on ice. Most nights I wear her.
I chose three nightgowns, a couple necklaces, four.
They're cotton, gentler. The *tabula rasa* of a grey.
Not for me. If visible, if palpable, the severity of.
Wandering amid the shops, cupping aimless.
In the pub, students compare. I can't hide.
Where she never was. Cobblestones, laughter.

city state

§ 1

there's beauty in this dereliction way-
ward broken vision merely a matter
of purity membranes sounding out strings
vibrating by plot conjectured to a
fault the usual nonsequiturs aligned
amid resisting concentric raised like
a hieroglyph against a bruised pane she
said for a bailout handed to them on
whereas by these precepts only one of
many possible wavering sumptuous
adept involved of course how could she not
have seen it coming not obviously
anything of the kind a little pet-
ulant perhaps impartially withheld

§ 2

anticipating such scenes played out in
labyrinthine construction a stream of
moted profligate light to abandoned
seats impervious to glass shards old brick
& dog shit in among the willow herb
where too many converge they used water
cannon loaded with liquid deodor-
ant to hose away the stench in the streets
a squeeze under way & the camera
team is there her body occupies a
space it does not own extrapolating
an intricate facsimile all bets
are off whatever can be accomplished
in the projection room no guarantees

§ 3

vapour trails in sunday evening sky war-
ranting rhetoric of happy hour warm
blooded in partial recognition of
conditions of recovery wiring
mainframe enjambment expressed these days in
bored vicarious alembic in un-
tidy rooms a cheap analogy an
assailable victory just a mouse
click away for gaming pleasure now &
with the latest shader technology
to detox casserite environment
street level understated against a
wall the ultimate ego discontent
high score total enemies another beer

§ 4

accidental clocks pitching us into
fiction the story changing over time
the official version constantly up-
dated having regard to rictus grins
in public spaces the tendency of
a system to entropy credit watch
negative terminally risk-averse
to limit the consequences or just
to see what happens when the knowable
is all we have keeping all our aspir-
ations on one side of the equation
adrift among the phonemes of a baff-
ling language & floundering there's nothing
arbitrary in the placing of walls

JENNIE OSBORNE

Crow Place

Blackness

wing canopies covering keeping a lid
glints sharp as nighteyes sharp as beaks
no fairy-come-follow goldie yammer

We feather-leaf here incubate
we burrow-root sett here cubsuckle

Nestraiding loudfoot thief kill-scent
we tooth against we claw we
root hole tangle thorn
we nettlebite stonebreak soilsmother

Strange enternest we hatch into earth
rootfood wormfood
all brood all blackness make

Sirenum scopuli

The whole island came. Turned
their leather boots
out as rows of ballet men.
No one laughed. They were as cattle
they all lay down before the rain fell.

The circus failed to lock her;
her cherry hair
netted in tents before the woods came.
Silver birch.
She was left to a navy dying. Each sharpened
stone in hand a ticket
which would have paid for breakfast.
Their stomachs rolled by military boots
tying wings of hers
to rocks
to stop her glow.
Sea claimed her thighs. Her stomach.
The children thanked the moon as wolves.

Wives stood over at the hide tide line
sleeves up, dogs
pulling on for nightfall, when
they'd free to fish out liver.

Men adjusted their own
as salt water rose
to choke
the neck of her.
It came to this: one craved
her teeth. Prayed they'd
wash up so he
could thread them on

a checked shirt hem.
Rattle as he walked.

Some bet her wings
would split,
unveiling
shoulder blades.
Waves breaking on a crimson bride.
She did not crack, her bird eyes
blank. If she'd come
with flags they'd have wrapped her in one.
They did not know her colours
just the way she sang.
She opened her mouth then
to catch the feathers.
The men hurled
as they'd been taught as boys.

I heard they gave her a strawberry heart

bred underground. Cured leg meat / bull fighters there to walk
the line. / She came up encased in deepest mud. / She came, then
/ to stand up in a field. / Planted herself. / Her heart pulled up to
the highest branch. / Its green strawberry pulse / pips pushing out
from the inside. / The villagers came. / Their church list brought
/ for Apostles she might answer to. / Her heart hangs. / Pilgrims
came to sit at lunch / to pray for monsoons to wash her clean. /
Scientists wrote / it would take a giant's hand / to reach. / Wives
had timers in their kitchen drawers. / Egg belts across their ageing
stomachs. / Their view the red glow of a farmer's crop. / Their
husbands there with brand new spades. / Break her open as a
chocolate egg. / A blooming girl. / They hung.

Angulimala

Little fingers strung across the door,
festival of you just stopped turning up.
New streak monoxide fixing to inhale
le Peloton speeds towards your rabbit

face the reflection of your own strobe
the possibility of being *la deuxième vie*,
can't make it make a path with a liquorice
Jackhammer. Wheelbarrow: Scene

Two: the problem of unity and the other
Thing. Your bag of poetry wanders off into the
you and me anthology of slightly disingenuous
apologies, the depthless truths of your 'things

men hate about women' and the interminable
tussle over who will wear the encephalogram.

Gift Registry

Drunk, appreciating poetry.
You wonder if *appreciating* poetry
is the same as a velodrome. The heavens
declaiming "it must be sex!"
July fills you with liars

Fancy an overseas trip?

You pick up the wrong pen.
You want to get to the real of him.
But you prefer alcohol.
The Bohemian geometry of open cut crystal.
Counting face.

JAMES BELL

meet morning

notices	this is where the day could start or stop	forever
taken	as the morning struggles to meet	morning
day	is faced again with reluctant greetings from	one
repeated	to another measured by tone and footsteps	borne
what	in voice and shape—while the cormorant	breaks
design	surface then in seconds dives again—has	breathed
salt	the chill air that you do continuously as	need
need	with no gracefulness and no craving for	salt
breathed	or hot/cold where you have stopped and	design
breaks	your own response to what you see and	what
borne	you don't until too late or often	repeated
one	attempt to begin the journey though the	day
morning	comfort in this freshness is not	taken
forever	granted by you or anyone else who	notices

what you see is not what you get

you hesitate over subtexts then keep walking
there is never any clue in what remains covered

in nature what you see is what you get
you are either quarry or you are not

leads you to think human nature has that angle
that becomes disentangled as you sit in the sun

the lone small wader is difficult to identify
its silhouette on the shore continues regardless

your subtext is an invitation never made
kept at a distance that does not bother the surface

the cliché is that this is just the nature of things
stated by the distant call of a curlew

the ribbed sandbar soon to be covered with water
the place not to visit unless it was already here

a patterned lute

(after Li Shang-Yin 812-858ad)

The moon is full on the vast sea
a tear on the pearl
Li Shang-Yin

i.

it is only accidents in pleasing sounds
that give the lute its strings, its shape, its patterns—
there are patterns that follow each accident
of meeting and parting, tighten or loosen
the strings that hold them to the bridge
that we cross—pluck tunes on the frets—
sound on the air until they are
soundless or until another hears—
or cannot hear because they are not listening
or the sound has become soundless
when the other is ready to hear
or when both make the same sounds when
they are soundless and can only be understood
by sign and the silent patterns of the lute that play on

Eyes

I slip by loss—
consequentially

without doubt
the way a shade lifts

upon the horizon there's a touch—
a fine distinction of gauze

and flowers stare and die
leaving

beginning.

dusk

sum total
I came to the conclusion
of all that I am
of my time not held
was merely some expectation
a solitary sign post
a hankering
as the dusk awaits
and drifts
returning re-discovering
vestiges of confusion
dappled wings

fleeting

I've established an
aptitude a

proficiency

whereby mere capacity
forms logic

the air tonight
rests on a thought
the way
leaves hang on objectivity

while the magpies laugh
bounce

rest me penchant

antipathy

game

Clear sky
words are not
made of this

more than anything
there is instinct

water seems
something different
it falls

or trickles
over rock and
and moss

we are

vicariously experienced
using sympathy
or substitute

we are
end games in oblivion
suggestions

epoch

More

Now
cannot be taken easily
not that eyeshot
of pink
between and simultaneously
almost between
feeling
that bit of grasp/being
a fine distinction
touched in a hint
a shard of light come
darkness

The Mind's Weather

As if a weathercock could uproot a house,
as if within his eye

which turns and chimes upon each unweighted thing
he held the knack for telekinetics.

His pivot rests above me,
neck over neck,

and I under his rooftop make do
with brow-wrinkled maps.

He loves what he cannot move, cattle like rocks
on the corners of the world's tarpaulin.

His balance requires unfailing concentration.
With a twist

he hauls a net of silver-stomached
gales over one shoulder.

And though a mind like mine
might reduce him to wire, coat-hanger bird,

his jurisdiction extends
to the hill's diaphragm, which heaves to his inspection.

He is the centrepiece
to the land's scales, herding rain

to a lake eastward
to ballast swallows bent on migration.

His brain is magnetic,
my breath is iron filings.

Impossible, how he directed his arrow downwards,

summoned a fimbulwinter
with motionless wings,

and I in the basement
with a single candle,

hearing the rooftiles diverge
and fall like fledglings.

Ghost

It had a pulse, the rhythm of a blinking eye.
Its breath blew over one's face.
It sat in the aviary and all the birds had flown.

When they came with callipers they could not measure it.
Now starved, now gluttoned, it broke them apart
and their distance hung in the air.

A thrown bucket of sand discerned its shape
but the sand was mute
and could think only of glass.

It had eyes, possessing whatever looked upon it
and whatever mouths answered did so only for themselves.

It sat in the tigers' enclosure
and peeled away the rinds to reveal their coal bodies.
It flickered like a candle suckling on the air.

Within a Budding Grove

It is simple enough: all windows
tarry this aspect
and even at such close distance.

Lay a stone here, then
step back
into descant and day.

True, I have fallen more than
once getting here,
eyes trained on other corners.

An attitude of seams, spacing
this ground
and all manner of convergences.

Whole cities might be made from
this, sloughs of colour,
all information and humming.

Through the woods a young boy comes,
arms of etchings
and deep pockets pitted with bark.

So it is hands harvest holding
and are taken back,
frequently, to fell, clough, and pike.

And then to stand, brackish and estuarine,
at that precise point
where the crossing happens.

LYNNE HJELMGAARD

The Other Boat

(off South France's Gulf of Lion)

In the throws of a Tramontare I spy another boat
surf erratically down the heightened slope of a wave.

Pellets of rain hit rippling swells, lethal bullets
on the surface, and dissolve. Freakishly, the skipper

on the other boat attempts to motor against the seas.
No storm sail is hoisted for ballast.

She is a toy, a flimsy teacup in boiling stew for the sea-beast,
and eerily disappears from sight.

We are in the Lion's mouth, territory unknown,
it speaks as if to say:

I too long for the smell and comfort of land
and want to leave once it's tasted.

It is better to sit above, secured with a harness if you're rested
and dry. The plunging motion in the belly of the vessel is a strain.

When I saw the other boat I stared blankly until it didn't exist
Now I am content just to be warm.

Annalise rides the top of a crest, her bow points precariously downwards
until loyally and steadily at the last moment
she lifts.

And we can log the miles.

ROBERT VAS DIAS

Episode

Getting up, unsteady, the me
 in the mirror is not the me

who keeps my memories,
 who wears the face, familiar

but odd, an oblong look
 into those eyes I seem

never to have seen.
 The slate's clean: how to begin

again, how regain, claim family,
 friends, where this room, where

the city, people I can call
 my own, anyone I can call for help?

Look deep into the eyes: they
 have seen where my life has gone.

The Fetch

This particular wind has blown a long way over open water. Dipping down like a bird or swirling up out of sight, but mostly held tight to the tops of numerous waves, at once urging and holding on for life.

A distance I've travelled. Between continents, across years. Land mass after land mass, hillock and cliff, shore and flowering wood—all could have stopped me. Should have, perhaps.

Today is frighteningly brisk. It wouldn't take much to tear a sail, collapse some stones. Let go the rope. I'm so tired, now that I think about it, of keeping us afloat.

Perfect Summer's Day 1

At a certain point, the sun and clear blue sky and turquoise sea wipe the slate clean. You notice instead the ways gulls chase, two on two, unsettling each other like relay runners, passing an invisible baton: your turn now to fly low, test good weather and calm water. Together you pass over, descend, move along the shore, your wings in unison, bare centimetres from a splash, crash and headlong fall.

Despite the dangers you hold onto your hard-won momentum, stay in the race.

AMANDA ACKERMAN

Structure

When my mother was driving back and forth in between the homes of husband A and husband B, what do you think she did in the interim? If you, iris/irises were at the helm, how would the world adapt to suit your—not your need—but your longings? Architectural harmony, says. Arch of tones, says. Bridge bridge bridge, says. Sunset-peace, says. Sunrise-joy, says. Heaven and earth, says. Everything else, says. If I wished the world to be well, it would be well. My bare arms would appear with fists of flowers. Trumpeting petals. A burst iris so that I could come down for breakfast. Buried in the dark earth, the end of our suffering.

Then that which you fear was over. It ended abruptly. The irises bent a little. There are passages to and from other worlds.

Uses

Well, she longed, and she knew not what for. Had the world nothing she might live to care for? Loved her own harmless gifts. Saying, unsaddened, this shall soon be faded. Who shall never name thee. My mother was three-fold in nature, like a flashing falcon in her daring, and had three husbands. My mother was a florist. Many pursued her with fire, and some with envy. She was often in a careful mood, but I don't know if this mood is what caused so many to pursue her, or the result of it. The third husband (husband C) had a name that was too long to tell. He was a man like a slender sapling. She told me: he bedded me in awful thistle and vile nettles full of vice. But on the day we wed, he was dressed in fringe and a vest with many dashes, and I scattered gold spots in its open breast.

When we walked among the irises she said, "I know that these pure waters and Flags know me, as my dogs know me. And I cannot change my name, you see. Like a strictly botanical name,

my name is hard to change, especially a name expressing such obvious characteristics.” This conversation could not have taken place elsewhere. “For a start, we would have to change the basis of the present universally accepted binomial nomenclature. No more homo sapiens. No more knife and fork.”

Care

I find five irises, and call them lovely. I'd like to investigate. We drift hand in hand through a hall... painted like a fresh prow... Do[es] your root drag up color? I can smell the gorgeous bogend with fire on your cheeks and brow. A man renounces the entire world—clothes, money, a job, a woman, daily breakfast, contact with friends, flesh & intimacy, flesh & books, what he thinks he knows—so that he can travel into the center of an iris. This is like having access to the tongue itself. Or the Law of mountains and lakes. One[s] become mountains and lakes through merit. But addressing the iris, he says: stained with your cool violet, I observe you and therefore, I change you. Am I rewriting your future

purple drop-
loped tongue-
splayed shooting-
star kingplant?

[“Am I rewriting your future purple drop-loped tongue-splayed shooting-star kingplant?”]

Have I heard you yet, and what is it the people want to hear?

[What is it you want to say to the people?] [also given that they are narrowing?]

As a starting place, return to your stalks.”

JULI JANA

more meanderings

I had met her feeding pigeons from a tesco bag
her hair dishevelled with mist before spring
it was outside gresham college by the wrought iron gate

I spoke about lectures there baudelaire's journey
to mauritius Iain sinclair who would lecture
on rivers tonight but she had never been
to one I was glad about that somehow
told her instead of a blossom tree in the inner square
a little mouse at its base I had photographed
she smiled looked in her bag for a last crust
I told her about rats that used to swim the river
then turned to catch the tube at chancery lane
thinking of tunnels dusty mice in the underground
wished to say no more but she tugged at

my sleeve *let's go to the blossom tree*
I showed her the hidden courtyard we sat in the
late sun listened to wandering footsteps the call
of birds waited for the swish of a tail
she forgot I was there

NICHOLAS YB WONG

Katia Kapovich's Face/Book

What's the occasion tonight? You're wearing melancholy, not makeup, in this B/W book jacket shot. The background trees, your denim blazer, equally bedimmed, neither earns more nostalgia. A cigarette—unlit—between your first & middle fingers that tap only on paper scraps & studs: a mnemonic device for your tobacco aura. Your head lowers, eyes downcast, you shimmy home, or a place fuzzier—a second home maybe. But what have we learnt about homes except they're where photos abound? I thank optical fibers for connecting me with your auburn hair, & you—wholly colored—though much sadder. The cigarette's still there, lit but smokeless. Your eyes, this time, look askance into the lens, as if you found, behind the machine, your image, your double, subcutaneous self. I hesitate—I'm tempted to befriend you in this dimension where distance doesn't exist, but your pale skin & gray eye circles object, your personal profile's set quasi-private, an inelastic border with the public. So I leave you alone, better remain a stranger to you & you to me. Let's face the present, let's draw a mental line. The way solitude is earned, such simple.

6 Haiku

keeping out the rain
a famous part of Paris
before the Eiffel Tower

*

falling leaves
down the garden path
the distance in light years hasn't changed

*

the side street's lower speed limit
—
a few trees changing
color

*

ALEXANDRA SASHE

“The Garden of Eden”

nothing other than arm
as bare as mine—nothing varied,
as unalterable.

one sound that set us apart—
on one side—from other sounds.

there lavender spreads out its annulets.
we enter the right to abolish
the volute motions of time :

an arm as bare as ours
spheres around.
what collects within the curve
we knead with flour, seed and oil

the bare of our arms
doughs forth the light.

Autumnal

Sadness prevails. no longer
an anguish
nor a corkscrew
mentioned rapidly into the marrow

a felt
clothing off the internal borders
between the dusk and the following
resurrectional morning.

for long
crows' sparse names

will remain unevoked.

Sadness

retains its humid
throughout the season; our lips endure,
hands sustain on the milk we are
to warm over and over.

Untitled

We are shreds forgiven
blessed set at naught

via the side lane of a thousand years
a vicarious pardon comes
takes a seat
on the side
orchestrates our blood currents our
invisible intersections

invites us to happen
(the rhythm of tango and other
selected forms of the sleepless)

our private mornings
follow us closely,
we listen inside
to the dot-and-dash messages
sent through the septum.

At night
we coincide, and
rewind the clock winter-wise

and build a city
upon this city
from our raw material.

PAULA KONEAZNY

Devotee of Birds

thinking about Rachel Carson
Are you my mother?/ Said the baby bird to the bulldozer—
Claudia Keelan ('Little Elegy (Eros)')

for there to be an elegy, first there has to be a someone
stepping out of sight engaged in close examination of
the blissful matter-of-fact

a still photographer / still, a photographer
I wait to see who'll come by
sometimes glancing at the drifting
halation around "This is where I came in."

her reputation for precision jostled by
streaks of life curveting
sound ballooning above under and through her feet

I take her likeness with a periscope
in the meantime / word's depiction
its rhythmic lashing
you can sing it

CHARLES WILKINSON

Water Coins

faced twice,
air-spin dance song's
luck, & to chance all the
marrow, though if what picks
gold in the vein

bones cloud from
sun-flesh, reflects the true
points, & wells tears, lies flat
down, the tale's lost, sunk
in rain-slime

& where glint
quarrels the surface, not
going deeper, our dark wound's
unseen, yet disturbs, a scum dis-
charging sleep.

what will keep
is this well drawn water:
its circles' bright now, not wishes
falling, just a tender trade,
or love of light

Connect

Room

without the spur
 there's no touch
to the source
 & no switch-
ing to light;
silence is
 deep, as if
submarine,
 & sounding
the room's shape;
 the curtain's
sigh, the creak
of depthless
 floor, the cord's
faint tap on
 the wall: there's
no outlet—
 or mouse in
the wainscot;
 never the
smallest noise
of this now
 circuiting;
inside, wind-
 owless breath:
only the whisper
 of what's fur-
ther than gal-
 axies, spurred
through the night.

Spurs

 the day: cross
-stitching rain,
 leaf spirals
down, though
 each island's
soft-cliff grey
is a cloud
 —beach fringe white,
& somehow
 light, beyond
the weather
 *
 sky gravel
walk, silence
 between what
steps closer;
& thin legs
forking, the
 arthritis
crack of the
 light giant: thin
bone-flash nar-
 rows the count
 *
 Apollo
gone with the
 Lamb, fleece
soiled when west-
 ering with
modern gods:
 the forms of
red, though it's
 what hides in
the black sings,
 rewiring stars

Measure

from pitch
back to its original

quiet tangle
of birchbark.

Down along
the frost encased

river, little
stinging reeds

thresh muscle
endlessly, stricken

to worry and ruffle
surfaces like this.

Enormous funnels
of pitch a people

press on, tamp
the thicket's

thicket quiet out
as if a current

of flame rouses
deep under boats

pitch-sealed
to carry them over.

Without an usher
or single familiar

landmark yet
the pilgrim

entering woods
hears pitch drip

from the sphere
of fixed stars.

The Work

ichorous tissue
cooling nude

on the bone
in this sieve

we achieve
transparency

reading fluent
from news

and weather a
sudden rose's

snaked-off skin
the glass apple

a crushed
and humble light

onyx preserves
makes possible
whose core
is ark air

[REDACTED]

Capability Procedures

1

Changed by observation:
not cat more. The pressure
risen on the bell, portholes
thicken with the soupy air,
he moves—an astronaut
blown to slow ridiculous,
a puffy suit of questions.

*

Each leaf its own torn
shadow that spills volume
to the ground. The very wait
a kind of lightness. Trills
inflected on the grass, bare
breeze, the neuropathic flinch
of blades. Say something once.

*

Abstract
telephonic tact:
a neutral act
acts natural
as 'background facts'.
Patter.
Lack.

2

Ground down these grains
must all be graded.
The objective is the name
we give the little lens
of the toy telescope,
all far-away-and-wee
as that finer flower.

*

Where the buck stops he smells
the air. From here the slowing
frames blend and the mind's
CGI churns over, violets
balletic on fresh grass. The kill
is here, only not yet. Patience.
Brick by brick they build a trap.

*

To: Re: cc:
FW: Re:
To: Bc c:
Re: Fw:
Cc: Bcc: Re:
Fw:
Recall this message

3

The wrangler locks the ride.
Break the plastic curtain as you will
the glass wall holds. Support
cold metal as the fake lights
blare and derivative

acceleration jounces out
on little tracks. Not frightened. Tired.

*

Backwards on each hoofprint,
every scuff and broken twig
appeals the origin. The forest
alive with sin and forgiving,
where each cast is perfect
evidence, angle, umbra:
the step from the path.

*

The bored
cries under pressure,
the bolder
rolled already
down the hill:
the Venus Fish Bar.
Brillo. Steel.



STEVEN WALING

Waves for Mike Taylor

(pianist, drowned by own hand, 1969)

but don't you all sometimes wish to disappear
I've been waiting ages for this bus Sorry Not In Service

sometimes it wanders off and the fingers do their own thing
wander the shoreline of a badly-tuned piano

don't you want to walk on the water

it won't stay in tune without attention thoughts
return to the theme of a road around and a road across

in my dreams invent the myth of an island don't we all
want to swim to a landfall sooner or later

repeat to fade take up thy bed of notes and walk
gently washed ashore unrecognisable metrical

untidy tides listen to the keys you don't play

blue notes rise from below or is it just me
sick of my own company voice drowned in each

musical phrase see the geese fly home just add water

to feel what hunger feels each chord a remembrance
further up the shore than the one before

everyone will miss us then they'll see

whatever you throw in the sea where giants live
returns changed out of all cognition

The Vampire

Sudden as the stab of a knife,
you lodged yourself in my sad heart.
Like a horde of demons running rife,
you flaunt your folly, tarted out,

treating me like your unmade bed.
You've made my spirit your domain,
you infamous bitch—I'm bound and tied
to you as the convict is to his chain,

as the drunkard is to his cheap red,
as the stubborn gambler to the game,
as carrion comfort to the worm.
I call down curses on your head!

I've begged the quick blade of the sword
to win me back my liberty,
I've had a word with cyanide—
"Aid me in my infirmity!"

No use. The poison and the sword
contemptuously answered me:
"You worthless fool, as if we would!
There's no route out of slavery,

you're marked in red on all her maps.
Besides, our help would be in vain,
you'd fall to kissing her again
and bring to life her vampire corpse."

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

AMANDA ACKERMAN lives in Los Angeles where she is co-editor of the press, eohippus labs. She has a book *The Seasons Cemented* (Hex Presse) and the forthcoming *I Fell in Love with a Monster Truck* (Insert Press).

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE (1821–1867) should need no introduction. The poems here are drawn from his famous collection, *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857).

JAMES BELL has two collections from Tall Lighthouse, most recently *fishing for beginners* (2010). He lives in Brittany.

MELISSA BUCKHEIT's *Noctilucent* appeared from Shearsman in March.

JEN CAMPBELL is a writer and bookseller living in London. Her poetry has recently appeared in *The Rialto*, *Poetry London* and *Agenda*, and her first book: *Weird Things Customers Say in Bookshops* was published by Constable and Robinson. Her blog is at jen-campbell.blogspot.com.

MARTYN CRUCEFIX has published five collections, most recently *Hurt* (Enitharmon, 2010). His translation of Rilke's *Duino Elegies* (Enitharmon, 2006) was shortlisted for the Popescu Translation Prize.

PATRICIA DEBNEY teaches at the University of Kent. Her first collection of prose poems, *How to Be a Dragonfly* (Smith Doorstop), was the overall winner of the 2004 Poetry Business Book and Pamphlet Competition.

NIKOLAI DUFFY is a lecturer at Manchester Metropolitan University. His chapbook, *the little shed of various lamps*, is from The Red Ceilings Press.

CARRIE ETTER is the author of *Divining for Starters* (Shearsman, 2011) and *The Tethers* (Seren, 2009), and also edited the Shearsman anthology *Infinite Difference* (2010). She teaches at Bath Spa University.

CATHERINE HALES lives in Berlin. Shearsman published her first collection, *hazard or fall*, and her translations of Norbert Hummelt in 2010.

FIONA HILE has poetry published or forthcoming in *The Age*, *The Sun-Herald*, *Southerly*, *Hecate*, *Steamer* and *Rabbit*. She is currently completing a PhD in creative writing at The University of Melbourne.

LYNNE HJELMGAARD's latest book is *The Ring* (Shearsman, 2011)

GARY HOTHAM lives in Maryland. In 2010, Pinyon Publishing (Montrose, CO), published a major collection of his work: *Spilled Milk: Haiku Destinies*.

JULI JANA is a poet and academic living in London. She is also a visual poet and has an interest in history. Her work has appeared in several UK mags.

PAULA KONEAZNY lives in California. She has a chapbook, *Installation*, forthcoming from Tarpaulin Sky. She is an assistant editor of *VOLT*.

KAREN LEPRI, who lives on Cape Cod, holds an MFA in Literary Arts from Brown University. Her poems, translations, & reviews have appeared

or are forthcoming in *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Boston Review*, *Mandorla*, *Vanitas*, & *Word For/Word*, among others, & online at *Verse Daily*.

ROB A. MACKENZIE lives in Edinburgh. Salt published his first collection, *The Opposite of Cabbage*, in 2009. He is Reviews Editor for *Magma*.

IAN McEWEN has had poems published in many magazines and in 2010 his pamphlet, *The Stammering Man*, was a winner in the Templar Competition. He lives in Bedford and is Treasurer of *Magma*.

JAMES McLAUGHLIN lives in Dumbarton and has two chapbooks, *AEIDO* and *Text 1* from Knives, Forks & Spoons Press, Manchester.

JAMES MIDGLEY used to edit *Mimesis*, and won a Gregory Award in 2008. His work has appeared in *Horizon Review*, *Kenyon Review*, *Magma*, *New Welsh Review*, *Poetry Review*, *The Rialto* and *Stride*.

CAMILLA NELSON is studying for a PhD, *Reading and Writing with a Tree: Performing Nature Writing as Enquiry*, at University College Falmouth.

JENNIE OSBORNE's first full collection, *How to Be Naked*, was published in 2010 by Oversteps Press. She lives in Totnes, Devon.

JAN OWEN lives in South Australia. Her sixth book of verse *Poems 1980–2008* was published by John Leonard Press. She has a small virtual presence in the UK through her inclusion on the Poetry Archive website.

LINDA RUSSO is the author of *Mirth* (Chax Press) and several chapbooks, including *o going out* (Potes & Poets). Her poems have recently appeared in *New American Writing*, *Tinfish*, *ecopoetics*, *Interim*.

SAM SAMPSON's first collection, *everything talks*, was published in 2008 by Shearsman in the UK and Auckland University Press in New Zealand.

ALEXANDRA SASHE is based in Vienna, but was born in Moscow. A bilingual English/French collection of her poems, *Ver Sacrum*, is forthcoming.

NATHAN SHEPHERDSON lives in Queensland and is the author of several collections in Australia, including *Sweeping the Light* and *Apples with Human Skin* (both University of Queensland Press).

STEVEN TOUSSAINT is an American poet currently based in New Zealand. He has recently been published in *Cannibal*, *Jacket2* and *Conjunctions*.

ROBERT VAS DIAS' *Still • Life* was published by Shearsman in 2010.

STEVEN WALING has published widely both as poet and as critic. *Travelator* was published by Salt (2007); *Captured Yes* by Knives, Forks & Spoons.

CHARLES WILKINSON has published *The Snowman and Other Poems* (Iron Press, 1987). Recent work has appeared in *Poetry Wales*, *Warwick Review*, *Tears in the Fence* and *Poetry Salzburg Review*, among others.

NICHOLAS YB WONG is the author of *Cities of Sameness* (Desperanto, 2012). He reads poetry for *Drunken Boat* and teaches in the Hong Kong Institute of Education.