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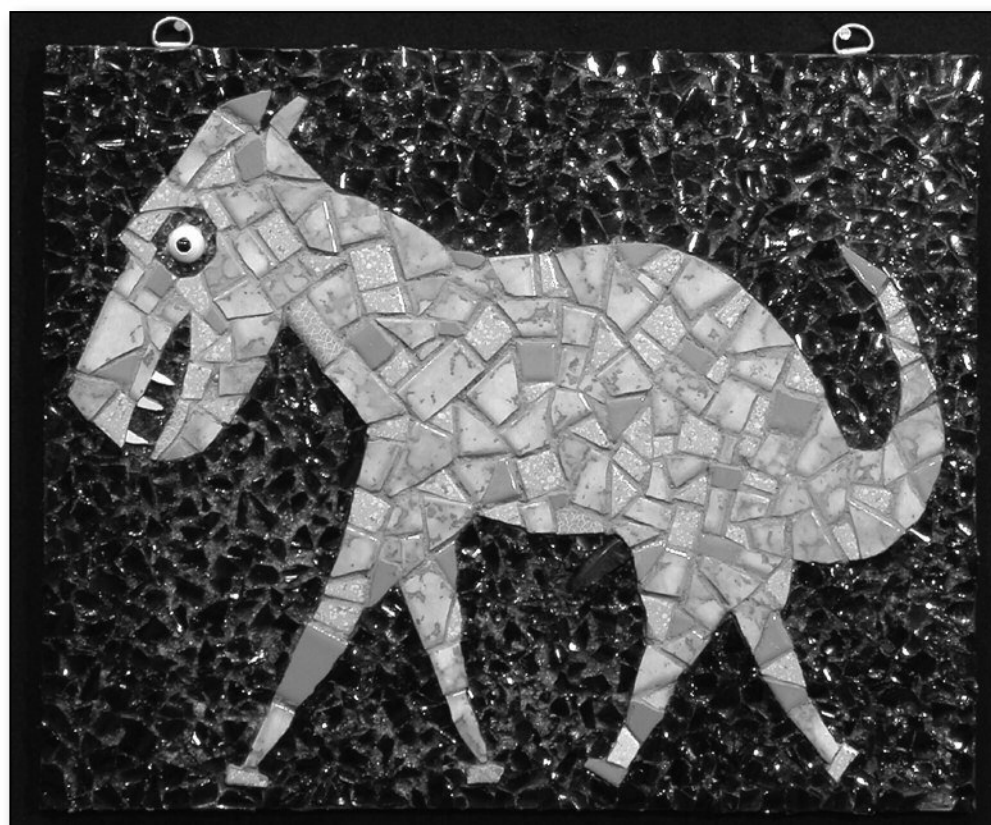
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from All Alone at the End of the World

Lesley Choyce

Falling into the Well
(Spring 2013)

It had been waiting for this moment
since 1978.
That was the year I first put shovel to soil
and began digging
down.
Shovel, then pickaxe,
more stone than dirt
and lifting weighty gifts
from the glaciers
up to meet the sun
for the first time
in twenty thousand
years.

I remember mud and stone
and the brown soupy sludge
that would soon turn
clear and sweet
and the delicate placing of stone upon stone
to form the walls.
Then the digger turned carpenter
and framed a flat wooden roof,
as good a place as any to sit on a summer morning
reading books
and writing novels.

But it was a well built by an amateur
with its poorly fitted walls of flat rocks,
each placed like pieces in an erratic puzzle
and then, too,
the well went dry each August
and eventually a new well
usurped the task of
slaking the thirst of
the writer's growing family.

And so, perhaps,
my old well wanted revenge.
To add insult to injury I had placed
a rusty barbecue
on top and grilled
greasy meat on shirtless
September evenings.
The lazy, shirtless man, I suppose,
forgot that old boards breed mildew and rot,
so it's only fair
that when they felt the first taste
of sweet spring air the next year
the boards would bend
then crack
when the weight of history
came hiking across
the surface.

Yes, I knew what was happening
so I reached out
as one does in such a fall
from grace.

If you were nearby watching you would have seen
the head and shoulders of a man
whose expression clearly spoke of
his shock
at the great decline
of all things,
his toes wriggling
in the cool spring water,
his mind filled with
the wonders
of such a dangerous
and beautiful world.

All Alone at the End of the World

So there you are, as you might have expected,
all alone at the end of the world.
Sure, you'd seen it coming
as did everyone else
but it didn't seem there was much anyone
could do.
Loner that you are,
you really didn't mind
that cities disappeared
and busses stopped running.

It wasn't like there was screaming and pain
and people dying.
No, it wasn't like that.

Everyone
just
went
away.

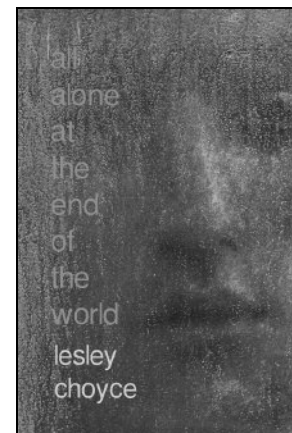
And there you were,
standing on a misty morning
smiling at the trees,
scratching your head
with a what-now? look.

Realizing there were
no forthcoming answers,
you decided to simply
get on with your work
and sit down
to write this poem.

Last Day in Chemo

Day begins with silence and
a million shades of pink and blue
both east and west,
a ragged flag above the old dock
begins to wave and fray some more.
Seven female pheasants scavenge for seed
by the frog pond
as you and I eat breakfast
on the barstools I assembled
this week.

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Lesley Choyce is a novelist and poet living at Lawrencetown Beach, Nova Scotia. He is the author of 86 books for adults, teens and children. He teaches in the English Department and Transition Year Program at Dalhousie University. He is a year-round surfer and founding member of the 1990s spoken word rock band, *The SurfPoets*. Choyce also runs *Pottersfield Press*, a small literary publishing house and hosted the national TV show, *Off The Page*, for many years. His books have been translated into Spanish, French, German and Danish and he has been awarded the *Dartmouth Book Award*, the *Ann Connor Brimer Award* and the *Atlantic Poetry Prize*.



White sheets washed and flapping
like schooner sails
in the famous southwest wind,
a tropical storm somewhere south of here
and our hearts secure
with who we are
and what the day will bring.

Long drive to town
on a ruler-straight highway
through the happy September wilderness
of spruce and lakes
and centuries of undisturbed cycles
of green and brown
and white and green again.

At the hospital,
people laughing
in a crowded elevator —
all of us unsure if it is going up or down.

from The Big Thirst

Jim Christy

Doggone Poem

It's got gnawed on ears
And might wag its tail,
Maybe give a paw
If it has a mind to. Call it
A stray dog of a poem. A doggone
Poem that looks like a cross
Between a chuckwagon and a wolverine.
This poem helped a guide dog
Cross the street and dared
Eat out of Rinty's bowl.
It growls at the mailman
And the cop on the beat
But children often ride
On its back. And it never
Comes on all mysterious
Like a housecat of a poem.
This one sleeps where
And when it wants. Sure,
It may be querulous and misshapen but
It has something most other poems
Don't have. It has *something*. Never attempt
To put a leash on it much less a muzzle.
Some have tried and lost a finger or
The seat of their pants. This poem is not
Licensed by the authorities. It likes
To saunter along, going where it wishes,
And watches the other poems in their
Enclosures. They can whine and preen
Or growl and bark all they want,
Knowing they're safe
On that side of the fence.

Fly Boy

As if it landed in the night, a blue
Condor surprise. An old cargo plane
That resembled an old pickup truck, doors
Flapping like wings to slow it down. Bald
Tires for landing gear. Grill sucking
Air through missing teeth.
And the fuselage just lays there
Like a tailgate in the snow.
The ground crew is two snowmen
Who signal with carrot noses.

Pilot and passengers are not to be seen,
Gone off foolishly in the snow.
I must snap on the snowshoes, go
Patrol like Sergeant Preston, with
The three-legged St. Bernard, who
Also gets lonely on long winter nights.
It's hopeless, of course, they'll never
Make it out alive, and we'll have
Ourselves to drink the brandy
Dangling from Bernie's neck.

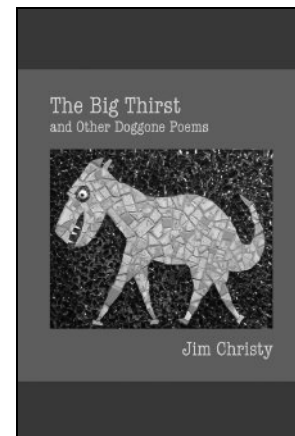
Call and Response

Driving through a boondocks
Chirascuro day. Grey, copper-
Dappled sky, birch trunks like
Cell block bars, serious jazz
From the little dog radio. Coyotes
Yip steady as a metronome, the dirt
Road a prison wall between.
Now the bars are Lester's, sixteen
That seem to hang there beyond
All this, woods and everything.
And here's Billie, and pennies
Start raining down.

The Big Fall

A woman's mug shot is always
Worse than a man's, especially
One who left broken hearts like
Road kill all the way from
Hyderabad to Hobbs, and was still
Doing so not so many years ago. Drunk,
You drove your truck into the front
Of a police station — I imagine Gila
Monsters rushing for cover — and told
The cops, you thought it was the
Mini-mart.
Long gone now saucy walk, long
Gone swinging Sixties' raccoon
Shadow eyes. No more hands full
Of fingers of rings, and bracelets
Stacked to the supinators. Unless
They took them away when they
Booked you. Google can't hide
White roots in mug shot.
What about those small young breasts
Like Alaska Highway mileage arrows that
Always made me calculate how far to
The next motel? And your traffic stopper,
That upside down valentine that followed
The rest of you, where did that go? unless
You still have it which could cause
Consternation in anyone approaching
From behind. And all the things one
Cannot see but this one can remember.
Angel with a slutty side, pit viper
Of tender interludes. You
Had it and, therefore,
Farther to fall.

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***The Big Thirst** is Jim Christy's 32nd published book. He continues to explore the earth as well as the ways and doings of women and men. He is also an artist who has exhibited in many countries. His songs have been recorded by singers in Canada, Europe and elsewhere.*

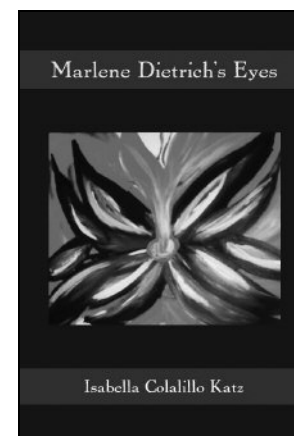


Mighty, Roiling Moira

Jetsom of the Moira, angry
With snow melt, a tipsy
Parade of tree branches and
Roofing tiles, half a yellow kayak.
Down from Deloro mines carrying
Gold dust and arsenic through
Farm fields, bubbling now with
Fertilizer and cow shit. The
Mighty Moira cutting capers,
Cheered on by cheerleader geese
As it rushes to the Bay. Rusted
Bedsteads, a bedside table
And a trophy from some
Bass fishing tournament
In 1989. And finally there
At the base of the bridge
At Quinte, one old man's
Body, stuck as if it had
A toehold on the footing.
Bloated feet like eggplants.
In his Sunday suit with button-
Hole rosette, Bible in his
Pocket, as if it had come along
For the ride. All dressed up
To meet his Maker.

from Marlene Dietrich's Eyes Isabella Colalillo Katz

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Isabella Colalillo Katz is a poet, writer/editor based in Toronto. She leads workshops and courses in personal creativity and creative writing. Isabella is the author of two previous books of poetry, Tasting Fire (Guernica, 1999) and And Light Remains (Guernica, 2006). Her creative work appears in numerous anthologies and journals.



Mother and Child

for limbs and blood and breath
an anchor to a valley is thrown
a seed is sown in the act of love
stirring a child in the soul
hatching itself a form

a frond of life stirs in her eyes
a mother's womb fills
with godseed
in a nose-dive of love
suturing form to fire—
a new conception

nine are the months of planning
and floating dreams
flutes play on hillsides
dancing stars open the crack to life
easing a smiling soul
from heaven's warmth
through a door of light
into the jaws of a deep abyss

another journey begins
into unforgiving time
where all is done
for the sake of knowledge
where spirit and time
wield the knives of illusion
offering pain—that naked plan of truth
to the new receptacle
blood made flesh

Coming of Age

my questions grow out of
my middle years
turning thirty-and-two
eldest daughter grown without a name
Colalillo is a foreign voice
among the Smiths and Martins

so why not Katz—
a sound too rough
for gentle English ears?

Kates perhaps...

why not?
we will pretend together

and the ring on my nametag identifies me
perfectly to some
dimming
the semantic colours
of my hybrid self.

Evolutionary Angel

*I convey this message to you whom I have stirred
with the sound
of my voice. These words are my signature.
Wingmakers, Chamber 2*

I

we live in worlds of physical experience
we are the living skin of First Source
we call her goddess, Mary, Mother, Inanna
we call him god, Father, Creator, Zeus.

we know her as love, wisdom and grace
it is his eyes we wear when we look at each other
it is her hands that touch and feast and labour.

we are the margins of her hadron dreams
the conscious axis of his time experiments
we are the eschatons of her hopes and visions
the dancing tachyons of his metaphysical longings
we are the gorgeous taste of air breathing love and fire
the confluent flesh of her seven bodies.

II

she accompanies all our journeys
he wills the chariot of our ascending explorations
we unite and synthesize her purpose
our free will willing her will
through each breath, each day, each gesture
we discern the sensoria of her desire
absorb the written texts of time's experience
new learning for his blue cosmic eyes.

III

I am her personality
the shape of her ego
the cherished heir of his visible light
I am the wandering limbs of her time portals
the bloom of her holy womb
the cosmic *rota* of his evolution
the visible purpose of all her forms

I am the human tears he longs to taste
the tender heartbeats of her songs
I am the tonal alchemy of his hands
the joyful body of her nature
my flesh
his signature
a blissful celebration

Fields of Presence *for Diana Grace*

you are here and there
you are now and after
indivisible
carnal

you were and are and will be
a mystery
I cannot fathom
whose soul I can only love
into the eternal

my heart is a place
to know your wonder
to remember and imagine
the spark and photon
of your air and fire
a felt perception
of whole and quantum
of *and*
& *or*
your longing
non-local
a place of light
made
flesh
in the breath of a poem

from A Private Mythology

Stephen Morrissey

The Poet's Coat

I wear a poet's coat,
a great black coat
pulled tight around my body:
the arms are long,
the material rough woven.
The coat gives warmth
and casts a shadow
between two cities,
two countries, two people:
an eclipse of words and memory.

I ride my great black
horse in this coat;
I walk my half wild
dog in this coat;
I drink too much,
eat too much,
say too much,
and when I try to swim
in this coat
I am pulled to the bottom
of the Sargasso Sea.

Oh, come and try on
my great coat of shadows,
my coat without money in its pockets,
my poet's coat I will wear one day
in my six foot grave
not far from here.

The Shaman's Coat

The pockets of the shaman's coat,
are like holes in the ground,
worms wrap around my fingers
when I dig my hands into the black earth
of these pockets.

My shaman's coat
when opened wide reveals a dozen
wrist watches in the coat lining
set to distant time zones.

My shaman's coat is long and grey
and smells feral, like honey bees
in a hive. Left in a theatre cloak room
the coat is returned smelling of perfume
picked up when pressed against
a woman's stylish coat.

My shaman's coat has a life of its own,
sometimes it disappears, visits a stranger's home
where it is an honoured guest,
fêted, wined, and dined until the coat
emits a protracted burp then sighs
and falls limp and rag-like
asleep on the living room couch.

This coat can walk the streets
on its shamanic journey.
It is not a coat that likes a crowd.
It is an introverted coat—
at parties it finds a secluded coat rack
where it won't be bothered

by the noise and talk
of normal people.

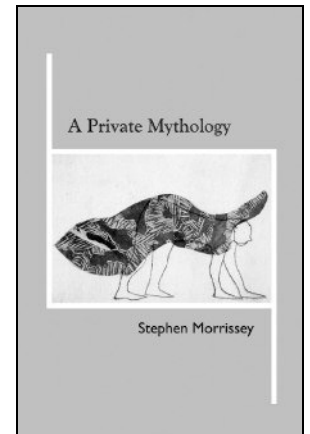
The shaman's coat
flies over the city,
enters tunnels, caves,
and office buildings;
stands on a beach,
the sea and sky gunmetal grey,
while the wind blows into a storm.
Wearing my shaman's coat,
pulled like a blanket over my shoulders,
I am on a journey I began at birth
and will end on the day
of my death.

Anniversary

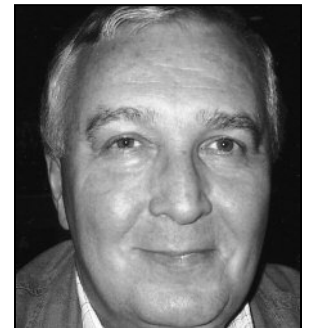
A year passes, it is less
than water beneath
the country bridge
where we sat a year ago
and talked; a flock
of birds flying south
move as one mind
or a single wing turning in the air,
caught on the wind, swooping,
then turning over like
a page in a book, they
are mere letters falling from
a page as it turns,
and are gone;
it is two hands held together
or touching your breast:
to be held in your arms
feels like a return to childhood,
but I have no memories
of being held
like this, close and tight
in a woman's arms,
so close I can hear
your heart, so close
our hearts are one and love
is blood, is honey
in the hive, the silent motion
of birds in the sky. A year
passes and it is less
than one's breath:
you are my strength
and inspiration, the single

breath moving through
my body, we are two hands
on a clock face,

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Stephen Morrissey is also the author of several poetry chapbooks and numerous book reviews. Morrissey is gathering his essays on poetry for book publication, entitled All Art is Vision. Morrissey's body of work is an important part of the rich poetic tradition of English-speaking Quebec writers. Stephen Morrissey earned his B.A., Honours English with Distinction, at Concordia University. He studied with poet and scholar Louis Dudek at McGill University, earning an M.A. in English Literature. While at McGill, he was awarded the Peterson Memorial Prize in English Literature.



stopped at midnight
when lovers meet,
two pages in a book,
timeless and complete.

A Saturday Afternoon

Outside the main doors
of Morgan's Department Store
facing Philip's Square, an organ grinder
played music that Saturday afternoon downtown
with Aunt Mable. I was a child in the late 1950s
with my aunt, walking beside her, window shopping,
eating turkey and mashed potato dinner
at Woolworth's basement lunch counter
then buying pastries upstairs as we left to walk along
Ste. Catherine Street. You could list the beggars you
saw in Montreal back then, the woman with one
shoe off, the shoe hidden behind her,
and the chauffeur-driven black car
that would pick her up,
or so we heard... or the old woman,
scarf tied under her chin
and the tin can of yellow pencils she sold.
Then, Eaton's, Simpson's and Morgan's
were the big department stores,
now it's boutiques, restaurants, crowded streets,
strip joints and bright lights.

from Ragged Light

Dvora Levin

Laughing Light

Out of nothing came something.
Out of nothing came everything.
Maybe it was not nothing.
Maybe it was a miniscule something
heavier, more dense than anything
that was, is, ever will be – maybe.

Bing, bang, boom, and there was something,
everything expanding moving
faster than the speed of light – maybe.

Something gassy, something dusty
forming stars, galaxies, bursting into
millions of billions of somethings,
ten to the power of something beyond comprehension.
Everything speeding away:
the then, the now, the will be,
coalescing, surging outward,
a combustible commotion of chaotic
order or disorder – both maybe.

In a minor galaxy near a minor star,
a blue green marble gives birth
to a fern, a frog-fish, a great ape,
a toddler wobbling on tiny feet,
little fists shaping crooked letters,
agile fingers tapping codes on keys
sending giant mirrors whirling through space
into the vast hinterland, searching
for all the hidden somethings,
searching for the secret of everything – maybe.

Only the mystics know it was
the great No Thing laughing
that begat the beginning,
that the invisible dark matter
rippling with dark energy is
the great No Thing's laughter
still echoing –
maybe.

The Force of the Universe

He rides alone, a studded singularity
in tight leather pants, chains hung with stars,
eyes concealed by wrap-around shades,
helmet holding his curly space-time hair in place.

His crotch rocket carves the surface tension
between nothingness and infinity. Traveling
at the speed of light, his fractal flaps touch down
as he pops wheelies between intervals of possibilities.

He stops for a dark energy beer, a stellar hotdog.
We stare at his tattoos: burning cross, two-eyed circle,
intersecting triangles, a star hooked on a crescent moon,
and the complete works of Hieronymus Bosch.

His chopper hammers down the super slab,
his muffler spewing majestic fumes,
as we, his road-blocking congregants,
are somehow sanctified, enticed to bow down.

Silence

An ache,
a longing for infinity,
that languid solitude
filled with grace.

Yet
always that sudden splash,
that florescent fish jumping
out of my restless mind,
longing for the place it can never be.

Always that endless CD playing,
the persistent thrum, residue of the big bang
that burst bubble spewing thought particles,
dust motes churning a manic sea,
always that hard-edged matter,
that persistent energy.

Silence
always compromised,
a seagull's sob of self-pity,
a crow's screech of complaint,
the sound of the wind whirling
around a twirling world,
my abandoned sigh.

Always the sound,
of blood pumping
through a whorled shell
held to my whorled ear.

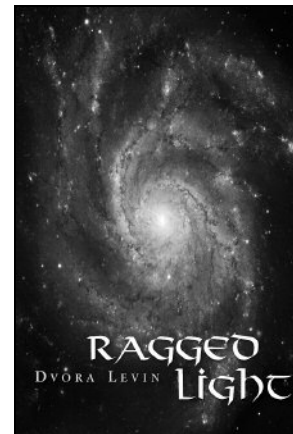
Perfect silence,
an ache,
a longing
for what can never be.

Ragged Light

I come to you, a scrap of ragged light,
limping down my muddied road.
My bags are empty,
my shoes worn through.
I've used up everything I had.
I have no choice but to come back to you.

You come to me, a ragged light,
fuck you graffiti on your tunnel walls,
littered with rusty cans of promises and piety,
never again holocausts happening again and again.
You've become slogans shouted at a poetry slam,
a cursing hip hop blackout trance.

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Dvora Levin, a former project manager in B.C. and Israel, has now projected herself into poetry. She has published two books, Sharav and To Bite The Blue Apple (Ekstasis Editions) and edited two collections of poems from her writing groups: Voices From The Edge (Ekstasis Editions) and Victoria From The Banks Of The Mainstream.

Or could it be,
You are a luminescence hiding
beyond the skyline of what we've built,
You there, waving a flag of truce,
a couturier with bolts of silken grace,
ready to replace our muddy rags
with robes of custom-fitted light.

Dodging Light

After heavy morning rain, a frivolous light
plays dodge ball with the clouds,
stipples the slate grey sea.

One freighter, then two disappear
behind Trial Island, silent pull-toys
tugged along the horizon line.

My second treatment starts today.
I take these as good luck signs
my freighted cells will soon disappear.

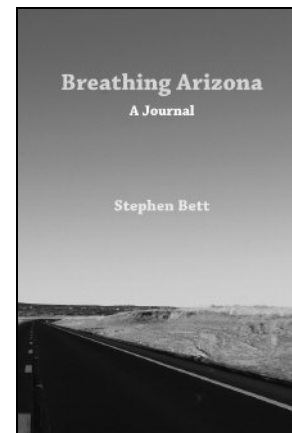
I ask, should I be afraid,
after my first treatment turned me
into a white carnation of fatigue?

I need more time to play
dodge ball with the universe,
more time to delight in the everyday.

from Breathing Arizona

Stephen Bett

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Don't know why you had
to go thru hell to get
here

Hades, Inferno, *what-*
ever ...

Some one (or thing) must
have thought it would be
a *damned* fine
idea

For sure it wasn't any
fun —drank & soaked
yourself every night
(worthless poison
tears)

No-one should suffer
like that is what you
told yourself
(completely
convinced)

That “you” was me
(undoubtedly)

Took nearly half a
year to dry out
the towel

That done, I swear
(stunned self)
a miracle
appeared,
woman from
the Arizona
desert

No tears in
your eyes

And no
mirage
(either)

Clear vision
that moves
miles in-
ward

Stephen Bett has had fifteen books of poetry published. His work has also appeared in well over 100 literary journals in Canada, the U.S., England, Australia, New Zealand, and Finland, as well as in three anthologies, and on radio. His “personal papers” have been purchased by the Simon Fraser University Library, and are, on an ongoing basis, being archived in their “Contemporary Literature Collection” for current and future scholarly interest.

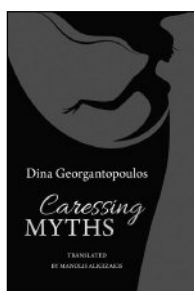


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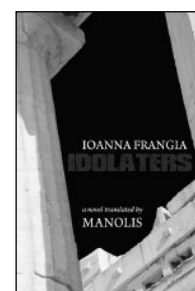
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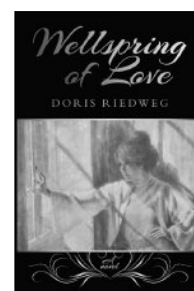
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from Collected Poems

George Seferis

translated by Manolis Aligizakis

Mythistorema

I

The angel,
we had waited for him for three years, concentrated
closely examining
the pines, the seashore, the stars.
Joining the blade of the plough or the ships keel
we searched to discover once more the first sperm,
so that the ancient drama might recommence.
We went back to our homes broken hearted
with incapable limbs, with mouths ravaged
by the taste of rust and salinity.

When we woke, we traveled to the north, strangers
driven into the mist by the perfect wings
of swans that wounded us.
During winter nights the strong eastern wind
maddened us
in the summers we got lost in the agony of day
that couldn't die.

We brought back
these petroglyphs of a humble art.

V

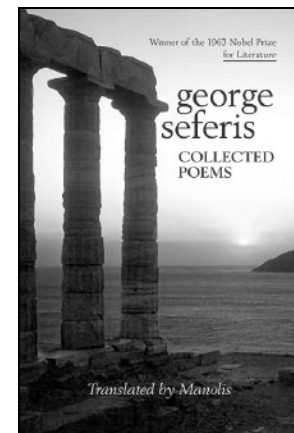
We didn't know them
deep inside it was hope that said
we had met them in early childhood.
Perhaps we had seen them twice and then they went to the ships
cargoes of coal, cargoes of crops and our friends
vanished beyond the ocean forever.
Daybreak finds us beside the tired lamp
drawing on paper, awkwardly, painfully
ships, mermaids or conches;
at dusk we go down the river
because it shows us the way to the sea
and we spend our nights in cellars smelling of tar.

Our friends have left us
perhaps we never saw them, perhaps
we encountered them when sleep
still brought us very close to the breathing wave
perhaps we search for them because we search for the other life,
beyond the statues.

XVIII

I regret that I let a broad river pass through
my fingers
without drinking a single drop.
Now I sink into the stone.
A small pine in the red soil
I have no other company.
Whatever I loved vanished along with the houses
that were new last summer
and crumbled with the wind of autumn.

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Giorgos Seferis was born in Smyrna, Asia Minor, in 1900. He attended school in Smyrna and finished his studies at the Gymnasium in Athens. When his family moved to Paris in 1918, Seferis studied law at the University of Paris and became interested in literature. He returned to Athens in 1925 and was admitted to the Royal Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the following year. This was the beginning of a long and successful diplomatic career, during which he held posts in England (1931-1934) and Albania (1936-1938). During the Second World War, Seferis accompanied the Free Greek Government in exile to Crete, Egypt, South Africa, and Italy, and returned to liberated Athens in 1944. He continued to serve in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and held diplomatic posts in Ankara (1948-1950) and London (1951-1953). He was appointed minister to Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Iraq (1953-1956), and was Royal Greek Ambassador to the United Kingdom from 1957 to 1961, the last post before his retirement in Athens. Seferis received many honours and prizes, among them honorary doctoral degrees from the universities of Cambridge (1960), Oxford (1964), Salonika (1964), and Princeton (1965).



for collectors of rare books

EROTOKRITOS

The summer of 1958 my family moved from the suburb Peristeri of Athens to Hagios Fanourios where we settled for a few years until my father managed to build our first family home in the north part of the suburb Ilion. During that summer my father brought home a copy of the most famous poem Erotokritos. I don't remember where my father found the book, yet I remember he said I could read it and then he would return it to its owner. Knowing the difficult financial situation of those days and knowing it was almost impossible for us to buy such a book not only I read it but I sat and day after day page after page I copied it. All its ten thousand and twelve fifteen syllable verses in fact I used two different colors of pen Bic, for those of us who remember those days. Least I knew back then that my longhand book would appear in the form you see it today almost sixty years later: one of the rarest ever handwritten books on Earth



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Vitsentzos Kornaros
transcribed by
Manolis Aligizakis

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from Selected Poems

Tasos Livaditis

translated by Manolis Aligizakis

The Musician

Often during the night, without noticing it, I'd arrive to another city where there would be no other but an old man who dreamed that someday he'd become a musician and now half naked he sat in the rain — on top of his knees with his coat he had covered an old, imaginary violin, "do you hear it?" he says to me "yes" I say to him "I have always heard it"

while at the far end of the road the statue narrated the true voyage to the birds.

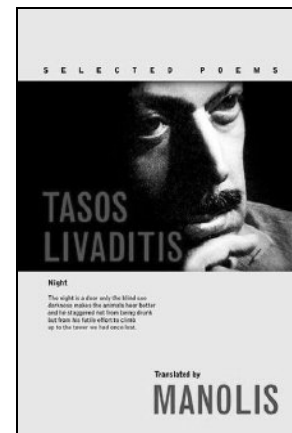
Daily Use

Of course, all these were somehow vague perhaps even inexplicable for the ones who raise their glass emphatically over the table without seeing who holds it until slowly the everyday use makes us mortal thus I always tried to look elsewhere when the doorbell rang and when everything was quietened: where is the host, why is he hiding?

I leaned on the table that I wouldn't fall; then bowing my head I opened the door and followed my path.

And at night, dinner time, in horror I listened to them narrating their stories that in a way silenced the dark, remote outside — there where we had lived.

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Tasos Livaditis (Anastasios Panteleimon Livaditis) was born in Athens April 20, 1922, son of Lissandros Livaditis and Vasiliki Kontoloulou. He was enrolled in the Law School of the University of Athens. German occupation interrupted his studies and his involvement with the Resistance and the political party EPON. He was the recipient of the First Poetry Prize in the World Youth Poetry Festival of Warsaw 1953, the First Poetry Prize of the City of Athens, 1957; the second National Literary Prize for poetry 1976; the First National Literary prize for poetry 1979.



from Caressing Myths

Dina Georgantopoulos

translated by Manolis Aligizakis

Sins of the Night

Little sins of the night
wait for me
to travel to other nights
resembling my small gathered
shivers
my bigger sins try
to find space
in prayer when
I beg of forgiveness
for not embarking
on the voyage

tools that erase stains
I no longer want to endure.
To find my balance in the
high temperature that existed
long ago took years to accomplish.

Truly it takes time to learn
the opposite of what
you have been doing all your life

High Temperature

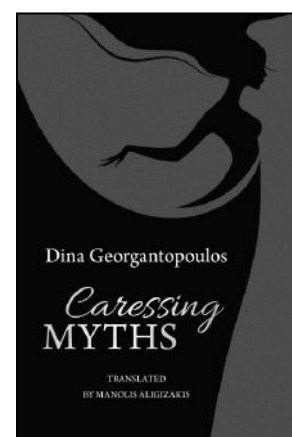
I fill and empty cloths daily
coherently
in reverence
I fill and empty plates, glasses
carefully albeit I shall ruin them
in the high temperature.
In the wholeness of my effort
I burn my hands that become

Thoughts of Snow

I want to touch you
with the longing and joy
of the first snowflake on my hands

that the weight of great love
bends me
that I feel warm in the emotion
of what I've hidden in the snow

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Dina Georgantopoulos was born in Vrahati, Corinth. She studied at the Law School of Athens. Her poems have appeared in various literary magazines on line and in paper form. "Caressing Myths" is her first poetry book outside Greece.



FLOWERS WE WILL NEVER KNOW THE NAMES OF

Linda Rogers

Anyone who cultivates words knows that ending a sentence with a preposition risks compromising the verbal garden. And so Cathy Ford begins to gather the petals fallen into silence, because “no one is moving fast enough/ to bring back the dead,” using old spells in the hope of restoring the earth that heaves and mourns, then resurrects.

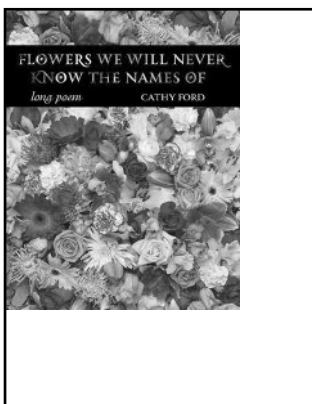
Ford’s long poem, the exquisitely designed *Flowers We Will Never Know the Names of*, eulogizing the fourteen women, the *promise*, butterflies, “souls of the dead” hovering on adult branches, who died in the senseless December 1989 Massacre at Montreal’s L’école Polytechnique, is a doxology of praise and expectation. In the language of flowers, redemption should follow the bloody footprints to a new garden, “a bouquet of flowers/thrown on the tracks, our tracks in snow”.

Her cover, an ambiguous blanket of blooms, invites hummingbird and reader as, petal by petal, page after page, the names of the victims are lovingly turned into compost: Genevieve, Helene, Nathalie, Barbara, Anne-Marie, Maud, Barbara, Maryse, Maryse Anne-Marie, Sonya, Michele, Annie, Annie.

As the Earth drowns in environmental violations and human indignity, this terrible moment in the history of man and womankind sounds a warning, Noah’s flood with four pairs and no Mount Ararat, only the fragile wings of poetry to lift the victims to a higher chakra.

*angel in the snow appearing, gazes down
arms folded around her chrysalis body like wings, just like caught wings -
bouquet of flowers in her hand -*

The garden is at war with itself, the life force designed to ensure its survival. Ford, a goddess gardener mindful of Voltaire’s declaration, challenges the vast graveyard to transform her doctrine of signatures, anthropomorphic plants, into sacred medicine. This is an ancient practice, as old as the first healers, witches who were, in more recent history, persecuted for their vocation. As each flower proclaims itself and assumes the shape of the woman it represents, we experience the pain and beauty of loss, punish-



Flowers We Will Never Know the Names Of
Cathy Ford
Mother Tongue
Publishing, 2014
paper, 83 pages

ment for daring to look at the sun like our foremother Hypatia, the murdered astronomer.

the names of our mothers who suffered like this
our own names, out of fear, out of pain, our sisters,
daughters

out of the untold stories of histories of women,
grandmothers, granddaughters

In other gardens, survivors walk the highway of tears, women are stoned for alleged infidelity, another co-ed is missing, and yet another has died of premature dementia, the victim of traumatic brain injury during an abusive marriage. Is the real value of a book like this, *memento mori*, that it takes us back to the murder in the first garden and reminds us that we need this catalogue of sorrow not just for the dead but for the living as well, to warn the present and future victims of our fatal weaknesses?

In the Gorge Hospital dementia ward, there is a woman who cuts down flowers newly planted by her fellow patients. The patients forget and replant. She forgets and offends again, and will until the man with secateurs comes for her. When will we learn, Ford is forgiven for asking in her floralphabet, even after the intruder has been and gone.

the sorrow of your dying is so deep
like death your dying does not stop

Pete Seeger poses the question in his anthem of war:

Where have all the graveyards gone, long time passing?
Gone to flowers every one
Oh, when will they ever learn?

When indeed.

Linda Rogers *Tempo Rubato*, the re-baptised ghost ship *The Third Day Book* will sail into virtual reality this spring.



Cathy Ford

Canadian Poetry Review in partnership with Ekstasis Editions announces the

Alan Crawley Victoria Poetry Award

Presented in memorium of Alan Crawley, who was instrumental in the development of Canadian poetry and a resident of James Bay in Victoria.

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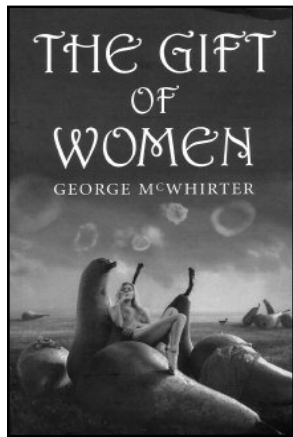
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THE GIFT OF WOMEN

Linda Rogers



The Gift of Women
George McWhirter,
Exile Editions, 2015,
paper, 199 pages.
\$19.95,

The actor Peter O'Toole said Irish women have lovely posture because they carry water on their heads and their husbands home from the pubs. George McWhirter has an Irish wife with the spine of a Spanish dancer, which must inform the tone of his stories, mostly about women, reflecting the high seriousness of conjugal dialogue. It is a dance, and the stories reveal who leads and who follows and when.

"Women," wrote James Stephens in *Crock of Gold*, "are wiser than men because they know less and understand more." Is he arguing that women lead with the intuitive yes, taking their partners with them?

That yes, permission, is the rogue note in holy canticles, as invisible as girls and women ruled by a patriarchal church hiding in the skirts of a virgin ostensibly blessed by parthenogenesis. It is all myth, the fertiliser that blessed potatoes growing in a country divided into male and female, Catholic and Protestant, by superstition manufactured in the rumour mills of religion.

Gift, which means poison in German, is an ambivalent word, another irony; and what better woman-gift

than an aye for an aye, reparations in bed, yes! when lonely women welcome gifts from the sea, just as their seafaring husbands go after mermaids, the warm-blooded and affectionate dolphins they encounter in faraway oceans. Imaginative ladies, left behind, suspend Wait and Widowhood with beautiful fantasies, or, who knows, realities, selkies who jump out of the ocean and in and out of their beds shouting, "Arrivederci," the title of the opening story, starring an Italian dolphin with the alluring linguistic pong of Kevin Kline in *A Fish Called Wanda*.

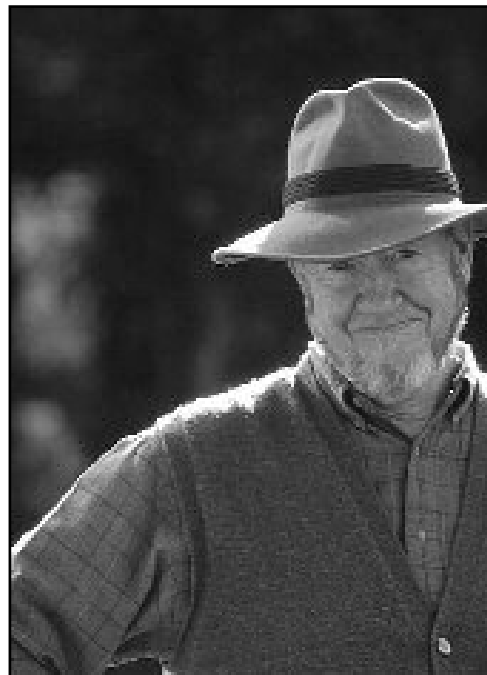
The gift is laughter. McWhirter's is a comic variation on the usually tragic myth: woman welcomes herring-breathed amorous visitor who slips and slides under her covers and leaves in the light of morning. "He's at it again, the old bum and belly samba, whistling off like a tugboat, chugging into that little sleep that seduces her into the same."

Just as the selkies of legend are shapechangers, McWhirter is a genre changer, transforming typically tragic stories of loss into comedy. "In Sittings for a Photograph in a Green Room," his humour turns black as a sister recounts her sibling's descent into congenital madness, her nakedness in the green room dominated by a photo of her mother in a similar state of undress and unreason. Their defiant nudity is a metaphor for the vulnerability of women held in the muscular loins of Ireland, where the Holy Mother rules and men misrule. The narrator/sister, who has emigrated to the BC Rainforest and escaped to a different madness, resists the temptation to return to the snake pit charmed by Saint Patrick into accepting the faith that circumscribes seasons in hell, a dementia ward at best.

"I can't hear the seagulls," the mad sister says with absolute clarity. She could be Chekhov's daughter, her Christian soldiers, Roundheads and Catholics equally repressed, fighting uncivil war in her divided brain when what they really need and want is the airy (aerie) freedom of seabirds and adventuring men who go to sea.

No one knows better than émigrés who leave their comfort (and discomfort) zones in pursuit of a better future that you can't go home again. Leaving is in itself a transformation, a haircut that does not grow back. "The Barber," a story set in the zone where men congregate without the stabilizing force of women, laments the loss and the unrelenting work and adaptation of lives that are, as Yeats wrote, "a long preparation for something that never happens." In this story and "Lonely Rivers Flow to the Sea to the Sea," disequibrated men are tourists in strange countries. It is as true for the writer, whose anima is Ireland, as it is for his characters, whose sub-text is ironic confusion, even in a story like "Tennis," which exposes the ugly underbelly of tourism in vulnerable communities.

Women are flesh-bridges over the troubled waters between past and present. When they are absent, the narrator trembles like the witness in the garden at Gethsemane. The uncertain existence of immigrants, tourists and ghosts caught in the ante-rooms to Heaven and Hell in stories like "Cup W," "Sisters in Spades" and "El" remind us that we are a country of immigrants, even First Nations, only now emerging from the shock of colonization.



George McWhirter

Chekhov's gun, the trigger in every good story, is the female catalyst who defines exile and existentialism, the human experience of alienation and temporary redemption. In "Lily of the Belly," a sterile marriage becomes fertile, and tentative roots reach into the compost on the floor of the rainforest where McWhirter takes dictation from his mad Irish muse.

The novella "El" is a selkie diaspora, women following men following women across the Pacific Ocean, sperm and egg chasing one another, settling into unsettling lives. "For me, their bodies were always connected to the sea-now sexily inextricably confused with the backdrop of a pool in the American desert."

The moment his wife and her ilk "break the tension of the water," and as "they swim through me...her whole generation and class of women," the

passive BBC photojournalist/ narrator becomes one with the carnal flow of memory and desire into the daylight between their legs, arid land as it happens. If it isn't the virgin swallowing, it is the whore as the Irish voyageurs, separated on coupling and uncoupling train cars in the Nevada desert, circle a drain foetid with racism. Way beyond tremble, this is an earthquake. Still, the narrator, aware that he is living the pivotal moment, the zone where sirens laugh, when risk becomes comedy or tragedy, holds his camera steady, keeps his lens clear.

The Gift of Women is a wild ride that could end in a train wreck or bliss. Ask the Irish amanuensis, God will decide or maybe the blessed comedienness. He's just the guy with the camera.

Linda Rogers *Tempo Rubato*, the re-baptised ghost ship *The Third Day Book* will sail into virtual reality this spring.



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Poetry

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OPEN HEART SUTRA SURGERY

Stephen Roxborough

sum uv th most romantik poetree evr writtn shakespeare
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open heart sutra surgery deals with zanee prsuayuns n
hot physical needs delite in passyun yerning n finding
th marvels uv language n desires satiaysyun betrayl
distans ing loss is it all random what role duz our
doomd intensyunalitee play whats goin on can we
know mantra 4 opn life love lerning unlerning book
a great book a great reed

~ bill bissett, poet, painter, teacher, mystic

Stephen Roxborough has been many things, including teacher, student, son, brother, father, lover, poet & hopeless romantic.

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