

CPR

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*Resuscitating the art
of Canadian poetry*

Contents

Mike Doyle

Four New Poems page 2

Burton in India
Clouds in the Rafters, Maybe
Faith in Whispers
On Reading Tu Fu

from *Collected Poems 1951-2009* page 3

Holyhead Mailboat, 1942
Deserted Garden
Snowblaze in Heathdale Road
From That Day to This

Annick Perrot-Bishop

from *In Long, Secret Rivers* page 4

In Heart's Dark Underside

Joe Blades

from *Prison Songs and Storefront Poetry* page 5

Prison Songs 01 - 04

Manolis

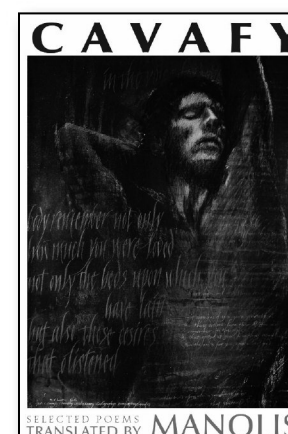
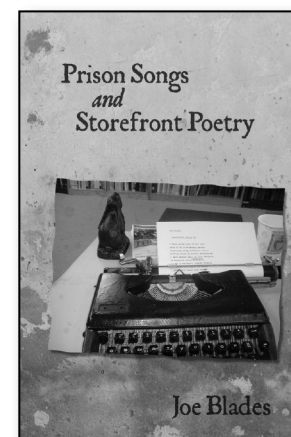
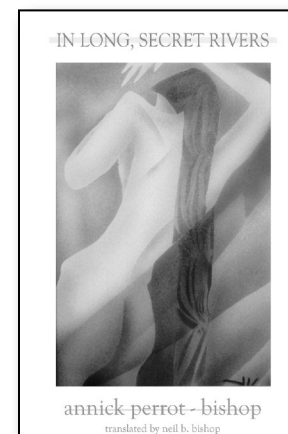
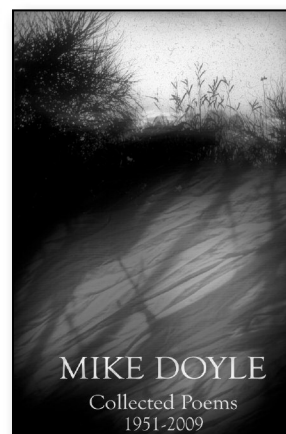
from *Vernal Equinox* page 6

Scandalous
Momentum
Lamppost
Triangle
Crystal
Winter Café
What If

Constantine P. Cavafy

from *Selected Poems*, translated by Manolis page 7

The City
Morning Sea
Remember, Body...
Come Back



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Four New Poems

Mike Doyle

Burton in India

The dwarfish demon called Interest had, as usual, won the fight.
~ RB

Finding odious his fellow officers' society,
Burton, the army man, explorer and linguist,
experimented with forming a monkey vocabulary.

To study simian language, he set up house with forty assorted monkeys, a mimic world
modelled upon his regiment. He assigned

various roles: solicitor, doctor, aide-de-camp;
one 'silky pretty little ape' he called his wife, putting pearls in her ears, seating her by him
at the long table. Waited on ceremoniously,
each monkey had its own cup and plate. Establishing a mode of conversation,

Burton gradually identified sixty-odd
definite words, finding the whole affair
vastly entertaining; but, along with priceless

Persian and Indian manuscripts and a huge collection of costumes, he lost his notes in a
warehouse fire. His simian distractions

failed to endear him to the authorities. No monkey business could save him so, adjudged
'unsuitable for campaigning', he was posted home..

On Reading Tu Fu

(Rexroth translation)

Rainshadow benefice,
Snow melted off yesterday.
A week ago suddenly
Nearly a foot in one day.

Elder, unused to snow.
You could not get out
To shovel the front path Or clear the sidewalk.

You've had ghosts of your own
A long time, but Tu Fu Sounds dire, heartbroken, even Weepy. Yes, thinking back,
Your snow scurried in coiling Wind; the dusks were misty. These days no wine for you
To dribble, nor logs to burn.
No one's here to speak with, Even in whispers. 'Letters',
They are your speech. Thirteen
Centuries after Tu Fu,

A city houseling, Not far from the ocean,
Again you read poetry,
Chinese, recast American.

For you, the one who comes
Closest is Rexroth, for
His flatness of line, Its authenticity.

You read his take on Tu Fu's 'Snow Storm' and its 'new ghosts',
Yourself a little haunted,
But your bottle more than wine.

Clouds in the Rafters, Maybe

*So writing involves some dashing back and forth
between that darkening landscape where facticity
is strewn and a windowless room cleared of
everything I do not know.*

~ Anne Carson

A windowless room, deep soul
in a ramshackle dwelling lost in the forest,
where at unpredictable intervals
light seeps in from an unidentifiable
source. These negative prefixes
would label the geomorphology
if such labelling were permitted.

As it is, whatever you may
or may not be, can you be there, on that day
on that spot, thinking these frame-forced words,
inscribed for reasons unfathomed
even by yourself. From the glimpses you manage
the sky is thick cloud, perhaps seeming
to signal there will be no light, yet somehow
if someone is there, words may come to that someone
and intimations that among those words is
the veritable word, the key to incandescence;
but who could be there to find it?

Faith in Whispers

Faith in the whispers of the lonely muse
~ Wordsworth

*Liang-chieh (C9, T'ang dynasty), crossing a river with an older friend,
asked him: 'How should we ford a river!'
He answered: 'Do not wet our feet'.*

This is the way of doing things without being attached to them.

~ Chang Chung-yuan, *Creativity and Taoism*, p 88

'The people on both sides of the river
wash their silks under the shining moon',
so wrote Wang Wei, T'ang poet,
thirteen hundred years ago. You, though

in the shallows, from here see no river
nor people on the shore. You have a cluster
of bamboos in your garden, but it is winter,
you, gat-toothed, stay in under your roof's

shelter. Even Wang Wei, who could see
lotus flowers everywhere flowering and falling,
could not have imagined most of your trappings
but would recognize instantly every jot in your soul.

from Collected Poems

Mike Doyle

from Uncollected (1950s-1960s)

Holyhead Mailboat, 1942

At midnight we came to Dun Laoghaire
From the fog-hooded sea, a picture with us
Of nuns praying their beads on the dark deck.
All night long we had kept a jagged course,
Alert to the skies' voices, thunder, the ominous
Chant of aero engines. Our single gun
At every augury circling the moving bulkhead
Above our moving deck, the heeling ship
Swaying like a drunkard. Night covered us
With weeds of solemn mourning; morning seemed
A world away, a universe delivered
From our uncertainties. Then, after all,

At midnight we came to Dun Laoghaire.
Small voices reassured the neutral darkness:
Porters in purple light glided along
Alien platforms. In the sepulchral waiting-room
A wraith lay moaning to the obsequious shadows
A last confession, come home too late to seek
Some village father and an absolution.
Unaware that our aunt had lost the passports
And every penny, we stumbled sleepily out of
The Gothic-fronted station where a hansom cab
Made the drab darkness elegant. We clambered
Over the silken seats, putting behind us
The fearful sea, the last rites, and the war.
Ending the episode with brief instructions
We drove to the comforts of a modest hotel.

Deserted Garden

Tired of adoring her body, he turned back
to the temperate zone where the garden lay
quiet, unvisited, in full leaf. Day
had mellowed to mid-morning when he shook

the latch of its rickety gate, opened it,
entered, feeling happy to have come home.
Nothing seemed changed to him. The fernery
made a cool place to watch the fountain from,

stroking the air with silver. Vines hung heavy
with grapes the hue of evening. Birches shivered
in the just breeze. Roses leaned his way.
Even the cracks in the wall were ivy-covered.

Then he noticed nettles in the ragged grass,
brown rot in the fruit, and at evening when the moon
rose he could feel black sky through the limned branches.
He looked out alone on irreversible autumn.

from Uncollected (1970s)

Snowblaze in Heathdale Road

Staying with the Lamperts in Toronto

Flittering through pages, after a Chelsea bun
and mug of strong coffee, reading more
student solecisms or, better, solipsisms,
I'm told that stubby Eli Mandel
regards the poems murky in him as prisons
from which he feels urgent need to escape.

In the company of a buzzing refrigerator
I peer at the circular sawblade on the leaf-
green cover of Bob Fones's *The Forest City*,
but won't go there today, and in fact my jar
of marmalade did change by a spoonful or so.
The spider's web on Rosenblatt's *Virgins and Vampires*

blazes up at me from 'Somewhere in Argentina',
page 58. From the lurking Nazis, from the
oozy puffed-up slugs, from the resonant' truth',
'the fat liberals invented equality',
fickle and further disorientated I turn to
Joseph K not getting his breakfast, poor guy,

not being treated liberally (or was he?)
Then I give it all up. I'm in Toronto
first time in seven years. Since last visit
I've travelled to Fiji (twice), to Paris, to Austin,
Texas, and Prince Edward Island, and this evening
for ninety minutes chug on a bus to a name

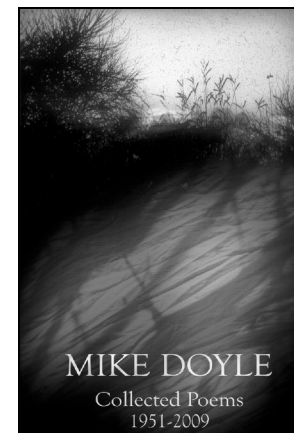
on a map, following my disembodied poems
into a winter darkness of ghost landscapes.
'Murderers are nice guys' (I quote, won't give
a name). Surely, we all knew, that goes
without saying. But what of poets? Who
can go bail for them? Is there anyone?

Yesterday, arriving at Gerry and Arlene's,
I rang the bell for maybe a full five minutes
and no one answered. I began to ask
someone inside somebody standing there
who seemed to be me: What am I doing here?
Is it me that's meant to be where this is, if it's anywhere?

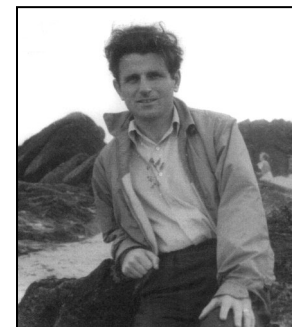
Is this where I'm meant to be? What do I do
if no one around admits to my existence?
It's always been like that with me, at least as a poet.
But I'm here, hopping a little on the packed snow,
desperate for a pee, imagining an abandoned
sofa the other side of iced-up windows.

Whether it's me or not, flapping arms in the cold,
bladder full of hot piss, a return air ticket
to take me back home out west, or further
to an older home in an earlier life far east,
nobody answered, and the flood of questions
continued to be eluded by their answers.

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Mike Doyle is a poet, critic, biographer and editor. His work includes William Carlos Williams and the American Poem, Richard Aldington: A Biography, Paper Trombones, a journal of his life as a poet in Canada, and Collected Poems 1951-2009. He has also published critical essays on Williams, Wallace Stevens, H.D., Irving Layton, Al Purdy and others. He has received a UNESCO Creative Artist's Fellowship, an American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship, and a Jessie Mackay (PEN) Award for Poetry. He wrote his book on Williams while a visiting Research Fellow of American Studies at Yale University. Doyle has lived in Victoria for over forty years and is a Canadian citizen of long standing.



But that was yesterday. Today I've found
at least a version of myself, among books,
among the work of poets, the work of a culture
which after ten years remains still new to me.
Outside, the snow still blazes. I'm inside,
seeking escape from what is inside me.

From That Day to This

After I'd said, 'I love you', for the first time,
the glow of saying it lasted many months.
Seeing your beauty crossing the street towards me,
slender in bluegrey dress & white cloche hat,
then an adventure, is an adventure still
warming the blood in memory. I've treasured it
from that day to this.

After I'd said, 'I love you', for the hundredth time,
our love seemed both a boon and a contagion,
exciting and bewildering alike.
Still, after eighteen years, a yeasty passion
works in me, hard to measure its proportions
of aridness and sacrament, caught as I've been in it
from that day to this.

After I'd said, 'I love you', for the thousandth time,
we quarrelled the nine hundred and ninety-ninth.
Pretexts for battle varied, with the glow
of inner fires the same, always the same.
You claimed I had exploited you. I called you
selfish, self-loving, jealous. Yet I've loved you
from that day to this.

from In Long Secret Rivers

Annick Perrot-Bishop

In Heart's Dark Underside

Water thoughts. Deep lakes haunted by slow creatures. Inhuman softness. Crimson thoughts. Winding branches of blood wreathing forth in the night. In silent storms.

Warm silt, my body sinks. Mingles with muck. Greenish softness. Crushed trees, inner wounds. Beneath my shut eyelids, slow, silent laughter. From the nightmare prowling after me.

A pulsing, like some water noise. Lapping, seeping into the fresh-hewn breach. Then, the distraught scarlet of voices honing their knives of light. Cutting through the limp lethargy of buried memories. Screeching in my eyes: naked birds filling with tears.

The ocean has gored me open. Broken my body, bedraggled my hair. Bitter sea swells. Algae: futile refuge from clashing bones. My crumbling carcass. Debris, crumbs, powder. Ravaged by blood and water. Slowly I take on a chalk-white, ghostly shape. A withered continent, riddled with secret rifts.

Fragments of sky crying up from my heart. Then muted by the shadow of my thoughts. Sadness moored to the smooth bellies of the drowned. Like a gentle wish to drowse off. Into the dark abyss of voices.

Deep within the thick waters, slow, glowing eyes. Gliding scales, probing, salt-mottled lips. Multiple

tongues upon my breasts, my belly, my thighs. Upon my legs, now pale, naked fins. I meld into the blue breathing of the water dwellers. My mouth suckling on blurred dreams.

Sleeper of the darkest hours, she awakens. Frets with thoughts. With fragile vowels that break on the wall of words, then splatter into her murmuring blood.

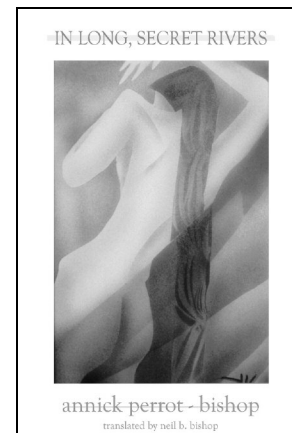
The heart's dark underside. Its veiled face. Shredding apart in the rout of day. Viscous blackness, madly sprawling mould. My crimson joy's dark underside. Reluctantly revealed.

I shook the sky, and the sky capsized. Coils gouged from red flesh. Floating clouds devouring the light. I shook the earth, and the waters poured forth. Dishevelled trees rush by, jostling each other. Broken trunks, cracking sounds on solid rock. Swarms of termites spew from their toppled nests. Speechless, I gaze, seeking the drowned light.

My body, peopled with many bloods. With mouths shouting in a throng of tongues. With shattered souls and crimson sap. Incandescent veins, cradling rage and children, that will make my slow, shadowy stature throb.

The sleeping soil is my shell. Haven from the shrieking wind. The frigid breathing of stones. Buried deep within my flesh, the night-tree. Roots gliding towards some unknown dawn.

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Annick Perrot-Bishop is a Francophone Canadian author of multicultural background (Vietnamese, Indian and French). A resident of St. John's, Newfoundland, she has published some sixty short stories and translations in literary journals and anthologies as well as five books. Her highly-acclaimed poetry collection *Femme au profil d'arbre* (Éditions David) was published by Ekstasis Editions in Neil Bishop's English translation as *Woman Arborescent* (2005). In *Long, Secret Rivers* is Neil Bishop's translation of Annick Perrot-Bishop's *En longues rivières cachées* (Eds. David), a translation for which he won First Prize in the prestigious John Dryden Translation Competition (2008), organized by the British Comparative Literature Association and the British Centre for Literary Translation.



I want to close the rift and its throbbing wound. Flow deep into a cloud. Some clear and gentle night. My body nestled in a lair of dream. There, one by one, I shall again take up the threads. Weave them into tawny fabric. An animal stretching awake, opening one eye onto the chill of dawn.

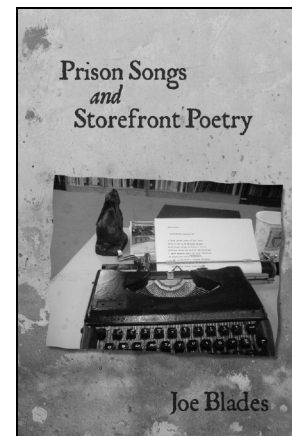
My joy mingles with the wan scents. The gnawing worry. A crater where the bird will again be born. Its keen, crisp cry repelling the waning night. Awakening pink vapours along the salt-bitter fringe.

By a dream-lush pond, I welcome a forest of green waters. A bird calls out in the hot daytime shade. Scents of presence. Rich, thick sap. Foliage rejoicing in the moist light.

from Prison Songs & Storefront Poetry

Joe Blades

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Joe Blades lives in Fredericton, New Brunswick. On the editorial board of revue ellipse mag, he is President of the League of Canadian Poets, producer–host of the Ashes, Paper & Beans radio program, and founding publisher of the independent 25-year-old Broken Jaw Press. The author of seven poetry books, including *Cover Makes a Set* (1990), *River Suite* (1998), *from the book that doesn't close* (2008) and the forthcoming *Casemate Poems* (Collected), two of his books were translated and published in Serbian editions in 2005, and several other book translations are in the works.



prison song 01

back in the stone hole
the humidity limps me
like a damp facecloth
i cannot have in here
might choke myself on it
might tear it into strips
as a tool in my escape
through hammered square bars
of wrought iron painted black
set in stone walls not going
anywhere as redcoats march
outside with pipes and drums

don't know if it's safe
to type this on paper
or if—in the hole—should
commit to memory only
the words of my songs
sing them inside
my stressed head
don't even mouth them
breathless air

nothing to do but wait
sit here weakened or
pace and dream of outside
think think think
what to do? am
no potter with slip
brushed on clay vessels
... words rise and fill
space complete with
sounds from the past
embedded in the walls

prison song 02

sweetgrass on compound air
post-military establishments
saturday afternoon songs and
dreamcatcher-making workshop
more water in the air than inside
our bodies walking through grass
bright green with wet droplets
the car after being emptied
of chocolate factory tour
recorded music and road maps
returned with a note
that it drifts to the right
possibly because it has east
of canada—newfoundland—plates
just want to sleep the day
away—not work on the slate
or the pounding black keys
the blank staring paper
after carving green eyes
for my stags standat at gaze
fused elements banner–device

black tea in today's mug
a quite quiet afternoon
can't easily maintain public
face appearance this damp day
sounds of guitar playing drift
across from stone guardhouse
without vocals or bodies seen
a guard not a soldier–prisoner
in the gaol with too much
last night in their blood
chilled by torrential cold
july rain and too little clothing
in the hour after last call
caught sneaking back
into the compound worse
than attempting to leave

prison song 03

no going upstairs today
the way gated and padlocked
no soldiers sleeping up there
no spit-polish boots and
brass buttons on wool coats
they've the day off life
down in the river valley
or they're inside themselves
guarding their fortified tea
while i crave relief not possible
acrylic medium drying clear blue
with night star speckles–spangles
on fallen roofing slate now
housing an account of giants
and castles in ireland—
scrap of a scrap of petite
art making in this casemate
a month or so back before
she escaped to port maitland
across the bay of fundy and
southwest down the coast
of nova scotia for the summer
a month from now i will be
taxiing down the runway
at yfc leaving fredericton
for the last time this year
flying to montreal then east
in an arc over greenland
to münchen and onward east
to budapest and way away
from where i am waiting now
for day to end and another
to begin—get on with it!

prison song 04

barracks room upstairs locked:
through the windows see beds
the fireplace in the end wall

a table with tin plates and cups
earthenware bowls and pitchers
for water or milk or ale or ...
and the archæological services
office is not welcoming—sign
on the door states *visitations*
by appointment only as if
british army ghosts carry
daily planners with them
disembodied and waiting

“happy birthday” on bagpipes
for someone out of sight
yet within hearing range

the wooden everything
within *SOLD^{RS} B^KA* intact
no cold weather destruction
of table chairs and cupboards
for its short-term burning
for warmth or its illusion
evident after all the army
allocated coal was consumed
anything burnable would do
even doors and window frames
whose removal simply admitted
more wind and drifting snow
in the miserable long cold winter
far from home across the atlantic
and some never made it back
died and were interred
in the old burial ground
established 1784 between
brunswick and george streets

from Vernal Equinox

Manolis

scandalous

He stops shaving razor floating in air
hand absentmindedly creates a circle in mid-void
like a bird stilled by camera lens
her scandalous vulva visits his mind
from days of that August
on the scorched island
in low tone siesta
in muffled moaning
lest the mirror would crack from tension
in the cool soothing room
before his eyes
finger in circular motion of agony
swirling eroticism
higher and higher
near a shuddering apex
wind pandemonium
lust and a red colored
Lucifer laughs sardonically
as the razor touches his flesh
opening it
like hers
color reddish

momentum

Silence stuck on the skin like a wound
hitting high notes across the room
pitching high balls amid my temples
letting havoc come over length
and girth of your indecision
as I near your body
with a soft feathery song
that resembles an ancient chant
left unanswered
ever virgin Aphrodite frowns
wonder underarm kept time
clock sounded the commencement
of Vernal Equinox as I discerned
from across the fence
another faint chirp calling

lamppost

After leaving our marks
on the sole lamppost
we parted

she to the west
I to the east

with a promise
to meet again
by this lamppost
and trace our marks

though we never thought of the Sirens
the Cyclops and the angry Poseidon

though we never thought of the pricey
ferryman

triangle

In the crystal night I'll find you
again in the plaza by the same
statue who saw us separating

that cold October morning
you to the west I to the east
from the merging point

of two lives like triangle
lines and I'll come to you
holding a book in my left

hand and a carnation in the
other just in case you come
looking to stir my emotions

just in case you come yearning
for kisses like that cold
October morning we separated

crystal

Girl stands by the sink cleaning
crystal wine glasses seeking
a spirit like her heart searching

for love in this city with power
lines describing life or death

at night her blouse a bit
open her poetic breasts

squirm tender desire for feathery
touch from the young man

apartment next who doesn't
yet know what softness means

and her hand full of soap-bubbles goes
quite unintentionally to the blouse opening

her finger coming close to skin electric
current lifts her blouse and in the window

she stares at her reddish nipple
with awestruck eyes

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Manolis has written three novels, a large number of collections of poetry, which are slowly appearing as published works, various articles and short stories in Greek as well as in English. After working as an iron worker, train labourer, taxi driver, and stock broker, he now lives in White Rock where he spends his time writing, gardening, and traveling. Towards the end of 2006 he founded Libros Libertad, an unorthodox and independent publishing company in Surrey BC with the goal of publishing literary books.



winter café

Steamed café windows
conceal disguised efforts

as old men surround
the burning brazier

recalling old stories
young men dream of

future girlfriends and
exploits in bushes or under

the watchful eye of moon
and a lone postman sighs

for the love letter
he never got

what if

If you didn't get to the train station
at that exact time you wouldn't
have met him you wouldn't have
started dating you wouldn't have
married you wouldn't have
the twins graduating this year and
where would you be now
had you taken the next train?

from Cavafy: Selected Poems

translated by Manolis

Η ΠΟΛΙΣ

Είπες «Θά πάγω σ' άλλη γή, θά πάγω σ' άλλη θάλασσα.
Μιά πόλις άλλη θά βρεθεί καλλίτερη από αυτή.
Κάθε προσπάθεια μου μιά καταδίκη είναι γραφτή
κ' είν' η καρδιά μου—σάν νεκρός—θαμένη.
Ο νούς μου ως πότε μέσ στον μαρασμό αυτόν θά μένει.
Όπου τό μάτι μου γυρίσω, όπου κι άν δώ
ερείπια μαύρα τής ζωής μου βλέπω εδώ,
πού τόσα χρόνια πέρασα καί ρήμαξα καί χάλασα.»

Καινούριους τόπους δέν θά βρείς, δέν θάβρεις άλλες θάλασσες.
Η πόλις θά σέ ακολουθεί. Στους δρόμους θά γυρνάς
τούς ίδιους. Καί στές γειτονιές τές ίδιες θά γερνάς
καί μέσ στά ίδια σπίτια αυτά θ' ασπρίζεις.
Πάντα στήν πόλι αυτή θά φθάνεις. Για τά αλλού—μήν ελπίζεις—
δέν έχει πλοίο γιά σέ, δέν έχει οδό.
Έτσι πού τή ζωή σου ρήμαξεσ εδώ
στήν κώχη τούτη τήν μικρή, σ όλην τήν γή τήν χάλασες.

ΘΑΛΑΣΣΑ ΤΟΥ ΠΡΩΪΝΟΥ

Εδώ άς σταθώ. Κι άς δώ κ' εγώ τήν φύση λίγο.
Θάλασσας τού πρωΐνου κι ανέφελου ουρανού
λαμπρά μαβιά, καί κίτρινη όχθη όλα
ωραία καί μεγάλα φωτισμένα.

Εδώ άς σταθώ. Κι άς γελασθώ πώς βλέπω αυτά
(τά είδ' αλήθεια μιά στιγμή σάν πρωτοστάθηκα)
κι όχι κ' εδώ τές φαντασίες μου
τές αναμνήσεις μου, τά ινδάλματα τής ηδονής.

ΘΥΜΗΣΟΥ, ΣΩΜΑ...

Σώμα, θυμήσου όχι μόνο τό πόσο αγαπήθηκες
όχι μονάχα τά κρεβάτια όπου πλάγιασες
αλλά κ' εκείνες τές επιθυμίες πού γιά σένα
γυάλιζαν μέσ στά μάτια φανερά
κ' ετρέμανε μέσ τή φωνή—καί κάποιο
τυχαίον εμπόδιο τές ματαίωσε.
Τώρα πού είναι όλα πιά μέσα στο παρελθόν,
μοιάζει σχεδόν καί στές επιθυμίες
εκείνες σάν νά δόθηκες—πώς γυάλιζαν,
θυμήσου, μέσ στά μάτια πού σέ κύτταζαν
πώς έτρεμαν μέσ στήν φωνή, γιά σέ, θυμήσου, σώμα.

ΕΠΕΣΤΡΕΦΕ

Επέστρεφε συχνά καί παίρνε με,
αγαπημένη αίσθησις επέστρεφε καί παίρνε με—
όταν ξυπνά τού σώματος η μνήμη,
κ' επιθυμία παληά ξαναπερνά στο αίμα
όταν τά χειλή καί τό δέρμα ενθυμούνται,
κ' αισθάνονται τά χέρια σάν ν' αγγίζουν πάλι.

Επέστρεφε συχνά καί παίρνε με τήν νύχτα,
όταν τά χειλή καί τό δέρμα ενθυμούνται...

THE CITY

You said: "I'll go to another land, to another sea;
I'll find another city better than this one.
Every effort I make is ill-fated, doomed;
and my heart —like a dead thing—lies buried.
How long will my mind continue to wither like this?
Everywhere I turn my eyes, wherever they happen to fall
I see the black ruins of my life, here
where I've squandered, wasted and ruined so many years."

New lands you will not find, you will not find other seas.
The city will follow you. You will return to the same streets.
You will age in the same neighborhoods; and in these
same houses you will turn gray. You will always
arrive in the same city. Don't even hope to escape it,
there is no ship for you, no road out of town.
As you have wasted your life here, in this small corner
you've wasted it in the whole world.

MORNING SEA

Let me stand here. Let me look
at nature for a while.
The yellow shore, the intense blue
of the morning sea, the clear sky; all
grand and beautifully radiant.
Let me stand here. And let me pretend
that I see these things (I really saw them
for a moment when I first stood here);
and not what I do see, even here, my fantasies,
my memories, my visions of carnal delight.

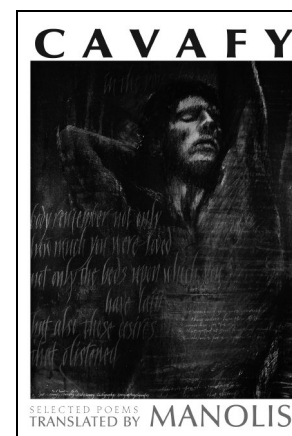
REMEMBER, BODY...

Body, remember not only how much you were loved,
not only the beds where you lay down,
but also those desires that shone,
so clearly in the eyes that looked at you
and trembled in the voices—desires
that some chance obstacle forestalled.
Now that everything is in the past,
it seems as if you gave yourself
to those desires—remember,
how they gleamed in the eyes that looked at you;
body, remember, how they trembled in the voices.

COME BACK

Come back often and take me,
beloved sensation, come back and take me—
when the memory in my body awakens,
and the old desire again runs through my blood;
when the lips and the skin remember
and the hands feel as if they were touching again.

Come back often and take me at night,
when the lips and the skin remember...



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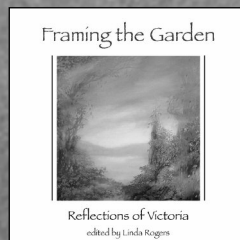
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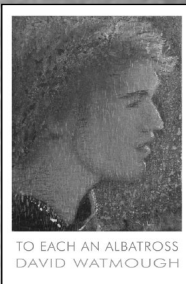
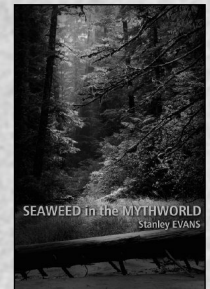
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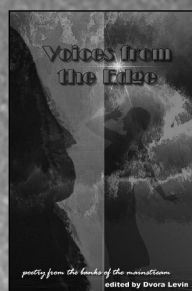
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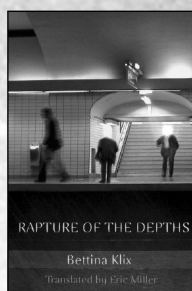
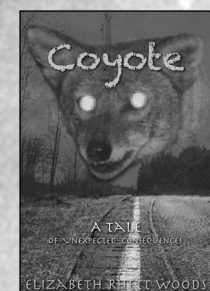


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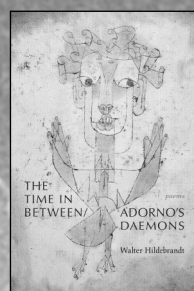
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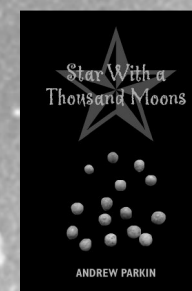
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