

# *Ygdrasil*

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# Introduction

## Patrick White (1948 – 2014)

### POETRY USED TO LIVE IN A FORBIDDEN STATE OF COURAGEOUS GRACE

Poetry used to live in a forbidden state of courageous grace  
but now it's palpably culpable of cowardice.  
Paper-mache lifemasks with all the characteristics  
of a gaping sin of omission. As F.R. Scott said of E.J. Pratt  
in his poem about the building of the CPR  
where are the coolies in your poem, Ned?  
The ten thousand that died lining and tamping track.  
Now the real subject matter of most works of art  
is not what was put in, but what was left out,  
where's the heart, the soul, the imagination,  
where's the grief and the longing that slowly matured  
into the black flames of the charred roses  
that immolated themselves in their own fires  
for the love of someone they couldn't live without  
like the other wing of the song of a bird  
maimed by the oversight like a tree in chains.  
The applause of trained seals isn't praise  
and celebrity isn't fame. Everyone's good  
at divining the well, but who takes the time  
to dig one any deeper than their own shallow grave?

Maybe there's a sleeper out there who's fighting  
for his life in a dream, enduring excruciating transformations  
as experience shapeshifts his voice into poems  
we'll get to overhear one day after he's dead  
like the sound of distant water in a mindstream  
or the ashes of an unknown soldier  
that couldn't be contained by a broken urn  
or buried under a monument to anonymous violence.  
A hero or a heroine who didn't play to the crowd  
like an acrobat of words faking it as a wizard  
in a literary scene of very unsacred clowns.  
Tiger-striped arsonists that couldn't burn  
their way through a matchbook. Where are  
the thieves of fire, the Promethean criminals,

the fore-ordained demons of nihilistic doom,  
the mad who used to sacrifice their shadows  
on the altars of the mountains of the moon  
and came down into the valleys in tears  
with a message like an avalanche of the underwhelmed?

Are there no more Druids? Is the bloom off the mistletoe  
of myriad moons that have lost their atmosphere  
to the bright vacancy of the vacuum on the reflected side of things  
and forgotten the dark abundance of the occult originality  
of the true face that's turned away like a perennial eclipse  
of the black sheep of a severely depleted family  
that doesn't want to talk about such things in public?  
No more shamans risking death in the cradles of the treetops  
at the hands of the visions that cut them to the bone  
to see if they've marrowed suffering into lunar gold  
they scatter on the waters like feathers and bread?  
Even the deer miss their hunting magic more than they realized.  
Now the flies stalk lions in zoos that know better  
than to fight back. And poetry reads like a tourist trap  
for expired prophets glad-handing their coveted awards.  
Bleed a bit, damn it. Weep like a mountain. Write a poem  
like an amputee in a straitjacket with the pen in your mouth.  
Pour the ocean into a seabed, not a teacup  
that tastes vaguely of life, and down a deep draft  
of your own blood in a single gulp from the vessel of your skull,  
then wipe it from your lips like the petals of a rose  
that knows how the heart feels when it's sealed  
like a blood bank and the hungry ghosts of ideas and ideals  
have been summoned to it like a séance of vampires in lieu  
of the living metaphors that animate the lives of real things.

I'm not saying that the morning is without singers,  
or that one should only listen to the night birds  
or that the old stumps aren't sprouting tender green branches  
out of their Medusa-headed roots. There's fire  
in every generation if you get close enough to it  
sufficient to singe your eyebrows on or at least  
walk toward on a cold night in a cruel landscape  
to spread a few stories around to scare the children  
into listening to their imagination unbound  
from the usual lullabies that keep their parents lyrically young  
in a state of arrested development. Where are  
the dangerously dissociated ones who yell Merd!  
at the choirs of cant and stab an established  
pigeon of a poet through the hand like an osprey  
then walk off the stage into oblivion as if  
a mediocre morality play were beneath his felonious dignity?

Where are the black-robed, outlaw, poet priests,  
the sybils, oracles, witches and warlocks,  
the vatic rebels hiding out in caves to amplify their voice  
like the anarchic mountain they're trying to bring down  
on everybody's heads like a meteoric shower  
of portentous space junk in a degenerating orbit  
that cremated their body parts separately as if each  
had nothing in common with its fellow asteroids  
except they couldn't keep their cornerstones together long enough  
to establish a small planet they could live on in anarchic accord.

I can remember when poems were written in blood,  
not bleach and fabric softeners. Not anti-bacterial detergents  
that shoot at their own troops over the heads of the enemy.  
And how the poetic toads that hibernated for seven years  
in the dry creek beds suddenly woke up one day to a flash flood  
and started singing sexually naked in the downpouring rain,  
not these isolated ripples and trickles of acidic dewdrops  
that burn the tongues of the flowers with trademarks and name brands.

Where the savage mystic who wanders in out of the desert  
reeking of stars and the wisdom of a snakepit  
that could make a whole village stop work, and listen  
to the unpurgated desert wind that spoke through him?  
Where are those who ennobled the miseries of life  
by living their way through them like diamonds in a black lung?  
Now it's the association of the sensibilities into elitist cliques  
of enculturated memes with homogeneous life themes  
that never leave home to save their children, as Rilke rightly observes,  
from having to do it for them. Domesticated lapdogs  
never very far from the begging bowls that feed them  
like the awards and grants of an institutionalized paternalism  
that lets them know when the silver-tongued should be heard  
at the table, each in their proper place, and when  
Skinnerian censorship, like repressive tolerance, is golden.

Poetry's as old and as dead an art as prostitution.  
It's been dying since the first shaman  
imitated the song of a bird with its feathers on fire  
or the first stripper teased her nakedness with boas.  
Or the first wounded wolf let out a warcry  
that chilled the moon with its unwaning sincerity.  
And the ultimate angle? To be the thing itself  
until it breathes you in and out like a way of life  
the petty won't risk aspiring to for fear of falling  
and being found out like a candling parachute  
tangled in its own life lines like a labyrinth of axons  
that have lost their nerve for heights. Twenty-five million

children dying of starvation every year on the planet  
and you're lying in the lap of the luxury of literature  
writing about the rustic quaintness of making home-made jam,  
the same way they turned totem-poles into telephone booths  
and minor domestic tragedies into recyclable myths of origin.

Let the stars burn deeper into you. Befriend the darkness  
like the largest room in your house. Salt your tears  
with oceans where your sorrows can learn  
to swim like fish without ever swimming out of your eyes.  
Ladies and gentlemen, this is it, this oneness,  
of the dirge and the lyric you're never going to hear  
the same way twice, this mystic specificity  
that encompasses us wholly in the mystery  
of what we're doing here, what we're saying  
and thinking and feeling and shrieking and seeing here  
in the presence of each other bearing witness everywhere  
as if even the void we flash out of like the morning dew  
and return to with the dust of the sunset all over us  
were also in some inconceivable way, though  
we can't put our lips to its eyelids, sentient  
and playfully absurd, but never frivolously recognized.  
Don't live like the dress rehearsal of a play you didn't write.  
In the pursuit of an earthly excellence that expresses  
our human consternation of who we are and are not,  
neither this, nor that, say deeply what you mean  
so that we can all draw water from it like the sun.  
So there's lightning in the clouds of your depression  
and the fireflies take over where the starmaps leave off.  
Be a great high priestess of the sacred syllable  
and when you enter your venerated groves  
like the night wind among the crowns of the trees  
be at least as engaging and beautiful as they are  
and as at home among warriors as you are homeless among saints.

Awake and alert in the unsayable silence. Wait.  
And the metaphors will come like bridges that burn  
and go up in flames like an orchid and bridges  
that collapse under their own weight into the river  
they were trying to cross to the colder, lonelier shore  
where purity's just a long, slow annihilation  
of everything you still insist upon cherishing.  
Let go. Fall. Revive. Return. Go up the mountain.  
Find the mother lode. Bring it back down into the valley  
like a strong river brings its knowledge of gold within.  
Behind every explorer is a child who likes to discover  
and share things. So what's worth finding that you can't?  
You just have to look into one eye to see the history



of everything that can be seen. And when you open your mouth  
prompted by a rush of stars, you sing  
for thousands of dead poets who used to occupy  
these green boughs and leafless branches, you sing  
as if you were the last surviving member of the choir,  
and the silence, the enraptured silence, were listening.

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## Karen Alkalay-Gut

### **Taste this book**

The sweetness is not overwhelming  
Rather invites another bite  
Chocolate touched with caramel  
coffee cognac salt what is it on  
Your tongue  
now

Ha  
It is your turn

To add  
The liquid of  
Your throat

## **Every day I fall out of love**

and in it again. You  
are always someone else  
remembering a different past  
looking forward to a singular day  
yet the same beloved I have known  
over and over. And I too  
am changed by your changing  
self – this element remains the same,  
simple and clear  
as running water.

## **WATER**

1.

There are times when I lose my life in the sound of water.  
Filling the kettle I listen to how it flows  
Into the growing pool,  
Until the vessel spills over  
And someone exclaims,  
“What could you have been thinking of?”  
And I reply, almost absent mindedly  
“water.”

2.

So much you can live without  
So much in our lives is so unnecessary  
Only water to touch the tongue  
Only water to awaken the pores  
Of your being. Only once  
I thirsted in the desert, only once  
And so briefly

3.

May those wonderful days on a boat in the middle of the lake  
Be given to everyone – at least once in their lives. Close your eyes  
And smell the water, let it tell you where you have drifted.  
Close to shore you will feel, at first, the algae, the little fish  
Then as you move in, the aroma of land. Go out further, and the wind  
Raises the water to your nose. Like wine, only fleeting, changing  
As miles away a bear comes to the water to fish or a man cooks coffee  
Somewhere invisible over an morning fire.

May the wonder of such senses be given to us all.

## **FIRE**

1. On days of fire  
I sometimes re-sense  
How we created its greatness,  
The little children gathering kindling  
The big ones looking for fallen trees.

Only one of us wielded the axe.  
He wore it hung from his waist,  
Pulled it from the leather case  
With the reverence of a little god  
And swung it back over his shoulder.

Then suddenly the wood opened to us  
Releasing its own bouquet into the fragrant forest  
I knew with my eyes closed which part of the tree -  
Delicate branches still green with hope  
The trunk rich with old stories to tell.

And then we stood waiting to see  
Which pieces we could carry  
Back to the clearing.

Mostly we used sparks from the flint  
But on wet days we allowed the luxury of a match  
And with our breath breathed life into the dream of smoke  
with our hands we shielded the flicker from the wind  
Until it grew to warm our faces, bent in greeting.

2.  
Malcah was my mother's favorite sister,  
The youngest and most adventurous.  
She lived as she believed, laid bombs  
On train tracks for soviet partisans,  
Revenged the murder of her children  
With the deaths of soldiers.  
When she was caught, her husband  
Escaped. For that, he was never  
Avowed, not even in the records  
Of partisans. In the fire  
That consumed her, June 24, 1944,  
As she was trapped in jail,  
his name was erased.

Yet she burns within me  
Every day, every day.

## **January**

One of my favorite gods, Janus

Always going both ways

Always taking both directions

Always thinking of days

Gone by and to come

Not either/or

But both/and

## **Blouses**

I counted nine white blouses in my closet  
I never wear them but they must have been important  
Enough to wear once  
At least before banishment.

Each one must have suited me  
At different points in my life –  
Perhaps when I was different women  
Each one trying  
A new return  
To propriety  
Purity,  
Whiteness.

I thought to try them all on  
One after the other  
To measure the differences  
In the size  
And self  
Image

Instead I returned them to the closet  
Side by side on the rack  
So they could begin  
To relate to each other.

.

Instead I left them hanging  
Sat down to write,  
Unite them  
In a poem

## Cigarettes

I thought I might start smoking again tonight.  
I even bummed a light off a tall handsome guy  
Who lit up the night with a match  
And let me breathe it in, remembering  
How I'd stand on my bed with my head  
Peeking out of the skylight window  
Blowing smoke into the winter night  
All alone in the wonder of the sweet  
Taste and smell that transcended  
All other senses.  
much before he noted  
I've done this before.

# Felino A. Soriano

*from antiphonies & spectrums*

**Of the I**

solitary

countermanded

independent

fruition, . . .

stationary then, the window's mode  
reconvenes amid  
textured abbreviations, the formula  
fits into foundations as genetic  
configurations revolve and obtain  
resilience in the contextual instances of  
silences of truthful predeterminations these  
rarities, revolving stamp-permanencies  
born (not anthropomorphized) to the beginning  
line creation, leading, lending, listening . . .



## echo of this necessary partition

laughter finds its harmony  
circulating the serenade of  
wind's softest finger  
fingering the cultural contour  
of residue                      from  
the ballet-soft landing of  
moisture's  
                    modulating breathing, the appearing  
of globular renditions of a wet  
welcoming: spring or  
the modular fluctuation of the year's  
pastel environs, —finding what rests, this  
invisible speck of eventual dissipation, the  
enjoyment of becoming an unnoticed  
existence, the ability to  
bend into pose sans  
misinterpreting eyes  
rewriting meaning into  
limited spectral blends of  
personal intuition

**if otherwise**

in this

on this

hour of redefined mentality, the whole of  
self enflames or engulfs running, running-as  
impartial faculties toward freedom of sustained  
reliability, focused

fathoms engage and create modular installments of indicative  
prosperities, fleeing as do homes from the stagnancy  
of architectural freelancing  
needing then the body's  
visceral elsewhere, the find-of  
procedural circumstances, the otherness  
believed within each  
syllabic arrival of composed interpretation

# Ndue Ukaj

## Juicy fruits

Beauty is high, between earth and sky  
Me and you.

A brain with mixed thoughts,  
Is like the great homesickness with rare truths  
Hiding below a dense grass, wetted grass.  
Beauty is high, between earth and sky  
Me and you.

Where the truth falls,  
Just like tall oak trees from the storm

That's how the path is lost from darkness and gates are invisible  
In the sacred city.

Time prohibits to reveal the true face  
In the great garden, where all fruits, all flowers, are planted,  
Altogether with pain with love.

Deserves happiness  
Yes, the miracle of happiness.

Your glimpse is vigorous,  
And your eyes have turned into dry creeks.

The beauty is high, between earth and sky  
Me and you.

Oh, how brown is the soil and trees have absorbed the soil's color.  
Except happiness is a tree with juicy fruits  
In the garden where a dense grass hides our feet.

## **A boat on a wave**

It's Saturday and a cold march  
the roads are shining from frost, the city is quiet  
sounds are frightening, like mountain's scream from lightening.  
Cold flowers have the color of a frozen sound,  
Nothing is shining, neither aroma, neither sound, neither a word.

We are going to the sea,  
Where there is a sole boat and a masked captain.

He leaves behind quietness and departs towards for the coast  
To throw himself in the mysteries of turbulent waves.

You are following with imagination its path  
When she moves through the stormy waves.

A thunder is heart....

Asking surprised, why did it leave the quietness of the coast?

Looking confused with the eyes covering the color of ice  
And reminds the worst tail.  
The boat becomes smaller, the waves are growing  
And the sky is furious.

It Saturday, cold march  
Flowers are freezing just like your memory  
Which leaves behind quietness and thrown in the waves of life,  
There is an abyss amidst desires and reality  
Between you and breathless reality, life, time...  
On the earth full of thirst.

## **A New day**

I am awake and sitting in front of the window.  
It is open, just like my eyes, just like my mouth  
Just like the flowers that take sun rays on the morning  
Just like the hills undressed from the dark night.

A tree is up front, and many colors are in it,  
Is the color of a tree log, of wet leaves and fruits  
That fulfills her meaning, its existence.

I am in front  
Just like the window in front of me.  
And the tree  
With its invisible roots  
Keeps all that beauty.

I stay in front of the window and see behind the tree  
That naked hill, and take a peak towards the horizon  
There are disappearing pedestrians with various news  
From the city.

I stay in front of the window and think for two truths.  
That are fighting, just like my eye's fight with the hill touching the sky  
And the tree with its deep roots  
On the earth which is never full of water.

Translated by Albanian from Peter Tase

# Silva Zanoyn Merjanian

## BLUE -COLLAR

Life sewn at seams  
with coffee break daydreams.  
Standing on cardboard boxes  
of embellished memories  
stored then pressed and flattened  
to laments under futile weight  
of so called fate.  
Smell of mildew on regrets  
creeping in speeches  
heartily delivered at Sunday fast food dinners.  
Blame burnt black  
gargled in salt and spat at capitalism  
and every sour life event.  
A town asleep to drone of machines  
real and imagined  
caught in its bolts, dreams  
fading between dusty numb fingertips  
scratching snores that once  
were heaves between sheets.  
Sound of failure drowning in beer burps  
and blue light of late night television talk shows.  
Self-pity chewed and forgotten  
in pockets of over-worn jeans  
more comfortable with every wash and rinse.

## MEA CULPA

Fall has not yet licked the sky  
against my palm the evening  
damp with California dreaming  
wide eyed  
perched on live wire  
I found my place  
ancient yet not  
here  
not here  
this not that  
nothing defined  
yet no cowering shadows  
no doubt plastered on tongues

but clean slates don't come without cracks  
ink dries in carmine on sins and wings  
dropped in collection baskets not aired

déjà vu dripping through fingers I dipped  
twice in pleas slippery on churned confessions  
friction burns, skid marks on longings  
barefoot on crows lining the streets  
squawks pecking silence of baring trees  
I wrung my words  
I fled the scene

he said never return to where you were traded  
for plucked feathers  
till spring when pails are sieved  
of bones and carrion flowers  
and he finds your fear in California dreaming  
skipping on an ocean's skin  
then melt  
melt  
and mold on lips you want to kiss

## AWAKENING

Simplicity with which morning casts aside a venal night  
no aurean regrets, but hushed readings  
where words stretch a paper-cut in the air

color-blind wolves retreat  
and she catches a glimpse of her self in their eyes

all that spills on night's curves and corners now half dry sticky mire  
on eyelashes sharpened behind muslin lies  
artless restraints rust  
the light catches their decay in glorious colors

she's startled by her voice that sounded different in the dark  
was that her in a ring throwing gloveless punches and missing every sneer  
she comes out with less skin, unlearned fear dripping down a broken crown

years stand rolled into haystacks in a field of mined hindsight  
virga of decisions fail to clear a path  
but every welt now a blue vein on cupped hands  
where she holds a voice that edited the night of its flaws  
what pushes against her ribs also pulls a smile on morning lips

she finally fits in her skin although thin at places  
and still as crazy as the bird that keeps flying into the window pane

at peace, in the morning that slaps the night when no one's looking  
walks in with a wink and a dance with no backward steps



# John McKernan

## SELF PITY

Louse  
On the hummingbird

Needle  
Through the eye  
Of the bluebird

Poison  
Popcorn  
In the beak  
Of the peacock

Eagle  
Feathers  
Beneath the tires  
Of the semi  
On I-64

Right here  
At home  
Resurrected  
In this cheap motel  
The feathered weeds  
In my skull

## **SURPRISING DAY**

I greeted everyone I met

"Good day Mister Pear I hope you . . . "  
as he sped by on his motorcycle

"And Mrs. Apple How are you this . . . "  
just as she retreated behind her green  
front door with a dog leash taut and  
coiled tight about her left hand

"Nice to see you Professor Pine . . . "  
I screamed to his by-now-tiny-in-the-  
distance form finishing his morning  
12-mile jog with a brisk 400 meter  
wind sprint

Then it happened A rain storm that  
lasted one block and two minutes Then  
gone to be replaced by a mile of bright  
blue sunshine

Astounding I wanted to talk to every leaf  
every flower every blade of grass I saw  
on my way to work

My silence wore a black coat & trotted  
beside me that morning A good pet

I spent that entire work day derelict  
from my accounting duties composing  
a Haiku to my brother in India tattooing  
the letter O to a blank sheet of blue  
writing paper

## SUNRISE

Dry white maggots Thin maggots

The color of powdered limestone

Teeth parts on the marble path up the hill

Two doves at winged sex on goose-daubed straw

A clutch of salt-colored eggs in their nest

Feathers floating everywhere with their  
rainbow colors

Green maggots slurping dew particles

Corpses resting underground Quiet as a painting

Doors held open with broken jawbones

Thick white sandals Thin white sandal straps

The strings of a harp in sunlight Each note  
leaping up the seven marble stairs

A leper kept tinkling a tiny copper bell

A huge white shadow falling from a human body

The hair of goats The beards of old men

Mist of yellow pollen Clouds of powdered bone

The braids of the albino Her pink eyes

Goat's milk in a wood bucket The ladle  
floating in bubbles of sunlit foam

A woman said the tomb was empty It was

## **HISTORY**

Worked  
In the Sixties

A version  
From a drop of peyote  
To a laundry cart full of grass

Growing up seemed simple  
First Death  
Then Old Age  
Followed by a prolonged Childhood

Europe was rubble  
Japan a tattoo of smoke  
China a bullwhip woven of dead babies  
I liked the lies we believed back then  
Helping us graduate from high school

## **THE HELICOPTER**

From  
The Crematorium

Floats  
Without moving  
Above the river

Flowing  
Into the blue bay  
With its white sands  
And white birds

In a violet sunset  
A man glows one last time  
As gold dust  
If you look up you will blink  
But you won't see a thing

## **THE MAJOR NECESSARY FOOD GROUPS INCLUDE**

A lean slice of light  
Star Moon Candle

At least two  
Generous servings  
Of music With the drums turned down

Three scoops daily  
From the silence group  
Letters Messages Notes  
Facial gestures Hand signals

Reasonable portions of natural distance  
And an extra large helping  
Of nothing Nothing at All  
Preferably beside a lake a shore a river  
Prepared with a coating of cool shadow

## THE SHADOW OF DEATH

Casts

A dazzling figure

Makes the darkness

Inside a noose

Glitter like diamond

Whispers

*You want me to tuck you into bed tonight?*

*You want to meet my sister Venus?*

*You'll love her lullabies*

Gretel kept singing

About new commandments

Handing out tiny pellets of lust

I waved at her but didn't stop walking

I despise dancing on water

# Maya Surya Pillay

**a child was**

## 1. a place, we were very little

But I remember the little town.  
There were red glints of prayer and  
birds of blue smoke in the gardens.

The drone of the white mosque  
pinned up arch above the bus rank

and the corpse of a sheep, hanging rose-pink  
in the clean room behind the counter

the smell of the sun melting  
over the empty storefronts

and down the walls of the apartment--  
slowly, over palms, into corners  
into plastic jugs and fridges  
homing into our eyes and such--

Well, that was summer.  
I thought there was more than one of me.

**And**

high, on the dim trees of the courtyard

that stood and bent their heads over us  
like mild physicians attending a birth--

--I remember.

**Out here**

the sun bumps its washed head  
against the four new angles.

Sometimes, I see the faces reflected  
in the alarm of light on water:  
a scoured porcelain, a flash of smile,  
an old turn of a staircase, a flash of turning cheek,

all plunging, all diving, gone.



2. *a girl. . .she*

Won't you tell me what happened to you?

What beast trampled you  
like a small shoot, back into the earth?

What hard things have been left to float  
and worry in the white channels of your spine?

I remember when you were ten, your sneer; us,  
crouched together on the cement of your front yard--

with the yellow points of the clay lamps  
speckling your sea-creature eyes--

and the sky so raucous over the house  
and the dogs barking over the wall.

# KRYSTAL VOLNEY

## ART, PHILOSOPHY AND POETICS

*Art requires philosophy, just as philosophy requires art.*

*Otherwise, what would become of beauty?*

*Painting is artistic poetry, and poetry is painting that speaks.*

*Poetry is the language that the heart holds with nature and itself.*

To the expressive cosmos, with the depth from artists' characters,  
Originated the homage from my heart to virtuoso art and philosophy.  
O artistic pride with allurements captured in oil paintings  
From Van Gogh's devotion and sensitive intensity;  
Charmed by the 'Road with cypress and star'-  
"I dream of painting and then I paint my dream", he said.

I was hypnotized by his works' ethereal passions and dramatic frenzies:  
Art is the most intense individualism that the world has known.  
True illustration is characterized by an irresistible urge in the creative artist-  
Yellow stars of Bethlehem in twilight Arles kissed the harmonious fragrance  
Of the air, caught in the 'Starry night over the Rhone'.  
Sweet scenery in lovers' land, Ursa major's glowing eye-  
Proclaimed the magnificence of time-swept pieces,  
On canvas bone.

Ah! Sulking unhappiness from the struggling age of the Ancient man,  
Was at eternity's gate with sunken cheek.  
Before morning's rise, athwart the phalanges of philosophy,  
In the Rinascimento poised the Great Master of unquenchable curiosity.  
"The truth of things is the chief nutriment of superior intellects". Da Vinci said  
Together with the women that danced with floral parasols to the musique mesurée  
Who came and spoke of Michelangelo, impassioned by his highly personal style.

Within Utopia's museum gallery, there was interest in the Vitruvian Man;  
I mused on intricate Venetian architecture with nods from Great crested grebe beaks.  
Classical orders in mirror writing- palms, cubits, feet and paces:  
It was blithesome to rhythmically pace with fanciful powers,  
In halcyon tones with immense thoughts at a mystic time with fiercer,  
Deeper notes from baroque violins and a Stradivarius beneath powerful showers.

The beatific display of abstract expressionism with its rebellious colors,  
Was surrounded by Mountain Laurels in the fields of my mind,  
That intensified epic spirits from western times-  
Where I was enthralled with artistic craze in the metaphysical tale  
Of aesthetic poetics.

O! I was astonished by Jane Frank's 'Craggs and Crevices'

Like floating Queen Ann's laces from enchanting sighing zephyrs,  
Whilst relaxed at crescent butterfly habitats noting their magnificent beauty!  
With nightly whispering anthems under the Champagne Supernova;  
Purely exquisitely blissful in the abode of peace captured  
In a Jerusalem-like sublime ceremony.

Ah and with deep weight of monumental height,  
I danced wildly to the sweet statuesque melodies of the CUBI VI sculpture in misty May.  
And I bolted, toward a city of added flair with Gorky's 'The Liver is the Cock's comb'  
From his surrealistic eyes of bulbous bright.  
Metaphysics! Well, the painterly spontaneity  
Of mature works in the innovative phase,  
Brought windy perfumes of frangipani that entertained my winged utterances!  
-Like on the feathered backs of Lutino Cockatiel birds.

Deep within the orphic valleys of gothic Romanesque art using organs  
Was tuneful dramatic reminiscence for Ctesibius's grave with noonday's gaze.  
And for further creative mystery, discovered in Beauneveu's 'Psalter of Jean de Berry'-  
Were heartwarming pleasures from the cherubic depiction.  
Lo! The age of Apollinaire's orphic cubism  
With the historical application of kaleidoscopic bold color,  
And 'all the world's a stage' in lyrical abstraction.

I pulsed with harmonious heartbeats at Delaunay's 'Simultaneous Windows on the City'  
For the honor of each division in the illustrator's interaction,  
Where my flames from votive candles burned for bright philosophy,  
To the sudden vibrations of the San Andreas Fault!  
A marvelous scene! - Of artistic science engineered for the very essence  
Of the pensive mind- 'Champs de Mars. La Tour rouge'.  
Upon vorticism I stood- guided by my eyes flashing forth;  
Dashed forth with dynamic fever,  
To Bomberg's 'mud bath' in the classical vault.

O where cherished valuables were positioned!  
Whilst in the Cubo-futurism period beguiled by Lentulov's 'Woman with guitar' piece.  
It was brought to life with the Russian futurists in mythical glory,  
Beside applauding flowers wrapped in abalone pearls.  
And I glared at the 'Skybell (Nebozvon)'  
With sentimental breath of visionary art.

'Twas convincing- glorious sight acclaimed alongside  
The 'Unknown Lady in Blue',  
Through the interpretive eye at Jupiter's station.  
Ah! By dint of Jupiterian mastery with cosmic incenses inhaled  
Beneath the fiery meteorites,  
That orbited around the Copernican system,  
With the painters' thoughts madly entertained- I sighed, mesmerized!  
The Magellanic Clouds came into view! They soared in the night skies,

With meticulous cogitation while the flare stars were wholly awakened  
From howling Iberian Wolves on earth  
Besides dignified lightnings of philosophical wisdom.

All of earth's philosophy came to life when Plato in olive tree sights from Akademia,  
Delivered his sophisticated encomiums before ancient Athenian institutions  
During the Hellenistic period. It was a fairy landscape from nature's hands  
With waltzing snowflakes in winter, where the sophists Protagoras,  
Thrasymachus, Lycophron and Cratylus amalgamated.  
'Twas their love for wisdom, inspired by the philosopher king  
In the intelligible realm within the oak forest, with growing whispers  
From the Wordsmiths' Congress about the forms in the Phaedo, Republic and Phaedrus.

Beloved life as I grasped my pages, soothed by the moon's crescent brilliance  
Wearing my overcoat, under the nimbostrati and cumulonimbi.  
Metaphysics! Philosophical artists were the best rulers: Visionaries of poetry  
And I, a true pilot paid attention to the seasons, the heavens, the stars, the winds  
And everything proper to the craft of ruling and commanding the sailing vessel as  
Captain of the ship; Plato's fashioned metaphor.  
While with all the joys that glowed and strings that flowed,  
-Unfaded to that stately form with deep fervor in platonic realism.

The distant thunder drove its rapid train for Aristotle's honorable high  
With his 'dialogues' in the realm of natural phenomena within states of Greek valleys,  
Where the nightingales sang near; I declared- "O teacher consort of Alexander the Great,  
Representative of Macadamia in the Atlantic Ocean's majestic calm."  
-Had movement in morals and doctrines of politics  
With untroubled passion in the past's palm,  
And inventions! Mathematical fancies of Descartes' analytical geometry  
Before constellations at midnight's Arctic welkins,  
Of the round planetary sphere, to fair days in one's memory for ecstasies  
Of the soul as a metaphysical poet.

## FOR THE ELDERLY

***"The oldest trees often bear the sweetest fruit."- German proverb  
The old are in a second childhood.  
It is a mistake to regard age as a class inclined toward dissolution.  
The reverse is true. While one ages, one rises with astonishing steps.***

Blessed are the elderly, when they experience indisposition or worse;  
Their shattered limbs and fevered brows, when there  
Is a need for healing from the senescent discomfort that they feel,  
While they seek medicine and words of comforting care,  
For their worth is far above platinum and gold.  
During lugubrious moments, support them with honor.

A saggy bending of the knees and elbows, with their palms  
Turned out, prudent-Socratic perspective: The greatest minds  
Throughout the centuries as foundation stones when  
Candles burn at night where they lay their hands upon understanding;  
While pensive and reverend amid waving Methuselah trees,  
The adoration song plays alongside the sighing breezes,  
In accents of climactic praise, shedding appreciative tears.  
A grateful influence from their wisdom- well-versed,  
During life's warm adventures under serene skies,  
With brief showers of rain nurturing Tiger Lilies and Cushion Chrysanthemums.

And when we were children, they taught us judicious morals  
In the shires of the island where we read novels about physics  
And astronomical matters until sunsets came with twilight shadows.  
At nightfall, we stared at the pulsars and supernovae through telescopes,  
Where their temperatures and substantiality were high enough to  
Sustain nuclear fusion reactions. They burned afar with luster until  
The beams of morning came at summer solstice as they drank  
Coffee in gardens filled with Larkspurs, snapdragons and delphiniums;  
Followed by a toast of vintage on the deep-delved earth: the dazzling Hippocrene!  
They taught Plutarchian tales- (Character is simply habit long continued).  
As the grass, the thicket and the wild pomegranate trees clustered around  
When our youth grew pale with soft incense; warblers hung upon the boughs,  
There were damselflies, antlions and web-spinners while the air was thick  
At midday as we flew on the wings of Poesy with imagined pards!

Blessed are senior citizens, for being perceptive and erudite.  
There on rocking chairs, where they assemble and participate  
In elderly activities and social roles.  
They are the roots that clutch that create the footprints of time;  
Blessed are elders with their wrinkles and liver spots on the skin,  
Their grey hair or hair loss and their lives captured in daguerreotypes.  
Oh and when we make our visits, in Venetian weekend villas;  
Dined in destination restaurants with them discussing global politics,  
Bringing back memories of quondam times.

\*The grandfather clock brought darkness on a November night  
Where the Queen-Moon, happily on her throne called their venerable soft names.  
Like an art-piece from Nicolaes Maes, an old woman dozed by  
While wind-blown glass armonicas made a melodious plot  
With multitudinous penumbras behind her from the noctilucous clouds.  
When a man honors his father and mother, God says "I regard it as though  
I had dwelt among them and they had honored me".

In distressing stages, as patients sojourning in nursing homes,  
Blessed are the old-aged who are respected and loved;  
That I may commemorate measuring out my life with comparability,  
And how should I suppose while holding a damask rose in sylvan eglantine;  
As I grow older, that I have two hands, one for helping myself and the other  
For helping others. And indeed we don't grow older, we grow riper like  
Bottles of Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir.

And as adults, appearing at the old people's homes with delivered Prinzregententortes,  
Streuselkuchens and Buccellatos, we assuaged their frowning countenances.  
We'd watch them suspend consciousness like slumbering angels as the  
Zephyrs blew tunes of infatuation while raindrops fell delicately against the  
Clerestory windows outside. One day, elder Benjamin and Oscar sat smoking  
Their tobacco pipes puffing by a fireplace with burning cinders where  
They recollected with personal narratives of their childhoods and manhood.  
The afternoon slept so composedly during that time they memorized about  
Riding Andalusian horses on German and Soviet ground forces  
In World War II. And how they wept for the deceased, laughing with  
Candidum Hybrids tearing the petals apart, declaring "Ladies  
Life is too short to be anything but happy."

Age is factually a case of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.  
Old Earl's face, wrinkled with perpendicular lines, resembled a Eurasian Cave Lion's.  
His eyes, observant and avuncular fixated on me with a light heart like the  
Desert sand while his white, thinned hair was parted with a comb; also  
Dressed in turquoise flannel trousers.  
He held 'Mister Ferris' his birman cat in his skeletal hands,  
Stroking its back gingerly, when he recalled yesteryear night fishing in the yellow  
Fog of South Korea for the duration of July. Under the stelliform sky, his best  
Friend Edmund navigated the rowboat as they searched for kingfish through  
The seaweed while the great winds shoreward blew. As young individuals,  
Their relatives told them mythical tales about the mermaids and mermen from  
The South Sea. At times, the faint quarter-moon dipped out of view while  
Thoughts of death entered their minds;  
Of patient bitterness they waited for their targets.

Blessed are the elderly ladies and those dying from old age

## GOLF

“Golf is life. If you can't take golf, you can't take life.”

I held a purposeful golf ball in my hand:  
It was alabaster and dimpled  
Near a garden of flowering Creeping thistles  
With soaring black-backed Magpies.  
Powerful and small the ball did appear,  
A harmless looking playing sphere!

Because of its small size I did not guess  
The awesome strength it surprisingly did possess.  
Since I started playing this game,  
With precision, heavy concentration and the greatest aim,  
My verse rose in four beats.  
Among the hills and island valleys of lush green lawns,  
The only objects moving were the eyes of the golfer  
Surveying the putt analyzing the land like a map drawn.  
It was more than one mind involved  
As a group of performers chatted in the trolley car;  
After having a luncheon and leaving the clubhouse bar.  
Perpendicular behind the ball looking for the line,  
One of the guys then crouched for a second look  
Reading from his putting book toward the sand trap curved like a hook.  
A golfer and his putter are one supposedly  
As his putter and his putt in the goal  
Are one if the ball goes in the hole.

I do not know which to favor: The loveliness of a perfectly struck putt  
Or the beauty of the green fairway at evening sunset!  
I moved around behind the pin covered in dripping sweat,  
As one of my partners took up a new position  
From which to trace a path ball to the hole like an ignition.  
“Fellow golfer, why do you imagine life like golf?” He said.  
“Well don't you see the difficulties of the putt?”  
I replied sitting in the grassy bed.  
Par is always a good score.  
I know of noble efforts and of rhythmic swings  
But I know too how to prepare for the next putt as the ball moves in a circular ring.

When the ball was still on the green, it only crossed over the edge  
Of the larger circle into the hole wedged!

I understood such a tiny ball,  
With silence from the sacred wood on the terrain;  
As I flashed my club sword, what more was there to explain?-  
For leisure with this game of considerable antiquity!  
At a distance of 200 yards with the group of acquaintances,  
I played the ball with the smallest number of strokes  
As the crowd drank their midsummer midday oolong tea,  
The thunder's rolling voice came with morning fog before the menfolk.  
Light-hearted joy of the musing soul,  
In a thrilling scene, I hit the ball towards its exact goal.  
I took one lingering look, the longest look dexterously,  
With profound notes in the site so nondiscriminatory;  
And with a shadowy face, I glared at it in the distant sand.  
I gripped my golf club to hit once more, pushing the ball at length classically,  
Piercing the target whimsically at the evening's final toast of tea!



# Veronica Valeanu

## Nimby

freebies & complementaries round-ups!  
the squeeze size is the wrong way round.  
all people want to do is  
make place inside other people,  
but it's like heading straight to being eaten alive by a hungry behemoth  
and then wonder why they're half the men they used to be.

don't eat anything out there, girl.  
if slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be a vegetarian.\*  
hoo-ha.  
don't let them sip your words, either. let'em draw a blank from you.

don't you stand now staring at nothing.  
I ain't nowhere. I'm that bubble that won't burst. you're not puffed,  
'cause you won't get to speak with a lump in your throat.

*(\*quote from Paul McCartney)*

## **buttons and buttonholes**

City slides, throbs in and out.  
She is craning her neck  
as if out to strike  
the collapsible,  
dispensed from the skyscraper ranges  
deep into the earthscraper ones.  
It's a city that doesn't fortify any foothold.  
Something has brought her here,  
to see her man once again  
lying fey-fevid on the bed.  
After all, love stretches out then skins territories  
until it all has fallen into place.  
No one knows why it then rears its other nether head,  
to push deep down its partakers' feelers,  
oh, those trembling feelers.

She is throwing herself  
over her man's body.  
This time, the city siding won't be smothering  
the flash in the flashmobbing.

And the Remains of Things are out there,  
pushing away a who-goes-there.

**metrophobia**

*(the fear of poetry)*

(circular)

there pivots Prima Ballerina

upon her pleated tutu

the alive layer raised the black flag

then

the dead layer raised the white flag

to do the wave

for the grandstand

(centripetal)

the Stadium's still-life printing

a fliptomania

hands holding out to cling

to the track belt pirouette

(centrifugal)

the Merry-Go-Round

was shredding its vertEgo

into thinking-between beams

the Choreography did nothing but go round in circles

## outstretcher

Lounging grace, meet-me-in-my-chambers black dress.  
She's lifting her jeweled finger to champagne.  
She can picture me, in some conceivable emergency,  
hawking about her slowed down movements,  
such as love patterns  
stenciled on a behind wall. My writing too is on it,  
let it flash across you. Stay there and feel.  
Now my mind pervaded yours, don't hate that.  
With the teaspoon I will stir in the coffee;  
the room will revolve for you. Stop it:  
we've nearly finished wearing out each other's asperities.  
I won't mind, the others may answer a question  
that you have apparently found the voice to ask.  
Line of ghosts, in and out.  
I'll ask silently for a private room.  
You shall take me there  
to reinstate the lounging in my grace.

## **miserotonin**

It's time to feel clean tonight,  
nestled into a space of smell room.  
Here we interlock again, after the dispersion of our privacy.  
Touchy-feely traffic lights and their finger pointing,  
just to lose track of us.  
Up a building, a single light stare  
spotifies us into the night:  
if looks could kill.

Everything may be washing over.  
But we hachure.

# D. A. Spruzen

## Sphinx Dust

Crumbling from the day of his birth  
he sucks salt from the ancient sea bed.  
Skin cells flake and slough, become  
sphinx dust under our feet, Sphinx dust,  
a fine ash that runs through our hands.  
Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, all in turn  
bolstered its flanks with mighty slabs  
to hide the furrows, hold old age at bay.

I will not wither, will stand my ground.  
Almost finished, they deserted me  
and the sacred machine that is Giza.  
Starving men could not fulfill their pledge.

Who desecrated that regal visage?  
Old myths accuse Napoleon, but he  
did not cause it, nor his men, his guns.  
Another wrecked the noble nose,  
leaving chisel marks, a recent find.  
An ancient historian wrote of the loss  
three hundred years earlier, before  
Napoleon planted his boot on Egypt's neck.

My beauty flawed, my body again hidden  
they marveled still, fought for my favor  
in strange tongues with strange weapons,  
made me famous in strange lands.

Modern man brought to light this crime,  
perhaps caused by a furious grudge,  
perhaps left unpunished, we find no record.  
If punished, a terrible death for such affront,  
entry to the afterlife forbidden by Horus,  
who in the way of old gods would demand a  
terrible martyrdom, a tortured death,  
no understanding or care for the why.

Cruel rogue, how you screamed,  
where was your zealotry then?  
Where was that foreign god  
too powerless to save you?

And only a Pharaoh could command  
the sacrifice of thirty men, and lions, too,  
buried there, condemned to serve him forever.  
Did all thirty men's hearts believe his creed  
enough to give their lives, to suffer so?  
Did they watch as each in his turn  
came to his brutal end, made his  
untidy trek toward eternal servitude?

I saw them die, quick and clean.  
They serve us well, these spirits  
living in men who try to save me from  
sands and fumes and crowds.

The gods of the pyramids have the  
heads of animals and bodies of men.  
The Sphinx has the body of a lion  
for strength and courage—like  
Ruti, the old double-lion god—  
and the head of a Pharaoh  
for intelligence and cunning.  
But which Pharaoh, we ask?

I am the soul of Pharaoh.  
thousands worshipped my cult,  
built smaller sphinxes, though  
none that eclipsed me.

Khufu? The face mirrors his only statue,  
a tiny figure housed in Cairo still, has the  
same square face, sour mouth, staring eyes,  
a beardless Pharaoh like the Sphinx. But no,  
we found telling grooves, where once a  
beard was set, found stolen shards in London.  
Did it suffer the same mundane fate as the nose,  
was the royal beard smashed by a vandal?

My cobra too, my sacred emblem gone  
from my great headdress that  
Tutmose painted bright in the colors  
of rainbows I loved and dreamed.

Some say it is Khafre, Khufu's son, who maybe  
favored his father. He built his pyramid nearby.  
The sun shines in a holy line from  
the Sphinx to the pyramid, whence Khafre's  
mummy traveled from temple to mausoleum.  
The debate rages on, Khufu or Khafre?  
Do the old ghosts laugh at our conceits,  
this perceived identity crisis of mummies?

At the equinox our shadows merge,  
Khafre's pyramid and mine,  
a time my spirit wanders the land.  
We do not laugh, we judge.

The enigma snagged dreams of poets and kings,  
seated the Sphinx deep in mankind's lore.  
But what was this icon to its builders,  
the masses who dug a massive trench,  
leaving a great knoll to be carved, reverently?  
Alternate striae of hard stone and soft,  
striped now, soft blocks more worn than the hard,  
eaten by eons of fierce desert winds.

Windstorms abrade me, devour me,  
the hungry desert lies in wait to  
swallow what she is loathe to excrete,  
though what she swallows she saves.

One hundred carvers toiled for three years,  
chipping away with copper tools heated  
to red-hot then beaten smooth and cooled,  
also stone hammers bound to wooden staves.  
They say it took a million hours and an army  
of forgers and fetchers and carriers,  
minions who broke their backs without question,  
an act of devotion to their god-king.

They worshipped us, died for us,  
not slaves, men well tended and fed,  
privileged and skilled, chosen,  
honored by sacred duty.



The Sphinx Temple had twenty-four pillars,  
one for every hour of the day, statues, too.  
It hosts the sun risen in the East as it sails to the West,  
its rays an arrow pointing the way to Khafre's tomb.  
Old symbols, old ideas Egypt's sons cast off,  
ideas that ran their course, cults that ran  
through the hands of time like Sphinx dust,  
replaced by other compelling dogmas.

My temple a ruin, I still harness the sun  
for Giza's sons so they may live for ever.  
I will always stand here and watch,  
watch and wait for our rebirth.

What did it mean to those who came later,  
when the old kingdom collapsed and  
Giza became an abandoned cemetery,  
forgotten, its glory mislaid, somehow?  
The desert almost swallowed the Sphinx,  
buried it up to its neck for one thousand years.  
Men left it unfinished, forgot their promise,  
left their sacred icon to the desert's embrace.

She hoards and saves, keeps her prey  
veiled from the eyes of lustful men  
like a harsh father keeps his virgin  
daughter pure for her next owner.

A stela now sits between the lion's paws  
and tells of the hero who unearthed it.  
Pharaoh's masons carved grand edicts into stone  
when he wished to speak for posterity  
as heroes and kings and prophets love to do.  
Tutmose ordered shielding walls, merciless mining,  
another heavy labor for a Pharaoh's reward,  
a promise of life eternal, but for him alone.

My shadow offered a young hunter respite  
from Ra's fiery fury. I lulled him to sleep,  
entered his dreams, promised him the world.  
Tutmose heard, obeyed. He gave me my due.

Horus sits enthroned on the horizon of the  
Stela of Tutmose, guarding the entrance to  
the afterlife, the eternal life promised to one  
who saved this monument, already ancient,  
saved the Sphinx from the hell of obscurity.  
Tutmose unveiled its leonine majesty and  
colored it bright, brought it to light, Egypt, too.  
A smear of blue paint still clings to one ear.

I led them to Khafre's ebon statue  
long slumbering in the sands.  
They see it now, they see our likeness,  
the shining bright beauty that was ours.

The riddle of the Sphinx lies in plain sight.  
Man, beast and god, a divinity  
carved from the desert, lost and found,  
a vast monument to conceited splendor  
built by common men's labor,  
and still turning to dust,  
the grand faith that spawned it  
demoted to quaint curiosity.

Common men always adored  
me, but they are inconstant.  
Immured again, so few cared,  
men's hearts do not listen.

Giza was verdant once, before  
the rains swept south, north, south.  
The old kingdom scoured by wet and dry,  
now only dry. The rains may turn again  
to the north, rest here awhile, and wait.  
Will Pharaoh come again? And then,  
will his gods demand their due?

Watch Re at the equinox and see how  
My paws hold his offerings to Horus.  
Can you stop time forward or back?  
Many tried and failed, all cunning, no wit.

Listen to me! Preserve me, save yourselves.  
Our time will pass through here again,  
Our soft green land will beckon back the ancients.  
I watch and wait, for patience and time  
are on my side.

# Post Scriptum

## Patrick White (1948 – 2014)

### IS IT BLACK? IS IT GREY? IS IT COLOURLESS?

Is it black? Is it grey? Is it colourless? Does it  
dwindle or expand? Exhume me, does it stand?  
Rest here, rest. Rest. Skull on an arm of flesh.  
Do your dreams have eyes? Do they cry over nothing  
when you lie? Squeezing pimples on a corpse,  
how wise. Funny man with a lot of sky in your smile.

Seated in a different chair, are you an interview  
or a guest? Is there a throne, a swing, a chest?  
Black boxes of earrings, consciousness, quest?  
So many have asked so sweetly, do you know yet?

Window let me look at you in the magazine,  
tender twin. Where do you want to hang the star?  
Will it gleam? Is it chipped? Is it wine  
for dead candles? Is there any longing left  
in what you find? Great earth, humble me.  
Great sky, touch. Less is more. Is that more  
much? The sun, the sun, the sun at the trapdoor moon.

Doorway without a face are you awake yet?  
Is it like this when why has differences with farewell?  
Go the distance. Go the nearness. Are you lost?  
Find me, find me, find me, there you are again.  
Is it frost on the hay? Seers in the rain? Insane. Asylum.  
Briefly forever is the hour wrong? Can you tell?

When a poem breaks, is there always an end?  
Breathe in. Breathe out. Hold it there. You did  
just fine. Misplaced telescope, do you shine?  
Do the book and the candle and the flower  
mean more to the boy in you than the man?

Are you renewed? Are you aged by what  
you didn't understand? Is it a long way to the exit  
on the way back? Is there an old man in a wheelchair  
of birdless facts? Is there a cross in the crutch

of the lie? Great sea warn me. Great sea rush.

Is it only the memory of a seastar and hermit thrush?  
Have you learned to drink the medicine  
that kills you into life? Is it sweet, is it dark  
as a syringe with a new moon in it  
with a wicked tooth? Does it smile, does  
it smile, does it smile upon the truth  
like a lost key to the skeleton with the crooked youth?

Use me, use me, use me like a hammer and a flute.  
A dragon and a waterlily, a desperate shout.  
Mystic rattlesnakes in the firepits of the rose  
do you hiss at what you've created, do you repose?  
Great light, cover me. Great dark, disclose.

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## COMMENTS & SUBMISSIONS

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