Sand River Journal

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Erik Asphaug, Editor

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(Total Lunar Eclipse)

☉ ☾ ♎

Degrees of Difficulty

Stop, and you still the ripples..
With a finger the tangles are raveled.
The knots rot with the rope.

Joe Fineman
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at 4 o'clock under chicago and state

i waited northbound
chomsky having sold out at 3 o'clock
for the day
postcard found for aimee in one hand
an architectural walk from the art institute
up michigan avenue, in the back of my mind

these three musicians —
they sang and played and harmonized
cohering into a mild form of torture:

you are the only woman in the world

i have eyes only for you
you make me feel so wonderful
i want to be only with you

the platform? studded with
beautiful women of all cuts and kinds
keeping straight faces
flashing smiles
rolling eyes
exchanging glances
(discreetly)
with all the other women

left out of the world
tragically.

2.

i was looking down her split ends
it was a crowded ride
she was protesting animal testing
so i so i — went untested
though we both got off

at bryn mawr.

Marek Lugowski
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king salmon

Sleep is
installments.
   Salmon rising to
empire;
   Mothers falling to.
   A nap
is no less
complex.
   In forty winks,
mama rises
to glory on
an imperial
line.

Mary Findlay
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On the Possibility of there being Bad Poems

(doggerel)

Are there no bad poems in this book?
Ask me this a year or so ago,
And I would have eagerly taken a second look
And said that this one was so
And that this other one is so so.
But today all has changed.
The old meanings have all re-arranged
Themselves. Books alone are feeble things.
Made from dead trees, the dried pressed pulp:
We call them leaves. But the only wings
That flutter are those of living men,
Of the fluttering eye-lash, or scribbling pen.
The book alone won't grow
Without the trunk of a body to bend it to and fro.
Bad writers there will certainly be,
But bad readers are always easier to see.

daniel
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Bill Brandt

bill —
you have put me upside
down
on smooth stones and
the idle backs of seagulls.
you have provided a lichen sea
to hold these white white fingers.
these sun bleached shoulders.

while you.
you are outside the weather,
inside that red red room.
your hands are stained with
cranberry sauce.
you killed a small girl
with your camera.
you turned her into mottled
marble.

she looks very beautiful
beside your hot and squeaky
leather
chair.

helen walne
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Painting the Blame

Pure sweet lips and asking eyes
will beg to be forgiven
But heavier than lead are lies
that come from the hearts of women

Patrick Kelly
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all i am not

sometimes, all i am is a mother is all
i am nothing else, and it makes me weep.
yet, it is this peace that allows me to love you,
a condition of unconditional love, lusting aside.
sometimes, because i am a woman and nothing else,
my nuturing turns into yearning.
and my eyes, they roll down my face
with the woman's tears, the woman i think i am not.
because all i am is a mother is all.
once, before the children, i thought i knew love.
but now, now that the children have taught me love,
i know it well. and you are the only man i've ever loved.
damn, how i weep . . . to be your woman.

elizabeth haight
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summit

Wind whispers over gravel and granite
        cracking in the sun,
    shakes her feet and leaves the dust of worlds behind.
Up here, even the clouds must walk
    or dance where breezes lead.
Snow, retired, soothes the air and weeps
    for winter past, tears trickling
        to dead oceans.

Horizons stretch the gusts to stillness.

Wind stirs and shares the kiss
    'tween sky and earth,
        then sighs

and slides her way down through the trees
to worlds that lie beyond.

She will return.

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Stillborn Words

The pen moves bloated on the narrow page,
between the blue, confining lines. I write
dull bastard verse; my pale and pregnant rage
spins out insipid words that have no bite.
I push in silence, minus eloquence
or wit. I wish my words were surgeon's knives,
curettes of stainless steel. So little sense
speaks from these swollen lines. Each phrase arrives
quite dead, a stillborn babe. Damned muse, no friend
of mine is she, but still I scribble pap
no child will suck, allow the words to wend
their weary passage to the paper's trap.
So I grow fevered by this fetal urge;
no midwife tends my poisoned, inky purge.

Karen Tellefsen
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Colour bars in front of our eyeballs

like prisoners walled in
colour bars in front of our eyeballs
in a fever of expectations
we listen to everyday sounds
and the threat underneath them

as we sit and talk about peace
in the midst of our words
the sudden wild scream
hundreds of huts catch fire
and sharpened spears
find their way to the beating heart
of our nation
openings which go down
into the earth like empty wells

echoing uncertainties

the birds fall and die
the ivy whispers unconfirmed rumours
and red leaves tumble
from the wall
into the black of our eyes

Peter Horn
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diamante

for grandmother . . . dreamer . . . tusitala . . .
fiery little spitfire that she was

on her seventy-fifth birthday celebration
she watches, from the balcony, grandchildren
playing tag in the moonlight

favored melodies from guitars
oscillate the wave of time ...

as young swains serenade her
with plaintive songs of love
she draws her gold-laced mantilla
across her face
            and coyly smiles ...

she is eighteen again.

zita maria evensen
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The Giving

for Thomas Elliott

Just give me a second
and I'll manufacture smiles
scatter them like dreamrushes,
drifting into afternoon
Spare me a minute,
I'll make the art of hugs
a Dali masterpiece
made of your arms,
my discerning eye pressed
against the sculpture of your chest

Grant me but an hour;
I'll take your hand and
show you, free of charge
my humble worlds of cyber alleys,
chessboards made of palm trees,
which I would give to you
rent-free
And with a generous day,
an extravagant weekend,
I'd aspire to the role
of an offering, ready-to-burn
at the altar of your eyes
— but wait — time's run out —
You glance at your watch,
melting on the horizon,
clock-face grinning,
time to spare is over,
the cumulus curtain closes
You smile and thank me kindly,
gently pushing me aside,
late for your appointment with the
fourth dimension
late for an important date
down a rabbit hole
where caterpillars blow smoke rings
spelling your name
and where we were
I still am
feeling your memory
nestling in my throat
looking at where you were
I checkmated the tesseract
but the calendar page is sinking
into sand-crab holes
submerged by waves of unicorns

Aileen Cho
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we will / we will not

you and i will not
run over hills
my love.

we will make cacoons
from silver shoelaces.
slip small moons into
our coffee

instead of sugar.

we will lick the
pollen
from the backs of
tasseled bees.

we will make timeless beds from
dandelions;
stretch loose-limbed amidst
the ashes of shooting stars.

we will kiss with mouths
of damp caves
and roll like satin
starfish
through the wet lamps
of sunken streets.

you and i will not
run over hills
my love.

helen walne
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prayer

how would i know prayer
    when
    when i wander into grooves
    of monolithic sequoias
    kneel on worn dark pews
    of medieval gothic cathedrals
    and walk barefoot
    in white domed temples
    i have heated conversations
                    with gods

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Untitled

Off—
on.
   You
join blue
to bird.
On—
off.
   Bird fled.
Bye blue.

Mary Findlay
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Ether

You smell like a doctor —
anaesthetised.
Lover, come over here
and take my pulse —
remove this rhythm out of me.

Split my eyelids with a scalpel,
fever me with science in
cross legged consultation rooms.
Hold your ether fingers against
the white sky.

Tell me i am not contagious.

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