

CHAPTER 14  
of  
THE  
ANEMONE SIDECAR

*Tiny Footwebs  
and Feathers;  
and Naturally*

K-

*A bird book, translating the sounds into words, or  
better yet the sound of a word and imagining the  
type of bird that might produce it. . . .*

*Heat was here for a few days, like putting on a coat  
of hot pasta, gone for now, a clearing, cleansing  
rain.*

-P

Introduction: *As if They Were A Basket*

As I am as were a born thing,  
as near the mouse as wing  
in such latitudes as thin the bones

and as the snowy owl or bee,  
framed by the geometries  
of beak, tooth, nail,  
the fading call in hallways—  
    referential as a peach,  
    insistent as eclipse,  
    eccentric at the core—

and as camel, bird, bison, fish,  
antelope, fox and mole,  
crossing longitudes and roads  
as safe as thistle,

    accompanied by ghosts  
and by the slyly misdirected  
    (how pavement burns them forward,  
    thirsty as a willow root  
    and bent,  
    longing not the same as moving)  
cascading noiseless solitudes  
of blithe array;  
    our skin sea-planked,  
    consistent with a long light,  
    drawn home foundering  
    in a strange comfort.

As they, as any, as I

and as a cow beneath a tree,  
all shine erasing from the air  
hard struck;

and from attenuating sky  
and phosphor sea,  
the undulates,  
the bourne beneath the grove,  
a green feast danced to death by elms;

as ashes bear the ash  
in their constituency  
as if they were a basket.

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The Anemone Sédecar, Chapter Fourteen, 2011,  
built on the work of select multitudes.

Cover image by Daniel Boyer.

Benjamín Nucum: two poems

*Christina and Birds*

bird say bird chip lean  
shorebirds say bird kee  
I know bird bellies Marie  
kee whee-eeep says Marie  
a bird keeps on young  
Marie you are young keep your young  
churns a bird tern turn Christina  
wide-a-wake whens christina  
Marie says Marie look a bird  
Sharp Tooth hasn't seen a bird  
Look Sharp tooth a bird  
churr christina let's go  
Thomas let's see the birds.



## *Ayden and the Monarchs*

Ayden is a Prince.  
the Monarchs are beautiful.

the monarchs are beautiful and  
Ayden resides in snow,  
a sermon firsting  
eating the grass  
and a monarch warbles  
I know a Sister—

I know a Sister  
dying as snowbirds and  
Ayden kisses  
it just look like it  
needed some red there  
Marie was  
kissing Ayden hello there!

Ayden linuses and knows  
warb rd sy ley  
Solars Marie  
Marie hidden in an arc

Silverinness Monarchs

Maria Anderson: *Directing the Birds*

Bandied legs, buckling wide a-waltz.  
Kohl eyes, hand over back.  
Fingers splayed, thumb and forefinger together with  
bit of cloth between  
ears, long, agape like two eyes  
a rabbit's mask, two fingers clutched, hand over back  
necktie scented with musk, shadow behind his ear  
Kohl eyes, chin on shoulder,  
man hand strong just below waist  
sweat, his, on temple.  
Ritual headvoid remnants, fallen temple, fallen oath  
Kohl rimings, golden backwaters parting for stupa, wat  
pure land pagoda inkings,  
sweat drops  
rain piddling temple roof  
pagoda upbringings  
mental lines divining walls, boundaries  
rabbit's ear mask between  
two temple upbringings, uprisings,  
House of Guru  
House of Ballroom visage

Philip Quinn: *Bird's Eye View*

major  
max  
buys  
post card  
heavens

in a swallow's  
dip

& goodbye

\*

she  
said  
rip  
of  
crow

in a garden phone  
crazy, crazy

as she churches  
the grey obelisk stone

& hangs up  
black  
against  
the tree

Paul Watsky: *Encryptions*

Despite drizzle, woodpeckers work  
a small pear tree up against the lot-  
line's quondam privet  
hedge supplanted

by brambles. A woodpecker's  
tongue wraps around inside  
its skull to cushion the brain against  
headaches, so it doesn't forget

its password to the other  
side, to where grubs cradle beneath  
bark. No password, no  
access, and all manifestation has,

it seems, another side—with check-  
points staffed by Satan-surrogates  
drooling to interfere: passwords  
to the other side of rain, to

the image bank, to the customized  
wiring of your private personality. It  
can be fatal if you hang every  
account on one reiterated

specimen of code, futile as well  
painstakingly varied paper  
master lists vulnerable to identity  
thieves or dropping

on the street. Memorize  
in toto. Don't forget, my hairy  
woodpecker, the dangers of  
forgetting. If you absolutely must

establish a computer file,  
secure it from viruses and exercise  
vigilance, or botware may hand you  
over, zombified, for extraordinary

rendition—even with nothing  
worth wringing from your cranial  
coin purse—to a black  
site where the torturing's upside

down, merely in fun. Remember  
to care, care to recollect:  
enter your password for  
pittosporum, for *Oh,shit*, for sky.

## Emmanuel Jakpa: Two Poems

### *Lyrics of the Wind*

There are things that live in the sunless depth  
of the ocean and do not miss the sun at all.  
There are things that miss the sun. And there are things  
in-between. But we turn away, and talk of what  
we have never seen. There, wind's making music  
with the brittle branches of the ash tree, its lyric  
goes like this, forget your perfect offering, only give  
your widow's mint, every soul has a gap,  
and good Adam started it all. But I pay little attention,  
for I have more to observe around, the swallows  
crowding away against the bright distant clouds,  
the dog ripping through the field to get its tennis ball,  
the lilac and hazel on the street delirious  
to have leaves, drunk with happiness.

## *Red Eye*

The Siberian apple tree holds its fruits  
even when the frost is three meter deep,  
is the red eye of the question mark staring  
at me, asking me, what are you thinking now?  
I can't say, nothing. So I pause and rewind.  
But thinking begins where the wind begins  
and ends where it ends. So my response is  
the things I know of the ash tree. It's the last  
to blossom and the first to shed leaves.  
Its brittle branches are no abode for the  
thrush, the goldcrest, the warbler, the Dunnock,  
the swallow, and the skylark, no matter  
how sweet and sonorous are their songs.

Judith Skillman: four poems

*The Horseshoe Bat*

Perhaps due to the luck  
drawn from its name  
this one is not like the others.  
Perched, it puts out the call  
for insects at intervals.

Suppose the hours  
of an entire night  
were this easy to spend.  
In the limbs of a tree  
overlooking a field.

Or, digits spread membrane-  
tight to make kite-skin,  
hunched between twinned wings,  
as if waiting to be mistaken  
for a bird.

A mere seventeen meters  
serve to take the call  
of what it hungers for.  
There will be no circling  
past transplanted palm trees

grown now into the gutters  
of the house next door,



stark-stiff and plane-barked.  
Old lovers won't repeat  
the same mistakes.

No one dances for the housewife  
who happens to stand  
in a chemise on her deck  
while the lake drinks the last  
filial rays of sun.

This woman—what higher  
frequencies surround her  
now the children are grown?  
Which nuanced thicket flower  
with pink-raspberry forethought?

Suppose she stays out late  
alone, until her husband  
puts out the chill-blue light  
of his computer monitor.  
Will there be once more

frogs, nectar, fruit, and blood?  
From what quarter  
will it come—the sound  
of subterfuge, the intermittent  
pulses, chirrups, whispers?

## *The Hurry*

In rabbits and cockroaches  
in warmth and cold  
under a stone  
where the maggots  
condone their maggot-love

In the phone  
and the terminal  
and the shops

On the ferry, the road  
in the car with its double cup holder  
for lattés

In robins and swifts and swallows  
in the string knit and drifting now  
like long light  
leased from a rain cloud

In the hangar  
and the building named for a hangar  
At the airport  
on the way to Kala Point

In the leaves that jostle awake  
after sleeping off winter  
in the bee  
that can no more sting  
than remember how it got here  
or why it left

In the wind  
and the sea, and the chop  
that licks the froth  
where a drowned man goes on  
bobbing up to the surface  
his vacant eyes  
like a Roman statesman

## *The Seven Hills*

Heat drove me from him.  
Thirst drove me toward him.

I cantered on the back of a mare  
    away from the city  
        over hills folded like putty.

Hunger removed me,  
exile restored me,  
the mare stopped at an oasis.

    Upon dismounting,  
I saw Narcissus  
lament needles of fir,  
twigs bent and hurt, driftwood logs  
        that kept him from seeing  
his own image.

He was himself  
only, as in the old story.

Spring brought me back.  
    Spring kept him alive long enough  
        to drown again.

## *Comes the Solstice*

Yet somehow the moon  
remains only a mirror.  
Meant to reflect, as we  
do at the worst  
times of our lives,  
on something larger,  
more angry than we are.

The sun—no more terrestrial  
than tape grass. A star  
holding four rocky globes  
in orbit, a furnace whose tesserae  
glint from water, windows,  
and the dead eyes  
of my father, who studied  
its flares and prominences  
even as he raged against  
the casserole dishes  
placed before him  
when the cancer grew  
larger than his own  
esophagus—the formal  
source of all his pleasure.

T. G. Boncza-Tomaszewski: *Kafka Came Back But  
At The Time I Was Blind*

Kafka was the first writer who I read, by accident. There would have been others, although not perhaps writers, known to me by writing: Tin Tin, Dr Seuss and Tom Kitten come to mind straight away. Richard Scarry and Farmer Alfalfa, although there was something wrong with that, probably because I could never make my mind up between the two, the name of the man on the book, the author, and Farmer Alfalfa, neither of whom seemed entirely all there. No. Kafka was the first, when I was round about nine; and he was there way before the funny haired little journalist, the man of letters and the fat little cat.

I was nine, and I remember many things from that time, which became in its way a time of Ks, (Krakow, *kneck* which I misspelled with a k like *kat* and *krystal*, too) each one registering with me in a way that felt so peculiar, almost painful, like a little kick. They bothered me like kids, children, I didn't want to play with. Distracted by these strange sensations and the sense of mystery which seemed to have descended over the way I was in the world, I'd think: *What can I do? What can I do?*

It took me time to realise that these distractions came from a strange place that seemed to vibrate in the world around me.

I never spoke to anyone about this. With a sense of extraordinary anticipation, I kept an eye on the television. If anything was going to happen, if there was to be an announcement, I imagined that was where it might be, unannounced because it wasn't quite there.

One afternoon while daydreaming of Krakow, sitting in the dark because at the time I was blind, I heard on the television that there had been a sighting of Kafka. The programme I was listening to happened to be the news, which surprised me a little. TV was surely going to be the place for a special announcement, but some

parts of it felt more likely to offer up great things than others. The News may have been called The News but I didn't think it was the kind of programme that would mention Kafka. The single Kafka book I had, the one with Joseph K and other stories, bought and shelved by my mother before she abandoned an Open University degree, had a picture of a beetle with human limbs on the front and that, if nothing else, surely condemned Kafka never to be reported alongside such things as industrial action, losing the World Cup, or heart transplantations.

But the news reader said, *First there was Elvis, now there is Kafka*. Instantly I felt ashamed: Kafka, the long and peculiar introduction to my mother's abandoned book had told me, was a man of the 1920s or so who wore a bowler hat. Elvis, the King, I had believed was more recent and wore white suits, glitter and thick belts.

Chastened, sickened by my poor sense of history, I felt sick.

I listened on, adjusting the bandages over my eyes because an uncomfortable glow of TV light seemed to somehow be intruding. After countless sightings of the King in United States' supermarkets, Kafka had appeared – *now!* – wearing black, in a bookshop. Be still my beating heart! The author of 'Investigations of a Dog', 'The Burrow' and 'A Crossbreed' (half lamb and half kitten), the man who Dreamed of Being A Red Indian was walking amongst us again.

The bookshop in question, a London branch of WH Smith, sounded full of clamour as The News cut to it and a journalist asked someone, a man, at what point had he realised a literary giant was browsing their shelves? It was obvious straight away that the man being spoken to didn't like the journalist's tone.

'He stood at the doorway,' the man replied, 'watching'.

'Not doing anything? A spot of reading to catch up, perhaps?'

'No, he didn't seem interested in the books.'

'And what happened next?'

There was a click, between ‘the books’ and ‘and what’, that I imagined most people, at least the ones who could see, may not have noticed. Something had been edited – a silence, perhaps. When you can’t see you become accustomed to watching TV in your own world where all of the little noises, the things you might never usually notice, appear. Commas, apostrophes, dashes and question marks melted into the atmosphere. Reading them was something only I would ever do.

The man sighed.

‘Somebody took a photograph and he vanished.’

‘He just disappeared?’

‘That’s right.’

The main news reader began to speak again.

‘I have Blahdy Blada (I never remember journalists’ names) on the line. Blahdy, what do you make of all this then?’

Blahdy sounded different on the phone: as if he was telling a joke at a party or something. ‘Well you tell me Dumdy (again, I can’t remember the name).’ They both laughed. ‘The funny thing is, of course, the photograph.’

A photograph?

‘Let’s take a look,’ said Dumdy.

I wanted to see the photograph. I had an urge to rip off my bandages and damn the light.

‘Mum?’ I called out. ‘Mum!’

‘Yes dear?’ She was in the kitchen, making a sponge cake.

‘Mum, quick, come here.’

I heard the soft sound of her slippers on the hall carpet, then the noise of the door being pushed open, and she was there.

Dumdy chortled. ‘Well.’

Blahdy guffawed. ‘Well indeed.’

I was sitting on the sofa to the right of the door; the television was on a stand with long black legs opposite.

Mum sat down beside me and put her hand on my wrist. It felt cool. ‘Yes dear?’



‘Mum, what’s that on the TV?’

‘I think it’s ... the inside of a bookshop.’

She sat quietly, not saying anything, probably wondering why there was a picture like that on the lunchtime news – a picture finding its form in my private TV world.

‘The funny thing is,’ continued Blahdy, ‘You can see something *is* there.’

I moved on the sofa, leaning forward, willing the image to appear for me. ‘Is there, mum? *What* is?’ I pictured books on shelves, tall shelves like buildings, dwarfing me, as if I was walking down a city street in New York, books that leaned in on me as I became Kafka with his deer eyes looking out at all the viewers: *Kafka*.

On the inside flap of my mother’s Kafka book there had been a photograph of him wearing a bowler hat, patting a large, laughing Alsatian dog.

I called Kipper, my dog, and he ran from wherever he was and sat leaning up against my shins.

‘Hmm ...’ began my mother, ‘I can see a shape of something ... like a head, or maybe a ball, and a neck – yes, a neck. It’s like the outline of somebody, or else it could be a hare ...’

I saw the ears, the long ears.

‘... on the lens – or some fluff.’

The image I had was hairy. Hairy books, hairy shelves. Fluff balls like a Koughing Kat had spat them out.

‘It’s Kafka,’ I said, speaking over Dumdy, who was saying something about tricks of the light and strange things you can do with a camera. The picture was now in the hands of an expert who could work out whether it was a fake.

But I didn’t see how it could be a fake. What would the real thing of Kafka’s ghost in a bookshop be?

‘Mum, what does it look like?’

‘Hmm? Oh – sorry dear. It’s gone.’

She shifted, probably looking at me. The news reader introduced the next item about birds, migrating birds, and I saw, in my private TV world, storks carrying something, a hair or a piece of fluff, away over darkened hills to be born.

Meg Baird: *Pan revisited*

when I was young  
and full of youth  
sweet as new green  
bamboo shoots  
fresh in the ethereal air  
way up there  
I might be food for panda bears  
however it was not to be  
how quickly grows a bamboo tree  
one of many waving reeds  
pleasing in both sight and sound  
I began a bamboo shoot  
I became a flute for Pan  
I look for him in every man

## Rose Hunter: Two Poems

### *You As Crop Staple*

More than corn to fix this  
and even with butter powder cheese  
and chili, as though it were that kind of  
hunger. *Malecón*: the barrels  
plate glass between plastic champagne rows  
with bay and sky and the rusted prongs  
of standing-on-end; I like to watch them

pile the cups, but to eat I prefer  
the cob: it speaks to my hunger  
to tear at the kernels with my teeth  
to pick the cylinder-field clean

while Felipe he tries to sell me something -  
you name it he's got it: scuba diving  
hang gliding, T-shirts, tequila.... *Terreno*?  
Yes, a lot, he says, when all else has  
failed; this last ditch attempt, to throw in - !

of course, but imagine - when hunger hits  
and you are on your own lot....  
After all you didn't buy it  
because you wanted it to stay how it was.  
I am happy enough with this *e-lot(e)*-  
I tell him, although I am not  
as the pigeons swoop down  
shard in my eyes like *jalapeño*:  
the pitch-ditch; what now?  
When I am hungry, who will feed me?

*You As Bignoniaceae*

And the reason to go to that gallery  
some artist? built a demolition?  
well of course it's on *Jacarandas*.  
The bear park is on that street  
almost enough to get me there  
with the woman who says she remembers me:  
you didn't look like you belonged.  
I say I never do, and laugh  
and she says she wants to tell me something  
else, and while I wait I remember  
how I tapped you on the shoulder  
you turned and lightbulbs sprung  
then blew the fuse; five-petalled  
the violet spontaneous deciduous  
and I am shaking it off  
the way the calyxes volutes Borghese  
craters have shattered, as you ask  
me to take your hand, walk  
with you over the dented floor,  
one more time and I say no  
because I think you will ask again  
another day. I do not believe  
you will die before then. I do not believe it.

Jessica Emerson: *Leaves*

Sun is to grass as sun is to water.  
Leaves hit the ground with a sound I cannot translate.  
Two great surges occur;  
the one, timed  
the other without control.  
The solar light now as in a small child's drawing:  
peaked over a building where two sides meet at a right angle.  
Protracted rays burst as if by protractor  
—another surge?—  
white sinking to yellow sinking  
below a crenellated wall.  
The surges come faster now.

Wait is to weight as wait is to woe.  
I grow tired of waiting for you,  
wish I'd waited longer.  
On the issue of a creator we agree,  
but on the timing of the falling leaves  
there is no consensus.  
Only that we take joy in nature,  
sorrow in her bounty  
—can there be more sorrow than in joy?—  
only that the bunched nerves of our lips blaze as if lit by the  
strained yellow sun;  
as if created to be joined.  
And still the liquid surges come.

A small one falls,  
yellow leaf to mossy cement,

and now I know the sound.

It is my language, I am certain of the cadence,  
hear syllables in the silent *whoosh* of the fall,  
whole sentences in the trembling crush of its muffled impact.

It is your name;  
the sweet, rugged sotto of your voice.

Russell Jaffe: Two Poems

*Little star goes to the bathroom*

Changes her clothes often in the morning when the other stars hide in the contours of their duplexes and waiting for the water to heat up and fog the mirrors with unreasonable vapor.

It is cold in the bathroom where little star takes long showers and brushes her hair. Another morning spread out for a hundred thousand million years, star?

At night little stars get wild but during the day they are good soldiers, affixed.

Little star learned this way growing up in New York. If she waits it out the scary things at night go away, but little star out-brights them anyway.

It can take millennia to learn that the wet swaths of rotating stars need a leader, not a sun, not a series of moons but one leader. Little star's ideas make the cosmos into funny butterflies or men's bowties or the mustaches of her arty friends.

Stars see their breaths leaving the apartment and in the mirrors they're gas giants. Little star prefers to be called glitter or googly eyes.

But this is how it must be. Little star sleeps with teeth that are brighter than the other side of eclipses. I myself write this as a plan long dried of water



with a view. I'll sleep off the flags you put on me. It is cold here but  
never nothing—little star, you must be brave, you must remember  
this,

and like the big hand of a clock you must learn your rhythms  
and we can name your galaxies someday after the funny things we  
know.

## *Little star is a fruit salad*

They say you are what you eat, and that's why you must fill in the colors of funny

galaxies like they do in a kid's first book of the stars, little star.

Though that is a gross generalization, an uncrossed territory spread out across

billions of miles littered with laundry and dishes.

Little star marches to work and her favorite fruit is fruit salad, that's how we know

she's one of us. Little star works hard for light and at bedtime she

leaves the up-late world connect-the-dots in the shapes of fruits for kids who will

become astronomers. I tell you this legend because I want there to be hope. Looking

to planetarium layouts for the best methods to open fruits without making a mess is

like using an autocracy for a kiss. Warmth is a nodding of stars in admiration. Little

star is warm even when they sold her childhood home and her parents moved away.

Little star leaves rinds and fruits in paths you can follow, in  
subordinate clues. I am

an acolyte—tell your children that means I am a pyramid of bones

with an upward tilting spooky skull and hands that are traditional  
bone stencils

covered in paper towel flesh. I will clean this mess because little  
star isn't an

unintended bag of peels and rinds, she's a brave shield.

Paul Kavanagh: *rabbits*

The rabbits were all dead. We held a mock funeral, we wore black, we delivered poignant elegies, we gave the dead rabbits a mock funeral filled with prayers and rituals, it was a solemn occasion. We buried the dead rabbits at the back of the garden, in two shoe boxes, I had to borrow a spade from a neighbor to dig the hole, he told me to dig the hole deep because if I didn't dogs would dig up the dead rabbits and ruin our back garden. We covered the graves with lilies. Lucy and Macy made a headstone out of cardboard, they had written the names they had given to the rabbits on the cardboard with their mother's lipstick. It was a bright red. Lucy and Macy cried throughout the mock funeral. Their faces were puffy and red. Kitty offered them a lollipop each but they refused. The rabbits had been white, with pink eyes, and long ears. For weeks Lucy and Macy had been taking care of the rabbits. They fed the rabbits, they cleaned the rabbits, they sang to the rabbits. We thought the rabbits were very happy. They were growing, their coats were shiny, they were full of life. During the mock funeral we said that we thought they were very happy, the girls said they loved the rabbits and thought the rabbits loved them. Somebody broke down and said life is so unfair. Kitty put on some music and we stood in silence and listened to a Greek epicedium. The singing was beautiful but very sad. Kitty poked me in the ribs and said she wished she had put on something from New Orleans, something uplifting and quick, the kind of music that would have made us happy.

Lucy and Macy now accepted the lollipops. We all sat at the table. Kitty poured out drinks and we sipped our hard liquor and talked lovingly about the dead rabbits. We made sandwiches and after sandwiches we had cake. The girls were very hungry so Kitty made more sandwiches even though the girls were still eating

cake. They washed down their sandwiches and cake with soda pop. Lucy and Macy said they felt silly in Kitty's European chic, so they went upstairs and changed back into their normal clothes. As they were changing Kitty and I went into the kitchen and looked over our new graveyard.

The girls came every morning before school to feed, clean and look upon the rabbits. It was their idea. Their mother didn't care, she was just happy that they were out of the house and she could linger in bed for an extra hour. The girls never missed a day. They would return after school and spend an hour or so cleaning, talking and playing with the rabbits. When they got home their mother never complained, even though the girls smelled of rabbit and they talked endlessly about rabbits.

We took the girls home in our car, although we could have easily walked. We told them we were very sorry. We kept repeating ourselves. We all felt very cheated. The girls asked if we were going to buy some new rabbits. We said yes. We all felt very cheated. The girls promised to feed the new rabbits, to clean the new rabbits, to sing to the new rabbits. "We must buy some new rabbits," said Kitty as we watched the girls run to their home. Once the girls had entered their home Kitty started the engine of the car and we hurried home. "You must take that spade back to Kowwowski," said Kitty. I took the spade back to Kowwowski. We had a cold beer and talked about the dead rabbits and the mock funeral. Kowwowski was piqued that he had not received an invite to the mock funeral. "I love a good wake," said Kowwowski.

Lucy and Macy were said to be geniuses, but they didn't like the word genius, they told us that the word was a derivative of genitalia.

We were aroused from sleep by the girls screaming. Kitty grabbed her favorite butcher's knife. I slipped into my shoes. We found the girls white, gaping, crying. The rabbits were all dead. The cage doors were still locked, there had been no struggle,

there were no sign of dogs. It was a meticulous horror show, still, tranquil, it contained a softness. Kitty said she was reminded of *The Death of Chatterton* by Henry Wallis, I said it reminded me of a sentence composed by Penelope Delta. We were unaware that the rabbits were aesthetes, we thought only humans had taste, but apparently rabbits have taste also. The rabbits must have had a pact. We thought only humans killed themselves, but apparently rabbits have faith in suicide. Over coffee we tried to make sense of the deed. "They must have known," said Kitty. "Yes," I said. We were sad. We felt very cheated. "Those girls were really looking forward to that meal, I mean they put in a lot of effort," said Kitty. "Yes," I said. In the kitchen everything was ready for the big meal that we had promised Lucy and Macy.

## Thomas Walton: *Coming, Goings and Leaves*

### *Fashion*

coming as it did at one time only  
in leg of mutton buttoned loosely  
what a pair of clubs you've brought  
how small the skull you've horsely chosen  
if, when frozen, the night lawn begs  
to be left in peace or else to crumble  
and your breath is asters  
dissipating like an icon painting  
as you hover over the grass  
floating away from me  
down past the oak where the creek  
is also a thief of leaves, and leaves  
only red venal roots helpless  
in the relentless current

### *Funerals*

coming through with this as their plan  
a slab of stone laid flat on a grave  
they proselytize with promises  
of left fielders, leftovers  
negotiations with masked plovers  
over under versus over  
on top of, beneath, amidst  
worms or angels, you decide  
the leese of tabla drums  
or the dregs of drainage pits

but it isn't that it's, it's  
less chiaroscuro than that

### *Nests*

when the magpies in the spruce came  
they were a sight for short tails  
portals of of's thoses rank  
and covered you with dried grasses and string  
what joy  
what joy to be made a nest for nocturnes  
a little troika of eggs in your chest

### *Vultures*

they will wish that they might be seen to come  
circling in the dry sky  
degenerating in a high spiral  
over the arid landscape below  
and you, binocularized, await them  
your bicycle and your pen ready  
riding as beneath them as  
the ponderosa pines scaling the slope  
otherwise where rocks have burst  
and bleed brickly in their wounds  
you've found the tree, you think  
where vultures come to roost  
and climb it, and wait  
and wait, and wait  
having lost them again until tomorrow's  
new attempt at gathering beauty



## *Paddocks*

once every day there is a coming where cows are  
out in that future field  
beyond the stand of garry oaks  
to reach it, to pass the old flatbed  
gathering rust and moss and mice  
near the barn, to reach it  
to walk the muddled road through  
ant hills, snags, and hung girls  
up the hill and through the hill  
the hill gate opens to it  
to the field where cows are, where cows have  
rubbed the cedar trees raw up to  
five feet so that they appear to hover there  
uncovered where shown affection  
the cedar trees, the cows laze  
and coyotes ease into the swatches of scotch broom  
to sleep or else imagine rabbits only

## *Fissures*

something drapes the walls  
and I must watch it  
as if it were drip, or droop  
the way it moves  
to keep from thinking of it  
aplomb in the midst of chaos  
the broken sky, the fissured child  
the pear trees about to blow

I am anxious for spring this year

not as I usually am  
but this year to see  
if it too will pull off its blossoms  
and tell me no! I'm not happy  
I need to go elsewhere  
and whether I will protest  
arguing for its worth, for its beauty  
and essence there between  
March and May  
or if I will watch quietly  
in disbelief  
as it gathers its shoots  
its leaflets and petals  
and walks out  
closing the door with a click  
that is as cold and insufferable  
as any winter ever was

Mark Mihelcic: untitled

the mud:  
  
and children carving  
  
in their own symbols –  
  
like an owl,  
a thunder heart.  
  
and the old men,  
  
since they were  
children –  
  
measuring the lines  
to the diagram  
  
they built  
before the temple.

*Dong Xi,  
China,  
Oct. 2, 2010*

Tantra Bensko: *Elephants*

The elephant lost its life long partner. And still danced. Lightly,  
elegantly, to unheard music. Unheard to anyone but its life  
partner. Who was trumpeting inside the dance.

The life long partner danced in the after-life, unseen by anyone  
but the elephant on earth. Who was able to see longer  
distances than ever,  
ever  
before  
.

Donavon Davidson: *The Settling Dust*

The season of apples  
stops beating

one heart at a time.

Sally Molini: *O These Toothy...*

contrapuntal traps,  
so many voices  
each on their own side.  
Forget nature's subliminal  
edge—instead of water  
the world is three-fourths  
left-over mistakes.

