

hobart park

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Evening in the front garden on Davis Road, summer-time 1997. I recall receiving a electric shock from a cattle wire on a farm near Bremen in the summer of 1960. How the German farmers all laughed at the American jig!

Enclosed across the road Janet's horse

looks. I am just watering a bush.
With the drought we may be too late with this hose.

It rustles a smooze. Together we harm
lessly remember the electric fence on Herr Höft's farm

which rippled electrical experience
through my innocent arm. Hilarious

opined my farmmates in cattle. I lept
sure as hell. I did a devil's jig, then blept

a faint ha-ha. The Germans laughed. No way
I'd die far from accustomed fields of play.

-Naw. That was 1960. You, beauteous
mare, were not even born. A lovely smooze

she rustles. Whinny thou about the juice
in the wire that keeps you enclosed? Loose

ly you stroll the paddock. Isn't it strange
how still electricity wants us, tame,
in order, arranged?

REBECCA HAZELTON

We were standing knee high in sharp-edged grasses,
your back to my chest: warm.
Cicadas' calls scraped a drunken round.

No light. The border between lake and land
one band of black bleeding into another.
Something shifted then: the insects hushed, the lake disappeared.

Disoriented, you panicked, pushed me aside,
running for light, our waiting car,
definition. I followed, running,

stumbling in the dark, and hit a park bench
with my bare shin, hard. I limped
to find you waiting by the car,

uselessly tugging the door handle, frantic.
Angry with you, too sick
with love to say it, I let you in

and drove you home, ignoring
my pain but not your panic.
I stroked your hair and soothed you.

Virginal and skittish, you permitted nothing
but the lightest of touches, brief embraces,
kisses cut short at the first sign of quickening

breath. I pretended respect,
when in fact I feared exposing
my own fumbling. How could I ever

unbutton your crisp white shirt, perfectly ironed,
knowing that the clasps of your bra
would defeat me?

But before you left, you clutched me,
and kissed my lips raw with insistence.
Dazed in your departure, I touched my leg, my lips.

My Father's Boss

REBECCA HAZELTON would pull up to the curb of my highschool
at the barest promise of rain, to see me
home safely. He drove a small blue sports car, the
radio loud
with the song all the girls hummed in class.

One brown arm lazily steered,
banded with a silver watch
and furred with dark curling hair.
The other helped him talk.
His cigarette, ash heavy,
was always ready to set the ceiling on fire.

Our talk would turn
from my tests to his accelerating divorce,
and I learned about the photographic opportunities
to be found in strip clubs (the lighting
is quite unique) and the money he'd have
after he was free. Till then, he could only
buy me sodas, candy bars, but just wait,
he'd show me my worth.
I was curious to know.

If the rain let loose before
we reached my house, he'd downshift to third,
take the curves slowly, carefully,
while I snuggled down in the seat,
enjoying the ride,
one foot on the dashboard,
my skirt sliding unbidden up my thighs.

Morning

LUKE O'HARA

*"since feeling is first
who pays any attention
to the syntax of things
will never wholly kiss you;*

*wholly to be a fool
while Spring is in the
world..."*

ee cummings

My bed is too small for us. Strewn in sleep like
the clothes on the floor, you've claimed most of it for your-
self. But I don't mind. The skin of my back tensed against
the tackboard wall, I'm sinking into a canyon, sliding off.

Your face holds the light. Holds it how a painting
holds the painter, in awe. I'm watching the sunrise with-
out the window. The lines of smeared azure from last
night have crept down your eyelids, to your fluttering
sickle-thorn lashes.

Only the birds and I are awake. They litter the air
with odd squeaks and chirps. But I am quiet.
Museumquiet, as if I stood alone, past the silken cords
close enough to touch the statue.

I crouch in the crevice of the bed, drinking your
hair. It is long, running straight and wide. An old river
through the wide banks of my crumpled sheets. As it
begins to lighten, a gentle gauze, an easy amber ember
floats around your face. Sun on water, playing on ripples
and tangles, the illusion of movement. Flowing.

I push the hair from your eyes, with the tips of
my fingers. Soft. One is elusive, silken, illuminated
spider-spun strand.

I think you are almost smiling, the way I think
cats are sometimes smiling. Your lips almost curled in a
shallow crescent pink moon.

(continued from page 5)

In our haste, we must have neglected the covers. Letting kisses flow over the sheets like music over water. And now we lie uncovered, unconscious (well, at least you), unclothed, unmasked. Naked to the dawn.

You breathe. Rising like the sun must be now. Your arms surround your breasts. One shadowed the other sundrenched, like Atlas holding sky from earth. Up and back, in and out, but I am always slipping down.

I know I haven't slept.

Your skin is a poem. Unchained, flowing, bare, sleek, exposed. It shakes with the breeze. It flattens and then rises gentle like water beading.

I rub your arm and shoulder, to keep you warm. Your skin rises a little into my finger prints, hills push up some geological shift. My leg is almost between the bed and wall.

I want you closer, but I'm just slipping.

I can do nothing ... nothing else.

Neck extended like a thin waterbird toward a mirror.

fragile grace in awkward movement

My lips on yours like things that fit.

Your lips crisp and cool, in the dawn. They quiver a little under mine, and I feel that I'm falling.

Restoration

LUKE O'HARA

When it rains in the Gobi desert,
the staccato drops wake green from subterranean sleep,
as a tomb raider opens a chest of century-dark emeralds.
An air of musky antiquity escapes
the lost color, old smells still preserved,
trapped in windless tombs.

Green excavates its revenge,
splitting the sand with roots.
It bulldozes under to find long tracks of grass
like jade roads under the dunes.

In the cool dew night, green steals the beige
desert's livery and stains it, soils the banner with blades.
The ghosts of green-eyed Titans roam unfettered
for a night, reprieved from mythical defeat.

Green gulps lakes before they're deep, desperate
like fire ravaging fuel. The pools burn off
in a few hours, showing no trace of fish or frogs.
Just the tail of an old malachite salamander,
burrowing through dry-flaked mud, following the water

JEREMY CAMPBELL

Here, far from everyone, the sun beats
upon your hair and rouses its honey,
and we're reminded of our lives
by the summer's last cicada from its bush
and the siren that shrills its deep alarm
over the thunderous plain. O voices
seared by the air, what do you want?
Trouble still rises from the land.

But here's what the thunder did not say:
in a summer of dead wood, when
we were most beautiful in this life,
there was a hiccup, a time to decide
what had died, to name and mourn it.
We had a moment when direction didn't
matter and the voices didn't care. Once,
when we touched the tapestries of night
and spoke.

*I am become the last believer in words.
I can fix you with a host of names,
degrees of names, pieces of names,
subtle plays on knowness.
Far away from the city, there is a rim
without a lid upon which we dance.
I tell myself that I can still see you
being born into the heat and death,
steel and conversation.
To ask life of these words is to risk
being crushed. The power of stone,
filament lights cover like grave blankets
Flickering in the auburn sky.*

The gray summer is behind us
the hour of the firing squads
say goodbye
forgetting
you, soft, say,
Now we can say the simple things
simply once more

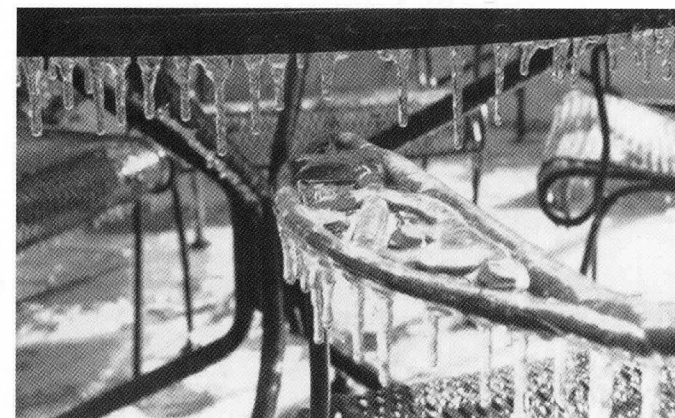
Like a stone,
hard, hot earth
between man
and what shines.



photography:

(top) LAMAR CLARKSON

(bottom) BEN BUXTON



Seen

JEREMY CAMPBELL

One eye, they say, looks inward
while the other scans the world. One eye
examines the self's invisible wanting.
The other scurries over the horizon,
connecting one place to another,
uniting warm stations, obligations, and restrooms.

They say you can't ever look someone in the eyes,
you'll only ever look with one, only ever see one staring back.
Left, right, left, right, you'll have to choose:
The bridge of the nose is a dangerous place for cross-eyed only.

Green, however,
is not a color I do well with.
It catches too much of me
nervousness, greed, envy, and hope
grinds me down to a fine powder
you gather with cupped hands.
I lift a finger for your epicanthic folds,
for the lines of life your laughter makes.
In a total ocular, emerald fire I am reduced;
Surely you see the fixed image of falling.

They say you can't ever look someone in the eyes.
I ask if they've ever tried.

Dreams

ALEXANDRA POPOFF

In a dream I can write poetry.
I twist and twine the words
perfectly
and can't wait to wake up to write them down.
But sometimes the morning
has something else to offer
and my verses get lost
like a dream
impossible to describe yet still so vivid.
I can remember the dead weight of
my fuzzy numb limbs
and think of how I make love to the wall
while my roommate makes love to her
boyfriend.
And I remember my dreams too
but never the poetry that I write
while my mind touches those
unknown dimensions.

Shed Skins

BROOKE SCHAFFNER

I remember plucking the shed skins
of locusts from pine bark
in the yard in Georgia
my mother, my father, and I
chasing each other with
funny hollow insects that clung
to our sweaters with sticky legs
in the days when screams
were followed by laughter.

I remember waking to dead fireflies
in the days when I believed
I could jar magic
to keep on my nightstand.
Since then so many have promised
a curtain of fireflies
lowering on a lake after sundown,
a sparkling roman candle
grand finale,
but I do not know that kind of ending.

Now you stand naked with love
offering me your shed skin
and I ponder it, I do
but I can guess at the things
your skin is heavy with,
some of your insides
being the same as my own.

Maybe it is only the thought
of how perfectly
your skin might fit over mine,
the thought that once shed
and slipped over my own,
it would make a jar of sorts,
the thought of its emptiness come summer.

Seventeen years since I have seen fireflies
and I am still not ready.
I have not yet run
to the point where laughter
follows the screaming,
where the weight of my own skin
lifts into the lightness
of breath and pulse.

Klopstock at Woodstock

MARK McCULLOH

Since Dali's dead I don't know what to do.
What skating prompter, destroyer of the national glue
Unfurls its flag, her flag, in gusts of change?
While bombers ride shotgun across the amber range?
Meanwhile amidst the skaters at the lake,
We pray the Lord one final time our souls to take.
The golden Prusso-Poet hail to thee: "O Klopstock!"
Contrast the anthem's parody at Woodstock
And turning, dance that little Hitler jig beside the train
Kick up your boot, your sandals, and refrain:

Our rhetoric of protest sets us free
to use the most extreme hyperbole
Now that Klopstock
Has graced Woodstock, Woodstock, Woodstock, Woodstock!
We continue to progress in our morass
Like Daumier's snails encircled, head to ass.
Since Dali's dead I wonder what to do.
Despairing, Klopstock, dare I turn to you?

YASAR ISHAQ

retreating into a shell--the proud loner
unoccupied for so long
where daydreams and memories are external hints
threatened with uncertainty, she keeps her head

Salman Rushdie is snoring

inside

reading another ghazal he wrote for her
Allah blows it away, far from her tresses
remembering your cursive handwriting on my purple
Ludhiana turban
unraveling the Bilal, alphabetically
his kisses wait for her breasts; her eyes await his arrival
some time later, you would call me the Purple Sikh
flickering your paisley wisps near the great crowd
people would call you
the new Amerikan girl-an IPO babe-the net sweetheart
with you it was always like this
with my *Begum*, it was different
resting her head on a cushion, imaging *tete a tete*
it would have to be an unusual fuck
you sort of get sick of the Amerikan routine after awhile
no woman will ever love a man you tell yourself
she adores the ghazal and must admit
my Petrushka, my stoned statue
waiting like Ha Jin
it replies, "*Sooraj ki har kiran tera naam Nabilaji*"
just as *Mumbai hai meri jaan* for the
Soda—Pop—Gin—n—Tonic—Haji Ali—wallah
you are a timid God, we now know

he knows Moors are for Moors only
sunflowers do not grow in the Thar desert
she speaks of there being many alternate human
beings
he sighs, knowing that each and every Pakistani
lives in misery

(look earlier in your pasts)

unaffectionate distancing between the two: disassemblage

what did I bring you to?

Ondaatje says, "you were the only one who would dare tease me
and I am a man who fasts until I see what I want"

both walk away in opposite directions
the ghazal of Old Delhi falls to the ground and its indifference bellows

"too soon we assume and forget that things may not have
changed, so"

tucked safe in between those colours of a new found mother
the armour and earrings of the Mahabharat do not protect her
loneliness hides behind the closed shutters of the
Sunset Boulevard Lady
who does not share her sambar and rice
what should I tell you about the bend in the river
remember the old story of the king whose soul rested in his parrot
the lines of mehndi smell the paint near the paintbox
like the beautiful moment before the last sigh
do not elude yourself because of The God That Failed
listen
to the winds resting on the road
see the tribalism
and try to understand misery
in the end we begin again

(for Nabilaji and our misunderstandings of love)

Kachhua is Hindi for Tortoise.

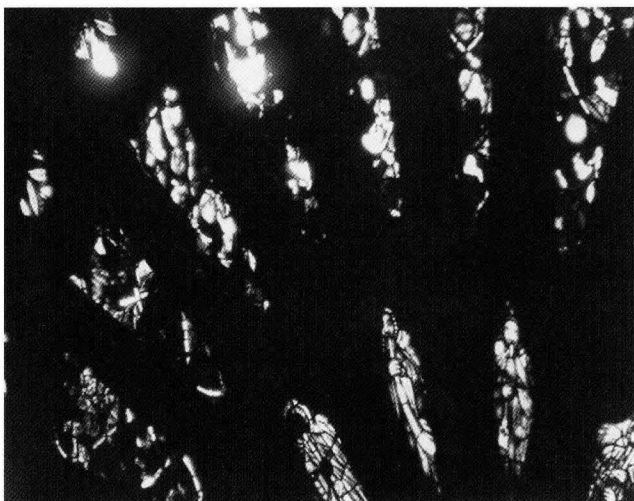
"*Sooraj ki har kiran tera naam*" is taken from a ghazal sung by Punkaj Udhas and
translates:

Each ray of sunlight radiates within your name.

Begum is Urdu for wife.



photography: (top) ANNA JUDY
(bottom) AMBER WORRELL



Noah's Wife

The stench stings my nostrils—
horse shit mixed with dog piss.

We sail in circles, heavy with cargo:
beasts bobbing in a vast ocean.
He wanders, muttering incoherences,
hoping for land—
sending the dove proves futile.
Forty days and nights burn
as candles drip.
We're both weary from retching overboard.

ANNE STANCIL

I deserve to be swallowed up,
drowned with the rest of creation.
I do not believe this new knowledge:
humanity will not emerge
from my womb.
I cannot summon the strength
to walk on the soggy earth.
I will stay in the boat,
and row home.

Hagar

You stand in the corner,
a sly smirk twisting your lips.
Do you enjoy watching your husband
move in and out of me?
My belly ripe with him instead of yours,
you kick me out after he shakes off—
you don't enjoy my company.

I will not give this child to you:
Slavery does not shackle my womb.

I will dislodge this baby,
emptying myself, leaving it
for the vultures.
I will not offer my eggs
as a consolation prize.

I peel layers of bark from an olive branch,
refining a sharp point.

The Ruined Barn

ALAN MICHAEL PARKER

The wind is from the north;
The barn door faces south.
The boards have spit their nails
And hang like open mouths.

Swallows stage their play
In swoops and whorls and falls.
Through the holes in the walls
Thread thin soliloquies.

The drama starts each dawn
To end each dusk again.
Till winter comes,
Or chance, or violence.

Or another play is staged:
Mennonite men and boys
Tackle beam and board
To load their skids with wood.

But not today.
Today belongs to the wind,
The only actor on the stage.
The only one in place.

Were we ever here?
The wind said go away.
The swallows huddled somewhere.
The barn door swayed.

Untitled

DAVID RUSHTON

the surging ache quivers
within this wine-consciousness
when we are apart
you don't know
how I shake
from the joy of desire
the nectar that drips
from my eyes
is the only release
from how tightly my body grips itself

face to face
why do I not cry then?

I saw where we
will make love
the gently flowing cascade
if not you
the lover behind your eyes

my whole being
is aroused
trembling from the thrusts
of your looks and your
soft, erotic voice that
throbs through my
eardrums to
the
center
--I think you said six words about
leaving a message

did I hear this through your letter
a year ago
the liminality
that I expressed to you today
that you said was like
knocking on a door
from the inside
not knowing the eternity overflowing
around me
is you

I hope I can laugh about this soon

Dame Fillander

SCOTT GEIGER

A Senior Common Room Dinner

'I've known many pleasures in my life,'
 She said, 'but nothing delights quite like it.
 To have one's organs rearranged with a good stiff-'
 Mr. Moresy, the dean, chokes, needs to adjust
 His bow-tie, attend some hair that is not there
 While old Dame Fillander sips her bulb of port.
 'By a good book!' she announces, drunk,
 A rill of lusty purple running from worn red lips.

He says, stammers, slurs, 'I've read all the big books
 Of the last ten years. Do you find finding the
 Famous inferior in their theme-' 'No!
 But when was the last time you let a story ravage
 You and the words ring in your ears like thrusting
 Of church bells?' Mr. Moresy is quite alarmed but quite
 Afraid to retire, to quit this lecherous bitch who
 Threatens to skewer with a weapon's leer.

But poor Mr. Fillander, a sprite of a man, a man given
 To sampling - if rumours be true - his stock of women's scent
 And a dainty blouse or two, saves poor Moresy as
 Dame Fillander takes her post-dinner cigar.
 'We've been speaking of books and things,' she reveals.
 'Right,' he says, 'I'm weary and ready to go.' 'And so
 we shall but not before I bid farewell! Mr. Moresy,
 'Twas a pleasure we must explore even more.' Then at the door
 She turned to say, 'Mr Moresy, come to tea, round four
 And stay to talk of our leisurely reading.'

Now Mr. Moresy, heart speeding, takes from the bowl
 His desert of grapes and a banana; but could not eat
 For the sake of his soul nor recall a novel worth reading.

... from 'The Dogs of Negril'

SCOTT GEIGER

That night I studied myself in the mirror for quite some time.
 I studied my posture, my smile, the way I spoke with my hands. My
 eyes were the same shade of cobalt as Doc's. My lips were just as
 thin. My cheeks could easily shrink and my body collapse, implode
 with unbearableness of failure. I would not speak so colloquially,
 use less oily language.

Doc decided that we should walk to Mariposa's. It was a
 gentle evening: the clouds had broken in mid-afternoon and violet
 light seeped through the trees. The heavens were decreating them-
 selves, inviting darkness.

I don't know how he managed to pick up a pair of Vegas
 Robainos. I suspected another friend that he might've touched for a
 favor. Doc displayed the cigars like artifacts. Their length, width,
 musk should be studied carefully, appreciated, he said. I suddenly
 found myself thinking of Hans Castorp smoking his Maria Mancini's;
 he too had been a captive of sorts. When I glanced back at Doc he
 was, again, almost transparent. The man was not my father, he was
 not even a man: He was less of a man than a complex code or sym-
 bol.

I felt the weight of my own secret history upon my shoul-
 ders. If I came to Doc's end, what would it have been for? All the
 moments of grace and glory counted for what if I was to die bank-
 rupt and crippled in a place like Jamaica? The thought of Anna and
 the cosmic beauty that she represented waged war against these
 fears. If Doc was a figure of defeat, Anna was blond winged-victory.
 If I could find her again, somewhere in Negril, all the stars in the
 night sky would wink conspiratorially at me.

We approached the bend in the road before Xtabi when the
 first shouts reached our ears. A crowd was gathered at the side of
 the road. Two rastas had cornered a dog against the fence between
 the bar and the street. The smells of deep-frying and burger patties
 were in the air after the morning's rains.

'Gwahn! Gweh!' one of the rastas shouted, feigning to kick
 the dog.

'Get outta m'bluidclot fais, 'ell doag!'

When I was thirteen, I spent a summer with Doc. We often
 spent late nights on the beach with another expatriate, a black man
 called Mr. Shanney. Doc would play the guitar, and Shanney, his
 drums and harmonica. One night I wandered off while they played
 around a fire. While I was looking up at the stars, my neck pulled

impossibly far back, a dog came up wagging his tail. He sniffed my shin and nudged it with his face, leaving a warm slobber along my leg, and he was happy to be led over to where the men were playing. I told the dog to sit, and he obeyed. The music stopped, and the men stared. He was a mongrel, a mix of terriers it seemed. Sniffing and whimpering, he repeatedly smeared his face with his tongue. There was blood crusted around his jowls, and it was still streaming from the hollowed-out sockets of his eyes. Doc shooed him off with swipe, and took off his shirt to clean the blood and mucous from my shins. Dog's are despised in Jamaica; the objects of cultural hatred, they face the machete or worse.

The dog at Xtabi was a proud German shepherd whose fur was caked with filth. He seemed willing to do whatever it took to get a meal. He merely wagged his tail hopefully in the face of the patois screams. Even when the net came down, a weighted fishing net, he only paced faster. The taller rasta in a white tank top dealt him a sharp kick to the ribs. Behind the dog, his companion had pulled the wicked curve of machete from his belt. In the evening light the blade glimmered as it arced, striking the dog's hindquarters; and the crowd cheered. When the net was snatched up, the dog finally screamed as it was pulled from his feet. He squirmed and yelped, trailing blood across the pavement as the rastas dragged him to the short wall overlooking the rocky, dark waters. The sound that came then from the net was remarkably human that it occurred to me that pain was one of the few universals that made borders porous. Ceremoniously, the net and dog as one were cast into the Caribbean Sea.

Another cheer went up and men bought beers and offered congratulations for the heroes. I think Doc may have known what was running through my mind, the cruelty of the parallels that I was drawing. Could he have known that I was so sensitive to living metaphors?

We'll be late for dinner if we stand here any longer, David,' he said. Doc began walking. I looked again at the trail of blood and the rasta who was brandishing his machete as a magician might wield his wand. Life has its own techniques, grand weapons. 'Life' was a misnomer for the malevolence that hunted Doc, and which I believed meant to prey upon me. The urgency of Anna became all the more apparent.

Two Lines from Spenser at Home

JAMES EVERETT

Come then, come soon, come sweetest death to me,
ease the hours by unfolding this used mind.
Sharp be thy wounds, but sweet the med'cines be.

On the porch I study the wind chime through a tree.
It's a sovereign rhyme.
Come then. Come soon. Bring sweetest death to me.

Struck in the bedroom I go to the kitchen to bleed.
Trailing you pick up an orange, tear off the rind.
Sharp be the wounds, but sweet thy medicines be.

You went to sleep, I noticed, without an apology.
I watch TV looking for a sign.
You come into the room like sweetest death to me.

Books are raged reaching for deeper psychology—
this search on paper for words I can't find....
Sharp be thy wounds, but sweet the med'cines be.

Words will eviscerate me over time.
I'll be spilt on the ground; the flies will nest in to dine.
Come then, come soon, come sweetest death to me.
Sharp be thy wounds, but sweet the med'cines be.

Waking

JAMES EVERETT

Start with metaphors. Begin. Try
to make sense of waking from dreams.
Find the familiar with touch:
warmth sleeps beside you.

Because an arm wants to close around a back, let it.
Let the tension slacken from muscles: feel heartbeats
slowing down.
Close eyes

when eyes sense sleep.
Begin again.

optional first line (how I wrote it)

Start with an image. Begin. Try

I think I like it better that way...