

Yggdrasil

A JOURNAL OF THE POETIC ARTS

April 2013

VOL XXI, Issue 4, Number 240

Editor: Klaus J. Gerken

Production Editor: Heather Ferguson

European Editor: Mois Benarroch

Contributing Editors: Michael Collings; Jack R. Wesdorp

Previous Associate Editors: Igal Koshevoy; Evan Light; Pedro Sena; Oswald Le Winter

ISSN 1480-6401

Table of Contents

Introduction

Michael Annis

fEAR&dESIRE

Contents

Carol Shillibeer

the goat brothers

Felino A. Soriano

from Quintet Dialogues: translating introspection

Of saxophone

John McKernan

A MOLE

WHEN MY CORPSE

THEY'VE RETURNED MY DOG WITH HER FRIENDS

MY HIGH SCHOOL'S ART GALLERY

AHAB IN WATER COLOR

Zohar Teshartok

Alon and Smadar
A Visit at the Fair
Kami/Kamilia
Enough

Joseph Farley

A Good Burn
Death At The Dojo
Apologia
Tea For Two
Gray Mass
Pop
Loess

Gary Beck

Mythos
The Poet
Idle Conceits
Epic
Lethe

Nancy P. Davenport

Caught
Meeting Bacchanalia
Sally
the recipe
The Pencil Sharpener

Post Scriptum

Jennifer Hollie Bowles

Obscure Lust

from where you came

[are you a face on the wall of a tomb?]

Times of total loss

[are your desires catacombs :: are your fears denials . . .

that deny

black tunnels to beyond?]

your own destiny : spawning : decapitation

[. . . dust, ashe, salt, crystalline tears, upon precipice of pyramid

THE HISTORY WITHIN YOUR GENES

capstone of the heart

re . . . members

listening

to the heartbeat

of

GOD

eating through the skin of the world,]

Unseen

a false, deadly light

as lucid

surrounds your *essence*

as

it *whispers*

[" I . . . AM

Yet, it hides from you

It masks itself in *goodness*

it calls itself

THE MORNING STAR."]

it is not light *["L'ETOI MATIN*

it is the darkness it knows

as darkness

[coating earth and sea,]

It is

an enemy

WHO

upon further scrutiny,

[burying eternity in itself,

IN DREAMS]

has been,

IS

shaped from your same mold

[vivre au jour le jour.]

living from hand, this mouth

from day, this dream

in psychic insurrection

before

the prenatal border

hookers seducing planetary debris

[centrifugal force of

disinheritance

[tiny planetessimals of

alienation

ARE::NOT ARE

grains of sand

brain cells

& souls

[fear&desire

disorders of magnitude

fusion of past&

future::with

present

[gravitational center

reflux

divination

human

disidentity

cornered

within

the wormhole

of lust & terror

hurtling

bells

peeling silence

doomsday

a domus Dei]

2

bright red scarf of the talking mind

your mind stuck__

your mind like

the small drawer__

like silk caught between lips of wood__

come to think that just because

scarf end is caught & flapping

therefore

you

are the letters carved by silk in air.

the wood the legs the space the backboard the drawer knobs

think not just along the flapping tongue

think through wooden legs the drawer knobs the backboard

not just red : orange, yellow, pink, blue, green, brown

not just wood: the nickle-plated screws, the iron nails, the brass handles

3

brother goat #2 came to my doorstep at night
now he stands at the window
on the chest his nose at the open lips closed still
in the cold standing fall
round to fall again.

And their wife__two goat brothers__the green
statue of the pregnant woman
her belly
a map
the earth's surface.

when I sit with the bronze weight of the goats' bellies in my hands
their straight legs dangling through my fingers,
metal is the taste of earth__basalt lips pursed,
stone breathes is it we?

4

*magic is really
about learning
to move
your attention,
with deliberation, around
your body
listening listening
for kinetic thinking*

uneaten rosehips red in the scrub :
the body thinking; brilliant even in the mind's

shadow meaning

is like the first yellow lung of forsythia in the spring
it calls nectar to the bees grass to goats
it calls words to me?

5

i sleep with hay in my room & during sleep,
in dream, mind sprouts, imaginibus deīs
and like dicotyledons reorient to the somatic sun

Goats come to me,
but so do shells and stone, bird shit and pine cones.
The goats stay because of the hay;
i stay because of the goats.

6

to Deleuze Bakhtin,

language may be *ideologically saturated*
but the red tongue of the mind is stuck
irrevocably between the Governing Boards of the body's evolution;
it is Their agendas that blow the mind out
over earthly folds, past lakes

to be blunt, truth *is born collectively* between
feet walking
 knees bending
 hands grasping
 lungs filling

meaning is sprouted in physical multiplicity
and so of course there is never one
never one
true understanding

7

hetero

glossia

unified by a twin-faced utterance__

speaking : double helix

8

tiny metal ridges goat
belly-up under fingers

compel touch

if i could

read metal

like braille

.....

.....

.....

but i can't

meaning just out of phase__

with desire

for surety : black diamond static__

i tremble

over the edges of understanding

as if coherence

or certainty

would flatten the world

into silence

into joy

9

what to do when goats land at your feet__

think through fingers
at the belly,

water metal wood__ through :

knee thigh shoulder__ through :

push nose through the window and walk

Felino A. Soriano

from *Quintet Dialogues: translating introspection*

Of saxophone

[14]

reminding self of the prior one the
younger extraction of prophecy this

moment of movement can become an
element of symbiosis : truncated though whole
an ironic attribute of impacted fusion
forgoing longevity forthcoming liaisons'
incorporated freedom and loss of
memory's aesthetic of sound

f15j

song in the mid-performance range of
spectral uncertainty

pageantry
pardoned by the dawn then follow-through hours'
angled
dexterity

beneath surfaces and
near wealth's undefinable meaning/mirror

a

sling holds what has healed what has hope\d for/of

and

designed
inside the introspective fathoms the
mind involves within range of the flailing hands

f16f

cultivated within the varied undulation
the vacuum insists on dialectical spirals to
concern

thus abridge |
an understanding lingo of emblematic structure

[17]

to the woman
holding

light

in the hand of her curiosity

near where hunger

hides within the

hanker of nuanced

lunges

hope

hoping

holding elongated fingers

these illusive neoteric
skeletal emblems

the warmth matched
as with dual identifications
claiming self in the other's
reflectional interpretation

know i watched the dance of

your systematic smile

search the angled occurrence

beneath

range of emotional structure

and i awoke

in the abstract construction of revelation to

the ballet significance

creating balanced new

movement and raced into your disappearance

[18]

side-by appositional-side these

worded braids compose interrogation of thought

in the prosperity of untruth's sly

regain of strength and unapproachable unquestioned penetration of
volume, speech

f19f

contained experiments
touch-torch-explanation
canopy retrusting resaying
echo aggregate outlining
voice in the positional sameness as
selected sorrow emptied erratic
range then spectrum and chosen
through enveloped structure this
pivot of mirror's self-inhibiting nature

[20]

to motion the charm
guides us or the we of our
togetherness:

phantom destiny (i's told through
interpretive silence
irony is the pageantry of truth's reliable embraces—

)

gathering a spatial speed, elected separation from/when
meaning is music and multilayered tones
abbreviate already brevity and the syllables of re
construct

ing diligence of seeking

John McKernan

A MOLE

Riding
A tenured eraser

Into
The valley
Of dry bones

Delivers the last lecture on
Heaven
As a substitute for guilt
Designed to extinguish undesirable emotions

The words *I Know*
Rise above the clouds
Peeled from closed lips
Of a ten-year old curse
His parents hated him too

WHEN MY CORPSE

Waltzed through the door chanting
Brother

I turned & hissed
Not me Amigo I'm aqui
You're only a mirror

He grinned
And whispered
Stop singing I've heard better voices
And buried prettier people than you

Handing me
A black & white photo
Turn it over Gringo
He laughed
As I stared

At a picture
Taken on the day
Of my First Communion
Anyone could easily see
Where he photo-shopped in
Pitchfork tines piercing my thin small skull

THEY'VE RETURNED MY DOG WITH HER FRIENDS

Lounging in shade in the shed
Beneath some leashes

They bring back
The idea of lamb
Not the lamb

One is chewing
On part of a white ear
In its black gums
A thread of nipple flaked to its nostril

Another gnaws on
A hip or a rib
Yet another a red paw
Some sort of writing instrument
In a circle of twittering haunches

The smallest has carried
For ten miles
Over chicory & daisy & ironweed
Across dawn mist of mowed clover & blue
Grass & timothy A pair of eyes Hidden
Flat in the damp folds of its pale pink tongue

MY HIGH SCHOOL'S ART GALLERY

Yellow new year's snow plows scooped twenty foot scalloped waves along the concrete edges of the Memorial's parking loop

A thread of new moon in a black Omaha sky

Argon streetlight glow in the halo of flood lights

The pirouette air skating at 5 below zero

One last church bell just finishes crawling towards Boys Town's burrow of the midnight sundial

Top frame Propane-tint gin kumquats

Bottom frame Edgy slices of hypodermic-needle vodka tangerines

Random candelabras of maraschino cherries

Slashes of Bourboned blueberry 7-11 Slurpees shimmered propane

Thunderbird pineapple Drambouie cantaloupe Everclear grapes

Oh There they are The batting practice copper-flame Jack Daniels limes

Above dots of urine the tint of steaming grapefruit juice

With their hot splashes of projectile Crème de Menthe

And ribbons of orange vodka highlight cinders turning to black ash

With half-chewed tequila lemon slices

We kept listening to the banked fires of dawn invade Nebraska

While the watermelon rinds kept lifting their layers of grain alcohol incense into a still air

We were still hearing the echoes of the Happy Hollow toboggan slope broken limbs cracked ribs fractured skulls squeal & moan when the blue-red quilts of police ambulance strobe lights drove off into Omaha's tapestry of silence

AHAB IN WATER COLOR

Skull

A green sundial

Teeth

Yellow to black clicking

With good intentions

Fingers & toes

Red & redder

Pointing at whitecaps

Flecked with blood in starlight

The crackling electricity

Is invisible

With the letters

YES SIR

Pasted to the top of the frame

Zohar Teshartok

Kami/Kamilia

The window in the room is closed, to prevent the cold wind from getting in because Kami was lying ill in bed. Bubbles are fluttering around in the room. Kami notices that they are all yellow; only she can see them. She cannot see all the colorful bubbles that always flutter around her. So Kami knows that her imaginary sister is sick as well, her arms, like those of a doll, are outstretched over her bed, trying to get rid of the yellow bubbles. Kami knows that as soon as they disappear, her imaginary sister will feel much better. When people ask her how she calls her imaginary friend, she says "Kamilia". Kami had always wanted a twin sister and therefore she gave her her long name as a present. Only people who believe in her can see how much they resemble each other.

Today she has a surprise. Mother invited Kami's friends from the kindergarten to come to visit her in the afternoon, as her illness was no longer contagious. Kami had to stay at home the whole week because she was sick and mother tried to entertain her and keep her busy in certain ways - painting in watercolors, various games and baking cookies. Kami promised her imaginary sister that they go to the beach when it gets warmer. Kami loved the sea and would love Kamilia to come with her, but she did not know if she was allowed to go out of the house because of her illness. In the meantime she had to content herself imagining how the three of them would enjoy playing on the beach together.

Suddenly the door of the room, that had been partly shut, opened, and her friends from the kindergarten entered one after the other carrying big balloons in different colors - with a card with a drawing on it, attached to the end of each thread, wishing their friend a speedy recovery. Suddenly all the yellow bubbles disappeared and the bright colors of the balloons appeared instead. Kami's friends were busy munching the sweets that mother had brought to the room and did not even notice that Kami had got up from her bed, and moved to the bed of her imaginary sister with the hope that she too had recovered. Kamilia opened her eyes slowly and smiled at her with the smile kept only for the most beloved sisters.

Alon and Smadar

The memorial night's programs appeared on television without a pause, and since all entertainment spots were closed this evening, they both stayed at home. Alon took possession of the comfortable sofa they used to quarrel over, and gazed listlessly at the repetitive programs. He knew that Smadar preferred to spend her time sleeping rather than watching these programs.

Suddenly he felt like getting up and kissing her. Such moments don't need an explanation. As he got up all of a sudden, he almost spilt the entire contents of the dish of fruit that he held on his knees. He already imagined, somewhat worried, how she would wake up on hearing the noise of the dish that would surely break into pieces, and the angry look on her face at the disarray in the living room, the same look she had kept of moments when he had opened her letters by mistake, out of a habit acquired after long years of marriage.

The sudden yearning for her, caused him to forget the transparent glass wall that separated the two parts of the apartment, and he ran into it. Lately he often forgot the wall. In his mind the wall had existed prior to their divorce when she had confessed to him: "I wish a strange man would approach me in the street and tell me how beautiful and attractive I am..." after they divorced, they divided their property, including the apartment they shared, in equal parts. They erected a wall in the centre out of transparent glass - a convenient solution that enabled them both to continue to receive their mutual friends who wanted to visit them.

Smadar, his former wife, did not dare to knock on his door since they had issued a warrant forbidding them to enter each other's dwelling, after their separation. She heard the smashing noise, guessed what had happened and quickly came close to the wall. On seeing him lying on the floor, his nose bleeding from the frontal injury, she stuck her face on the glass wall and tried to call him to get up.

A quarter of an hour later, Alon got up, as if seized by an obsession, made an imaginary circle on the glass with his finger, took a heavy chair and began to beat at the center of the circle with all his might.

When Smadar saw what he was doing, she decided to take part in the terrible mistake and began encouraging him with soft kisses she sent to him. He continued to beat on the wall and soon the first cracks appeared. Smadar stood on the other side at a safe distance, and continued to send him kisses,

along with seductive movements of hip and hands, that became more and more assertive, the more progress he made with his smashing. Finally the glass gave in and broke to pieces.

All the boundaries crumbled and they stood opposite each other panting and excited. Only the voice of TV news anchor could be heard in the background: " On hearing the Memorial siren, the public is requested to honor memorial day eve and stand still for a moment in memory of the fallen in the war". The memorial signal was heard in all the corners of the town, and they stood as if frozen, looking at each other.

A Visit at the Fair

Here lies Gregor Samsa and this is how his life came to an end.

His father prompted him to hurry and sent his younger sister to his room to help him get ready, as they were not going to the fair that had arrived in town, to honor him. So He was not to keep his family waiting. When they arrived at the fair, he was completely astounded by the many amusement facilities and food stalls full of delicacies all around him. He had seen many sights in the course of his journeys as a travelling salesman, but the wonderful facilities – with their seductive look – actually invited him with widespread arms, to enter. His family members stood in front of the sword swallower, waiting for the performance to begin. Gregor suddenly found himself standing at the opening of the tent of the fortune teller who would tell the fortunes of the innocent visitors for a meager fee. Gregory wondered how he had come to her, without intending to. May be his feet had lost control and led him to her mysterious tent.

He hesitated on entering the tent and even before his eyes could get used to the darkness around him, he heard her commanding voice: "Gregor, sit down at the table and stretch out your right hand." The fortune teller looked at his hand and after murmuring something he could not understand, under her moustache, she turned to him again: "A great misfortune will befall you if you deviate from the righteous path". This was her way to make sure that those entering her tent would pay her fee even if they were not satisfied with her vague forecasts.

Gregor was sitting tense on his chair, his eyes fixed at her movements. The fortune teller mixed dry bones in a tin dish and then scattered them on the table cloth. By looking at the random and meaningless forms created by the bones, she guessed the future and related it to him. Her words about a suitable match and plentiful means had a good effect on him and he was about to pay her a double fee for her forecast which would surely give pleasure to his family as well. Suddenly, a horrible beetle came out from among the dry bones scattered on the table, and Gregor with a swift movement, hit at him with the tin dish. On seeing the crushed beetle, the fortune teller started to murmur unintelligible words that sounded like an ancient curse. Her threatening response led Gregor to understand that the crushed beetle was one of her ways to predict the future.

His voice competed with her`s as he tried to explain his error and begged her to forgive him, fearing what was going to happen, but his father, who was standing outside the tent awaiting his turn after the sword performance had ended, heard only his son`s voice in the confusion, moved his arm into the tent and pulled him out, thus preventing him from completing his apology. His father`s efforts to get him away were of no avail, but Gregor heard one word in the curse and understood it well – "beetle".

Thus, Gregor woke up one morning from a nightmare and discovered that he had become a huge beetle.

Enough

Enough! Shouted one of the passengers, who was sitting secluded in his seat in the bus. At this moment all the passengers froze in their seats. The stillness that resulted was blessed from his point of view, as up to that moment all the passengers were busy talking to each other in loud voices – with their neighbors on the bench – whether they had known each other before, or had only now met by chance and decided to share their woes, or were shouting at their partners on the cell-phones that they carried. To his amazement the passenger discovered that his shout caused the whole world around him to stop its motion, as if it had ceased breathing and was awaiting his words. He quickly drew out a notebook and a pen from the bag he carried as a matter of course, and began writing short notes containing advice and instructions to the passengers frozen in their seats.

To an elderly lady who complained to her neighbor about her back pains: recommended to get a second opinion – with the name and phone number of a specialist; a young couple he advised to take the mortgage as the percentages of the interest was bound to rise soon; to the troubled young girl, who's conversation he had overheard when he changed his place, he wrote: say yes! To the man who looked sloppy and was sitting curled up at the front of the bus: love yourself, and finally to the driver: please stop the air-condition.

After he had finished writing his relevant messages and advice to every single passenger, he quickly placed them in their hands or in any other suitable place and returned to his seat. At the same moment the order in the world returned to its correct state, as if nothing had happened, and the rest of the journey went on, silent like never before.

Joseph Farley

A Good Burn

The sun does not rise,
No gas giant does.
Internal fire burns
hotter than farts
in glowing stars
and sacred gymnasiums
where athletic monks
practice their faith
every day, all day..
All sweat is holy.
Vapor rising from skin
forms clouds in the sky
making this effort
ephemeral or eternal
or both in the same.

Death At The Dojo

(for Kevin Connor)

My martial arts buddies are dying
and passing into dust.
Who will throw me and twist my arm now
in such extreme pain and gentleness?

I shall throw myself on a green hill
and roll and twist in falling leaves
and none shall ever break my limbs
except the bastard in the sky
and the relentless assaults of time.

Apologia

forgive me God for I have lived
and there can be
no greater sin than that.

I have crawled out of primordial seas
and sought through eons
to pass on my reconstructed genes

I kneel now before you
less than a man
but more than protein filled goo

not quite a god,
not even a hero
or a djinn

just a spirit of desire
with my strongest need
being the need to live

forgive me this
and my other offenses
which may appear big
when frozen in the moment

but when seen through
the prism of geology
and the movements of the continents

it is all so small and amoeba-like
just as I once was
long ago

before I had ever dreamed of God
or moral philosophy

Tea For Two

You say I want to poison you,
And you know it is true,
But there is a greater part of me
That never could and never would,
So eat these toxic pastries
And drink this harmful tea.
Nothing I give you will kill you
Though it might be the death of me.

Gray Mass

It is easy to love or hate
that which you do not know.
Familiarity breeds complexity,
and all relations ebb and flow.
Between gray and swirling colors
indistinct and unsure
the distance seems so clear,
but what's close at hand
is all covered in mist,
good and evil,
affection and desire,
repulsion and compulsion.
There is no easy place
to set your hat,
no easy road to travel.
You just have to sort it out
or at least give it a try
before settling into acceptance
of all things and all people
just as they are.
Prayer and meditation
or strong whiskey
help to obliterate
all distinctions
and make everything even
in an odd world
where we are asked to do sums
on human lives
while juggling chainsaws
and riding a unicycle
balanced on a tight rope
over the mouth of
an active volcano.

Pop

I did not want to exist so I stopped being.
I blinked out like a great light, a star, a god.
I was nothing surrounded by nothing.
I sat there in the middle of nothing
until I realized I had nothing to do,
so I turned on the lights,
made myself a sandwich
and clicked on the television.
I am still nothing surrounded by nothing,
but at least I have no one
to share the vacuous programming with.

Loess

yellow clays held together
by roots of stunted pines
this green valley
and the hills around it
could be sand and dust
if not for the occasional cloud
and the tenacity
of a battalion of hard-scrabble trees.

Gary Beck

Mythos

Tonight the wind
goes howling and shrieking
through naked trees,
making them groan
in unnatural agony.
The creaking of frigid limbs
splits the darkness
as the wild hunt goes on.
Every moaning shrub and plant,
each sob of nature,
save for the ugly one
who cackles in her cursed den,
reaches Asgard with lamentations,
for there, transfixed,
lies Balder, dead.

The Poet

Too often have I turned
to others in supplication,
crying my need like wares.
I waited with expectations,
thinking words of promise true,
undone by my desires.
I am tired of patience
weary of bland refusals.
I shall never soar through others
and remain within my room
making poems to hide my fears,
dreaming bombs to crush deniers.

Idle Conceits

On the journey to the sea
the years have brought
the endless, timeless,
roar of ocean
whose spermy, frothy waves
break upon the shore
in rolling, crashing currents
that fall and leave
green-yellow maiden-hair
upon the beach
uncombed.
Then, blowing a final wind
on Assyrian sands
Nature crawls into a steamer trunk
and goes to Bermuda
for the mild winter.

Epic

We crippled sons
do not have our forefather's crusades
whine the ancient songs of restless men,
nasal in heated rooms.

We cry for causes, having lost
cruel hunger of other ages,
curse the test-tube plans
that guide us to new motions.

We would be led,
spearmen in Agamemnon's band.

Yes, we would despoil a city,
we office mites, subway bards,
fanciers of fair captives, distant glory,
but only the poet's song
conceals dull and gore long past.

Lethe

We express our suffering
in the song of traveling sorrow,
as we mourn for forgetfulness
on a thousand lonely roads
that our bleeding feet
traverse to find oblivion.
Some desperate seekers
yearn a master painter,
blame the mixer for creating
the canvas of gnarled humanity,
who cruelly prevents
the fulfillment of dreams.

Nancy P. Davenport

Caught

I am discovered, captured;

speared

on my bed,

he becomes huge,

God-like.

He grows wings

and

he smiles at me

with both humility

and arrogance

before

he

howls into my ears,

growing ever

larger.

And

after the walls have

caved in, and the

windows shattered,

the ocean roars

in my ears as my

hands clutch at

the lotus blossoms

blooming from

the shaking earth

And

after the rains

have poured in,

he smiles, once again,

and I see that

it's Tim.

Meeting Bacchanalia

I pick a back seat

carrying myself as carefully
as an antique vase

putting one foot in front
of the other so carefully

but I

fall sideways anyway

looking down so that
nobody can smell me

I make myself as small
as possible in my seat

when I am greeted by
a friend from the bar

with a sheet of paper
to be signed and I

begin to feel normal
again

Sally

You are impossible to
capture:

like trying to bottle the
smell of daphne,

or grabbing a wisp
of smoke.

But digging through
a drawer in the front

bathroom the other
day, I found your

orange plaid Catalina
swim suit.

It is probably older
than I am, but it

it is still chic. There
you are.

the recipe

it's when Tim
is cooking

that I
scent
myself

with the smells
of the kitchen;

cinnamon, clove, coconut,
chocolate.

it's a test to see
which one of
us says

"God, what smells
so good!"

first.

The Pencil Sharpener

Under a window
in my garage

draped with mom's
old plaid kitchen
curtains

is

a pencil-sharpener
that my dad hung;
when my family

was

still whole and
while we were
all young.

Though it is
covered with
dust and

with cobwebs,

and is difficult to
reach through
the accumulation,

it still works.

Post Scriptum

Jennifer Hollie Bowles

Obscure Lust

Is it sane to covet blue
eyes composed of ash?

I love him like a poker game cheated
well, a hairbrush used on a willow tree.

Fingers, is it normal for you to obey
a mind that tells you to pull the trigger?

Please tell me why his suicide
speaks louder than my life.

Cunt, is it wise for you to spread
for a man that reminds you of Daddy?

My pride is gone; it's a knife
stuck in an albatross.

I fall from heights of verbal towers,
so I can crush his lofty residue.

Copyright Information

All selections are copyrighted by their respective authors. Any reproduction of these poems, without the express written permission of the authors, is prohibited.

YGDRASIL: A Journal of the Poetic Arts - Copyright (c) 1993 - 2013 by Klaus J. Gerken.

The official version of this magazine is available on Ygdrasil's World-Wide Web site <http://www.synapse.net/kgerken>. No other version shall be deemed "authorized" unless downloaded from there. Distribution is allowed and encouraged as long as the issue is unchanged.

COMMENTS & SUBMISSIONS

Submission and comments should be sent to Klaus Gerken, Chief Editor at kgerken@synapse.net

Submission must be in the body of an email unless otherwise agreed on.