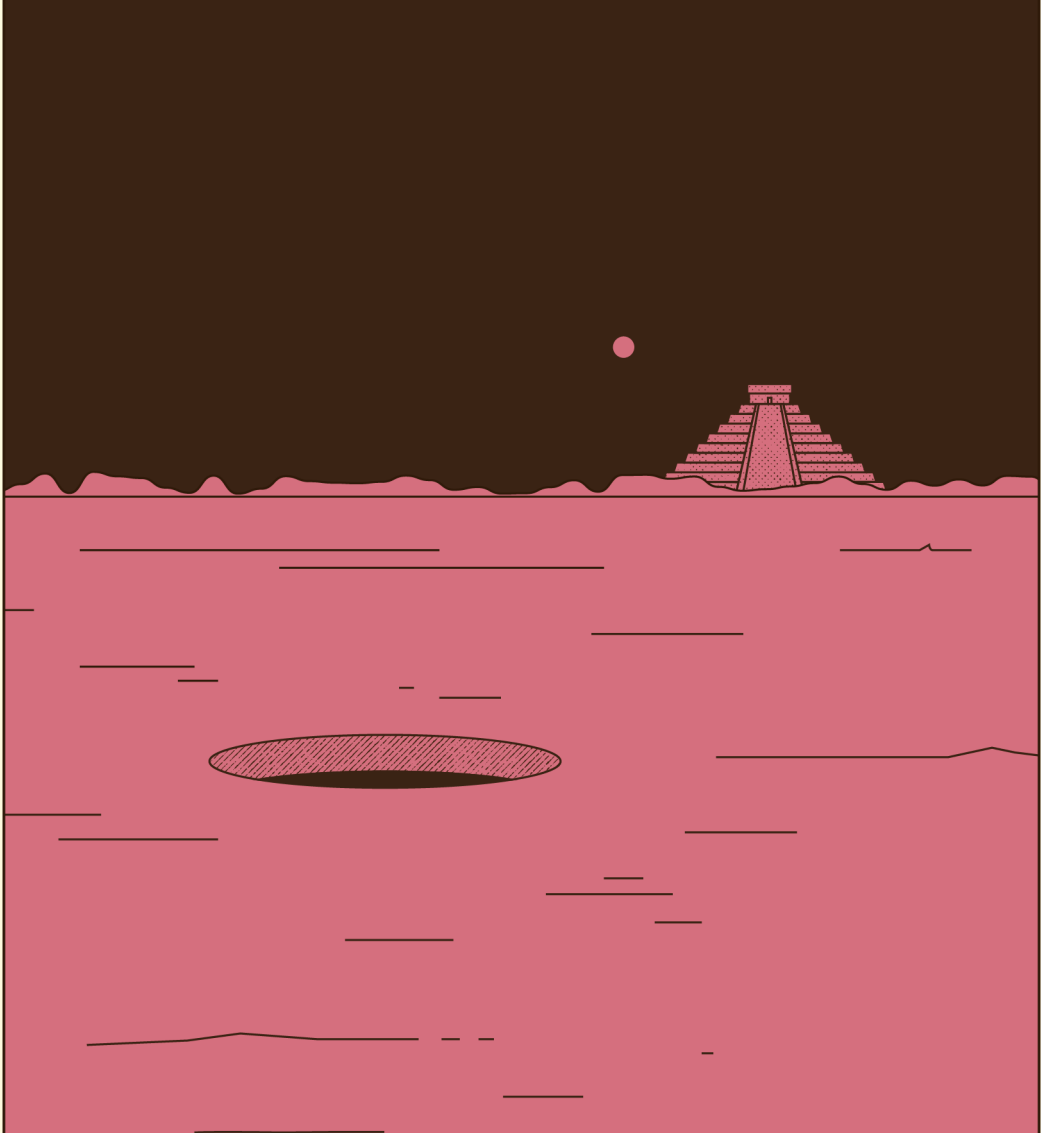


20.687708°N 88.567694°W

# HALF DAY MOON JOURNAL ISSUE N. 3



Featuring Artwork by Michaël David Conduit

Digital Edition

HDMJ

# HALF DAY MOON JOURNAL

## ISSUE N. 3 (AUGUST 2025)

*Featuring Artwork by Michael David Conduit*  
Edited by Joseph S. Aversano

### Contributors:

Michael David Conduit  
(front & back covers + pp. 3, 4, 16, 21, 32, 42, 58, 73, & 85);  
Epigraphs (p. 2); John Levy (p. 5); DS Maolalai (p. 10);  
Grant Hackett (p. 15); Bob Lucky (p. 17); Mark Young (p. 18);  
Tazeen Fatma (p. 22); Donna Fleischer (p. 23 );  
Sabine Miller (p. 25); Scott Metz (p. 27); Cherie Hunter Day (p. 30);  
Vidya Premkumar (p. 31); Judson Evans (p. 33);  
Jennifer Hambrick (p. 39); Sondra J. Byrnes (p. 43); Peter Yovu (p. 45);  
Grzegorz Wróblewski (p. 48); Richard Wallace (p. 59);  
Hafi Akar (p. 63); Randy Brooks (p. 64); Maryann Waterman (p. 65);  
John Phillips (p. 68); Vijay Prasad (p. 70); Orhan Veli (p. 71);  
Debbie Strange (p. 74); Ganesh R. (p. 75); Elmedin Kadric (p. 76);  
Shrehya Taneja (p. 77); Fred Jeremy Seligson (p. 78);  
David Kelly (p. 81); Shloka Shankar (p. 82);  
Michele Root-Bernstein (p. 83); Notes (p. 86)

Copyright retained by the authors.

Published by Half Day Moon Press  
[www.halfdaymoonpress.com](http://www.halfdaymoonpress.com)

Menlo Park ○ Ankara  
ISSN 2995-2700

*The Milesians afterwards built a temple, which exceeded in size all others, but it remained without a roof on account of its magnitude.*

— Strabo in his *Geography* [14.1.5]  
(trans. Hamilton & Falconer)

*When forth he went, the Princess by his side,  
To sacred place that had no roof to hide  
The glorious light of day, but walled so high  
That none could see within while passing by.*

— Alice Dixon Le Plongeon in her *Queen Moo's Talisman:  
The Fall of the Maya Empire* (1902)

[The translation of Strabo: cc by 3.0 us]



Introducing notable personages of  
The Kingdom of Chichen - Itza

MESOAMERICA

PRINCESS MOO

PRINCE AAC

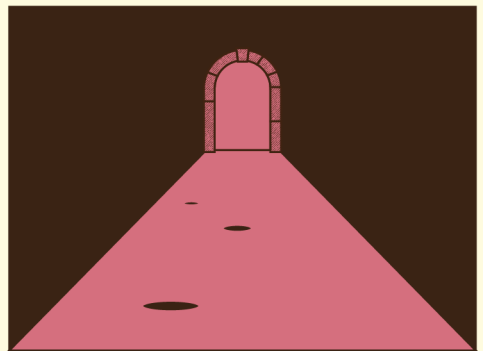
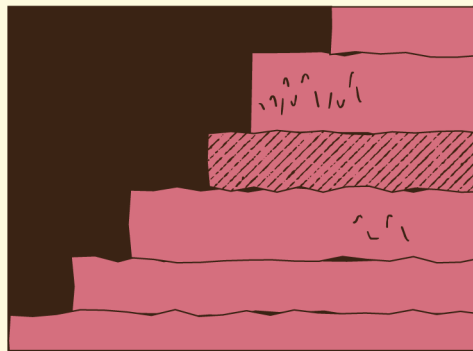
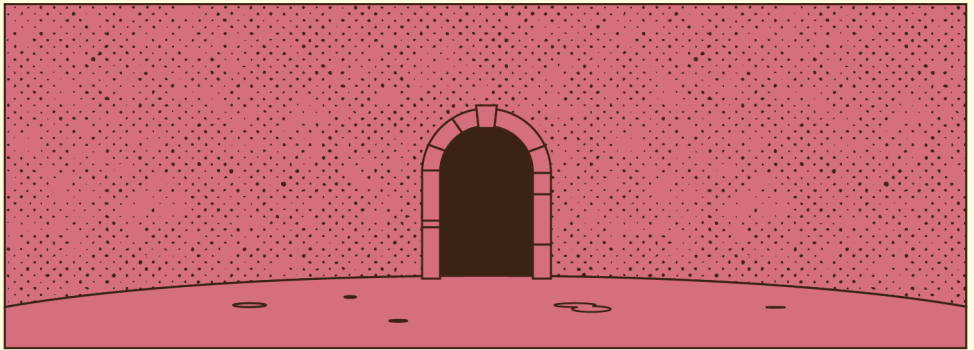
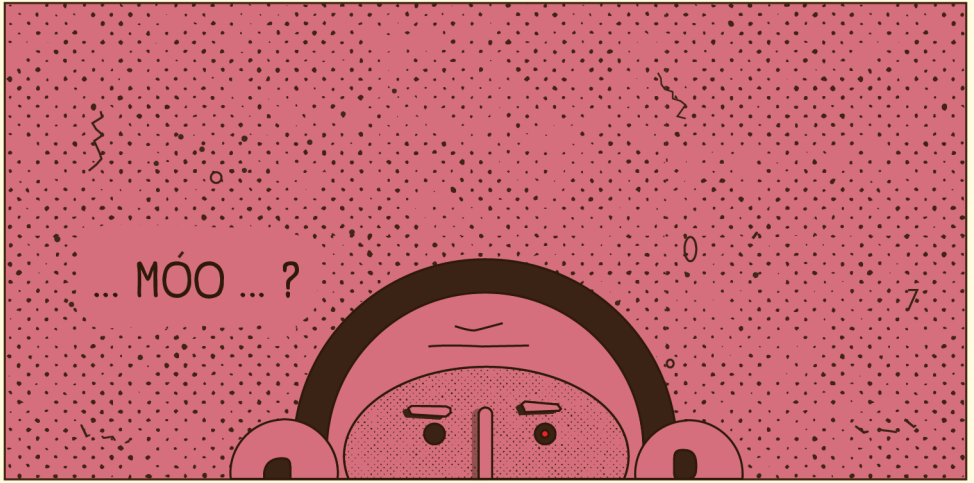
PRINCE COH

CHICHEN-ITZA

MAYA

CAN  
THE SOVEREIGN

HIGH PRIEST  
CAY



## John Levy

### Santōka enters

the dark room he has  
rented for the night (had to

beg for the money) and  
reaches  
his hand toward the light  
switch  
and the moment  
the light will fill the  
room  
hasn't happened  
yet he  
knows  
it will he  
waits  
waits  
wanting to feel the  
empty dark room  
first  
its  
corners  
its  
ceiling  
his  
moment  
his  
hand  
near the manmade  
switch

*for Dag T. Straumsvåg*

## Poem Beginning with a Line from Robyn Schelenz's Poem "Newborn"

"we die surrounded by blank space"

the blank space is annoyed with us  
for keeping it out so long

it does not have a good sense  
of time

it thinks we are always dying anyway  
if we don't let it in

it is proud of being blank and  
being all around us, rather than anywhere else

it believes it can have countless thoughts  
and yet continue to be blank at the same time

it believes it is immortal

## Note to Ken Bolton (March 2, 2025)

It is already 5:14 a.m. and what  
have I accomplished  
since getting up at 4:30? Is *zilch*

one of the perfect words?  
It sounds faster than *nothing*,  
seems to float, or hover, com-

pared to *Bolton*, and almost dance — airy —  
compared to *nullity*. “Johnny,” I don’t remember  
my mother asking me when I was

a child, “what have you accomplished  
in the last 44 minutes?” I didn’t

say, up there, in the ninth line, “my late  
mother,” as if I don’t have to, every time, say  
she is. I scratched my head after writing that, something

in my brain made a wordless command  
and I lifted my arm. Using  
words, I say, “Hello, Ken,” speaking out loud, because

I’m writing this and its  
sounds  
are one of my guides

as I reach the corner of *Zilch* and *Poem*,  
where I build a stanza, im-  
perfect, at 5:32, before dawn.

## Note to Grzegorz Wróblewski (April 7, 2025)

There's another rabbit  
who isn't thinking of you or me.

I can't even tell  
if it's a him or her.

It seems to think it disappears  
if it sees me and stops moving, as if

it is like a poem that no one  
wrote, not even God.

## My Late Father Loved Drawing a Tree

He told me that when he was a child he'd

make a very simple drawing of a tree  
and make it again and again, apparently

each time the tree made him

happy as he made it

appear. When he was my father I never saw him  
even doodle. (Mom doodled.) I like thinking of him

with his trees, his boyish line; he said he'd

create the tree without lifting the pencil.

I read books of poems slowly

I read poems  
slowly I read poems in-  
completely I read  
poems and read poems  
again the same ones  
aren't the same  
again I read

the poem I hadn't read the words  
didn't change  
you could say I changed  
you could say I had read and  
changed what I read as one  
becomes another

O

echo another loss

*JL*

Where are You?

sometimes the dog  
goes looking. she walks  
upstairs. goes to the kitchen.  
I sit, read a book and wait  
for her to find you. type  
a poem at the table. drink  
wine in the evening  
and read what you send me  
about your trip. outside  
the trains run with a sewing  
machine's regularity.  
your absence is a tune  
which I can't hear but can hum.

## About Bukowski as an Atheist

in poetry — god:  
a drunk beergut  
can smoke without  
blossoming cancer.  
a womaniser also,  
and made me discover  
the idea of poetry  
and then made me continue  
to type it long after  
his poems had stopped  
being interesting to me  
and other people's barely  
just did. I've been reading  
love is a dog from hell  
this evening. he built  
me and I don't  
believe in him.  
he is honest and dead.

## An Off-The-Rack Build

walking through dublin  
up george street  
around to the liberties.  
it's a glassy bright day —  
warm for january. I'm stopping  
at each of the second-  
hand clothing stores:  
oxfam, vision ireland,  
a thousand vintage  
thrifths. I have an eye  
for this sometimes.  
I like battered linens  
(get several generally)  
but it's hard to find trousers  
my size. it's odd — you would think  
that they'd go with the shirts.  
when I was fitting  
my wedding suit  
the tailor said to me  
I'm built with an off-  
the-rack body.  
he meant it as a compliment  
and I took it as one  
but it doesn't help  
shopping second-hand.  
the people who wear trousers  
and shirts in my size  
are apparently buried  
like pharoahs in beautiful pants.

## People in Barren Locations

a fade of green paint  
over dry wooden doorways.  
the thick flaking white  
of these whitewashed  
and falling down walls.  
and these islands in summer  
are nothing but come-upon  
waspnests and wandering,  
occasional goats in the furze.

the car draws by ferry  
on a dull weekend morning.  
the ferryman knows me  
and won't ask for change.  
later I'll stand him a pint —  
things have happened and never  
stop happening, repetition the spirit  
of islands — a feeling — cut by the sea  
from the rocks of their memory,  
and so, using habit instead.

a dementia'd mode  
of survival for people  
alone in these islands and barren  
locations. it's the same  
every time. these lives  
with small corners, these peach  
pits to biting and hard  
situations. islands cannot  
maintain history, watching

the water. the few trees  
which grew once don't grow  
any bigger than that. they stand  
in a shoelace knot, dwarven  
and clenched up and warped.  
twisted like knuckles  
on the hand of a bachelor  
farmer from a salt-barren island  
off the west coast of mayo,  
raising one middle finger to the wind.

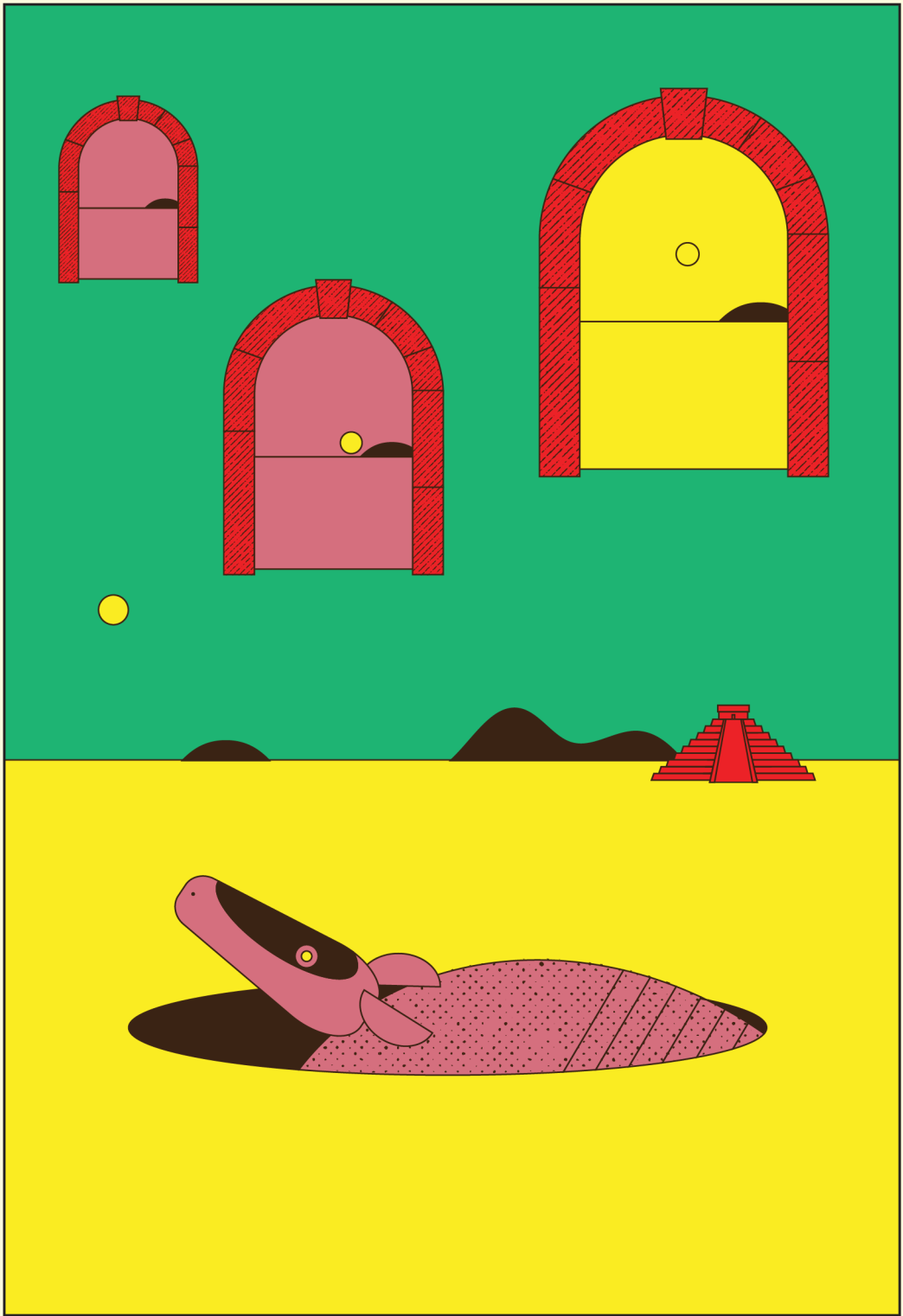
*DSM*

## Grant Hackett

gathered the freedom  
to be an anchor  
wandering among the waves

O

untied from its willows  
the river dies —  
stars graze on time in the desert sky



## Bob Lucky

### The Cartography of Hope

At dawn I went down  
to the river to play  
with water and thought  
I had misplaced  
an island or it had  
drifted off, the caprice  
of currents and beavers.  
The line that ran midstream  
on every map I had  
had disappeared,  
and every X was  
now a floating treasure.

Vestiges

I have almost forgotten the name of Alexander the Great's horse; confuse it with a strain of virulent bacteria or the narrow strait in Türkiye that separates Europe from Asia. I have never used it, nor am I ever likely to, but it's there, in memory, ready to be called upon if necessary. & I have almost forgotten the names of all the mountains in New Zealand's Southern Alps that are higher than ten thousand feet, but they sneak back into the conscious layers of my mind just before they escape forever. At the age of ten I could recite them as a party trick. Have done it again at an age that seems closer to ten thousand, just to show what a wonderful thing the mind is & how it manages to retain such useless crap whilst forgetting The Bosphorus & brucellosis, both of which I am more likely to need to know or use than Bucephalus &, in descending order of height,

Aoraki  
(Mt. Cook)  
Tasman  
Dampier  
Silberhorn  
Lendenfelt  
David's Dome  
Malte Brun Torres Teichelman  
Sefton Haast Elie de Beaumont  
La Perouse Douglas Peak & The Minarets.

## Vanity Speaking

Can't  
tell you anything  
you haven't  
heard  
before. Only  
change  
the timbre  
pitch  
accentuate  
some different  
syllables  
in the hope  
the telling  
might come  
a little closer  
to you. It  
is vanity  
speaking.

## The sight of

seen things going  
past in the air. Not  
even. The sound  
of. Enough. Com-  
prehension is akin to  
pregnancy. Not. Either.  
No need to know  
the exactitudes of  
shape, of surface  
texture. Half-guessed  
sufficient. Why try &  
grasp, catch hold of, be  
weighed down by?

## Intermezzo

Cellophane, plastic, train  
tickets that take you

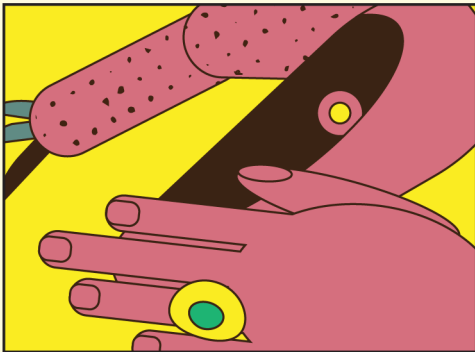
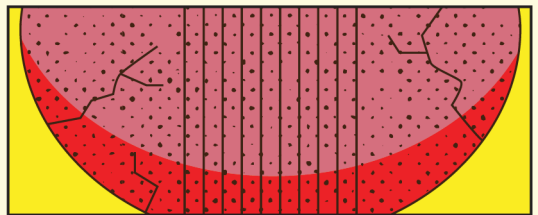
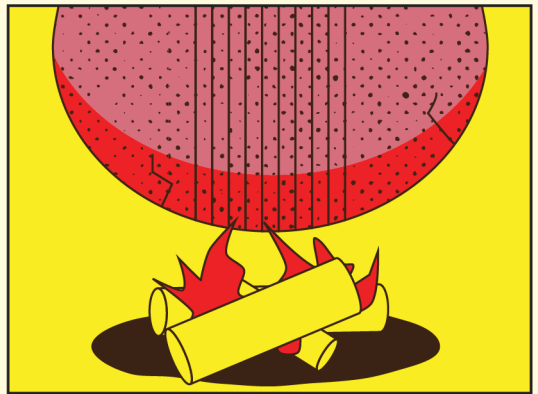
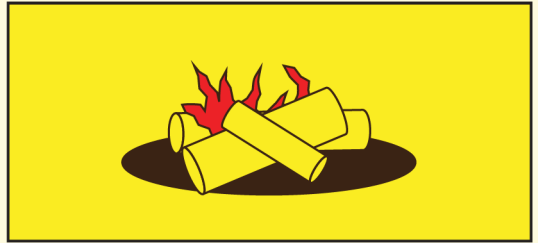
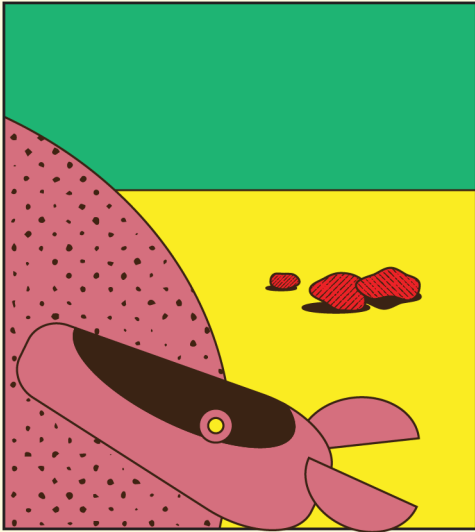
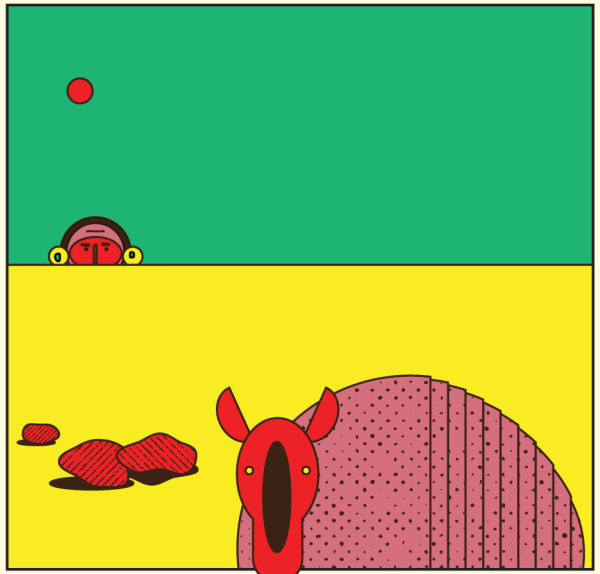
nowhere. Birds that  
carry the color of night

into your waking hours  
& pick away at the cracks

in the concrete, hoping  
some moisture might have

gathered there. What a  
distant sound the city has.

*MY*



Two Truths and a Lie

I feel safer today,  
away from the headlines  
and the honking streets —  
the prime minister didn't lie,  
the sun doesn't cast any shadow.

## Donna Fleischer

### Plainly

may this i  
speak plainly of  
your beautiful hands that  
with words of their own bring  
this life into motion

the way the sun does  
the light justice, the way  
the moon assures us  
of being behind the dark

## Meta-Morphose

chambered nautilus pulls  
its buoyant, gas-filled shell

upright atop  
an arterial blue Atlantic

swims those brief, coldwarm lights  
in split second time to turn and

turns to squid ink dark loss  
under sea foam caps' churn and rile

spirals its gradual  
descent with the day

into that unknowable inside  
pearl brighter than ever

*DF*

Sabine Miller

A Love Like This

Some people see with closed eyes; some skin cells detect light.

if I leak light  
will moons  
find me

## Fragments from Afield

A piece of antler under the strawberry moon, helicopters yielding to crickets, a five-year-old teaching me about king cobras and their “capes” —

I have nothing to say. I am encountering the limitations of a poetry of experience.

Or:

I took the oppressive thing out of my mouth, and now I have nothing to say.

...

I really have nothing to say. I am not the type of person who waits with an umbrella in the rainy driveway for you whom I've invited to dinner.

With what flavor of silence will I gift you?

Only dusk brings the wooden scent out of the wood.

*S Miller*

# Scott Metz

she's the unfinished part of the house where the butterfly is

O

t

here

eve

n

under

th

eir

petal

s

rain

a  
gain

the  
rain

is

again

the  
rain

is

rain

a  
gain

the cold. Of each  
cloud sinks. Into its  
own. Stone

O

a  
cloud

a r  
ave

n n

a

rr

ated  
cloud

nar

rated r

ave

n

*S Metz*

## Cherie Hunter Day

raven the loudest part of holy

○

whirlwind of a pragmatist first hummingbird

○

winter drafts through clefts & nomenclature

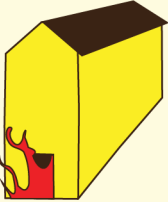
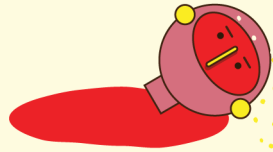
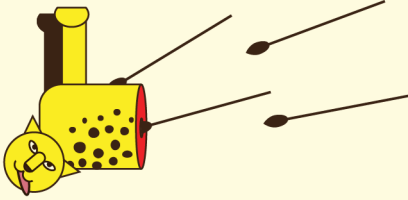
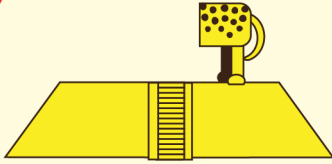
# Vidya Premkumar

## Borrowed Tongue

“Poetry is the main line. English is the train.”

— *Nikki Giovanni*

My mother tongue still hums —  
but I dress my grief in English,  
borrowed syllables  
rattling on foreign rails.  
The ache knows its own syntax.



## Judson Evans

### Zuihitsu on a Theme of Paganini

1.

“Night of the Hunter”, “Stars in His Crown”,  
‘Home from the Hills’ — her three favorite films.

2.

For seven years I’ve searched for a way to write about  
my dead mother without sentimentality.

3.

Tearing the N.Y. Times apart at the breakfast table  
folding / refolding, long strips for paper mâché, cutting  
photos free of their captions, throwing away:  
Business / Style / Sports  
Stapling film reviews, actors’ obits to Indian stepwells  
to subatomic particles to deep sea vents...

4.

When we first watched “Night of the Hunter”,  
I made fun of the fake giant animals in the escape-by-  
rowboat-scene.

5.

“to scale” that hated idiom “It doesn’t scale”  
What can this mean in the afterlife of words?  
our emotions don’t scale.

6.

Before I was born, my mother painted my bedroom with a woodland scene out of 'Bambi' with giant rabbits, squirrels, and woodpeckers. I'm sitting on a rotten log with tousled brown hair, blue jeans with suspenders.

7.

The scam of Wordsworthian childhood as if there wasn't a boy's body with its earliest erections and auto-asphyxiation.

8.

A woman on foot weeping barefaced on the traffic island. I accuse my eyes of caring more about the cinema than the catastrophe.

9.

Why not write sentimentally? My mother was an exaggeratedly sentimental person whose favorite films regularly brought her to tears.

10.

In telephone conversations she'd often report "well, I had a good cry this morning and I feel better for it."

11.

My mother's sheet music for Rachmaninov's "Piano Concerto no.2" scabbed with Scotch Tape.

12.

Fruit flies respond to the sight of the death of other fruit flies as if they were contagious.

13.

It was before our 8:00 A.M. classes discussing St. Augustine and Epicurius my fellow teacher friend asked: Why do we discuss death at all its very name casts a pall on our world.

14.

My mother asked for a rom com from the video store in that B.C. of VHS, but in a dusty bin I discovered Kurasawa's "Throne of Blood".

## Space Age

Hats — essential male appendages,  
partial orbits, saturnine rings  
tilted with a tang of obituary

When you were essential male appendages,  
my father walked the earth  
confident he'd never die —  
elliptic of alcohol.

Partial orbit, Saturn's rings,  
phony Northern lights of affluence  
from nothing-to-nothing American Dream  
just the moon-landing boots, the receipts.

Tilted with a tang of obituary  
open coffin for an astronaut  
waving to his family from space, the speed trap,  
the rolodex, time capsule of briefcase.

## Light Box

*for the Man Whose Brain Was Turned to Glass  
at the Eruption of Vesuvius*

hunkering too close to this lightening field of push pins  
currents of northern lights ice gnarled with pine needles  
something solid pushed past plasticity beyond interrogatives

Tell me scribe — was this fire storm between eons the Stoic end time  
or just the more-life melting through a stack  
of Polaroids?

It cost the motherboard of me emptied reagents halo of halide  
brood heavy dreads wound in wool my hat soaked  
with rain shorting out the colander skull cap

Now like a brittle star I see through  
my skeleton all that wild seeing rises up in me  
thermometer reversed to boil where the bulb is blown glass

I kneel for October light learning ley-lines of leaf veins  
skirt of reeds around the red shift  
interference forms exhaled tuning forks turnstiles of broad  
daylight.

## Sagrada Familia

beatified architect  
the scaffolding still on  
his cathedral

architect beatified  
every catenary arch  
reverses rainbow  
from a Messiaen quartet

scaffolding still intact  
holding the entrails —  
the percentage of stigmata  
per thorn, itch through corbels

his cathedral's  
threnody to failure  
broken tables of law  
at its foundation

## Spangled

this spinnaker            in the updraft    crisscrossing white  
and red stripes            tablecloth on the clothes line  
folded and fumbled    like the ritual of a man's tie    I have never  
learned to tie    since its parts too    have secret names  
shell and tail and blade    same language of armor and fear    cantons  
charges on a ground    and the fly end    subject to whim  
in this origami    of wind    snagged    a moment    crest and badge  
a loose field of stars drawn taut            at the hoist end  
a tangled kite that must be cut    free    wrapped around itself  
see-through    in rain    like the robe    of the enslaved Trojan woman  
Odysseus almost outs himself    weeping over    clumsily trying to draw  
a cloak    over his own head.

*JE*

# Jennifer Hambrick

## Nocturne

night sets on a small sea

tender the night comes

I look into it as into a mirror

the night stares back with a large blind eye

empty

full so I leave

what I bring

at the threshold

the threshold of night

everything unspoken in the pull of tide

the lapping waves

a coverlet of moonglade

speaks —

*step in* the moonlight says *the sea sings for you*

*are you on the water* I ask the moonlight *or are you lost*

*like me*

*somewhere below?*

## Panegyric to Flesh

It is the shade that appears between the first weeks with a lover and the arrival of the future. The cool shade of familiarity. Here is the scar from my appendectomy. That is where his pancreas came out.

There is nothing not to love here, unless it is meanderings of veins in marble once thought without blemish. The lights are out, so it is easy for him to envision my skin without the spots the sun leaves behind. I intend to enjoy the strength in his hands on the crest of my hip.

Intention floats in the mind but requires an act of will.

These words are skin, blinding to the gaze, hiding the imperfections from view. Touch the skin enough, lights off, lights on, and the story changes. What you feared could not be loved disappears in the haze of moonlight.

Fish again in the shallows, eat what you catch.

surface tension  
lost in the flotsam  
an abundance of midnight

O

it's all a rough draft mackerel sky

O

ipsum lorem  
a dense block  
of future

*JH*



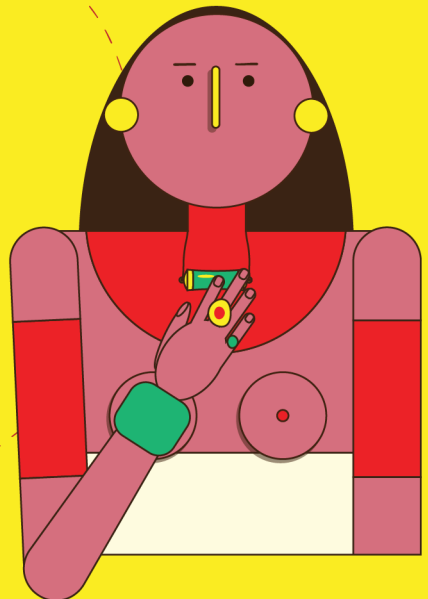
I have seen the future in the cracks of the armadillo shell ...

... the future does not bide well for you my child!!!

Take this talisman ..



If you part with it then all will be lost!!!



## Sondra J. Byrnes

cloud of unknowing  
how to keep my feet  
on the ground

○

sumi-e all that isn't is

○

be/longings

mu  
until the cows  
come home

O

a low rio grande deep time

*SJB*

Some Deep Easy Breaths

Summer. Arms in short sleeves,  
the little hairs a breeze has been longing for,  
cows whose udders touch long grass.

The horizon never came into focus,  
wave after wave.  
Desire: barely flower, barely sky.

Deep easy breaths.  
I wanted to call this emptiness mine  
but it became a body as soon as I did.

No other world.

The groomed stallion runs from shadow to shine.

The shimmer of oil in a hot iron pan.

November: another month under a photograph of clouds.

Inspectors in the warehouse take inventory.

Sparrows in the rafters.

A cathedral. Years of building with stone.

A watery yellow blister on my hand.

A tiny ancient fish swimming in it.

## Something only briefly

mentioned, as the blink of an eye

mentions sleep,

soon forgotten as

a cloud of midges

like digital code written and rewritten,

is dispersed by a breeze.

## Fog

Third eyelid of the dawn.

A fox never seen north of here  
looks north, as through  
fog burning off.

Breath my father gave me.

## Cloud

sky shadow,  
a scarf of wind,

soul  
longing for salt, for being  
everywhere's nowhere  
again in the sea.

## The message

Just when I thought  
I could no longer take it  
a message came, carried by hand —

the hand is the message.

*PY*

# Grzegorz Wróblewski

*Translated from Polish by Peter Burzyński*

## Uprawa

Zawsze ktoś na ciebie czeka.

Nawet,  
jeśli ty na nikogo  
nie czekasz.

Ten, który na ciebie czeka,  
chce tobie powiedzieć,  
że miałeś rację,

że na nikogo  
nie czekasz.

Czeka na ciebie po to,  
żebyś wiedział,  
że nie warto czekać.

Musicie się spotkać.

Żebyś przypadkiem  
nie zaczął na kogoś  
czekać.

## Cultivation

There's always someone waiting for you.

Even  
when you're not waiting  
for anyone.

The one who's waiting for you  
wants to tell you  
that you were right

not to wait  
for anyone.

Their purpose is to wait  
for you so that you know  
it's not worthwhile to wait.

It's necessary for you two to meet

just in case  
by chance  
you begin waiting  
for someone.

%

Kwietniowe słońce na wyspie Amager.

*Somebody put something in my drink*

(Ramonas). Czy wszystko można zacząć od nowa? Dwa głosy:

1. Jutro jest zbawienne!

2. Nie ma go, zanim nie nadejdzie...

Czyli niczego na 100% nie da rady

(od nowa). OD NOWA istnieje

wyłącznie hipotetycznie.

Albo 50 na 50% (dwa głosy).

%

The April sun shines down on Amager island.

“Somebody put something in my drink.” — Ramones

Can one really begin their life

anew? There are only two opinions:

1. Salvation is coming tomorrow!

2. It won't be here, until it is...

So, you can't guarantee anything 100%

of the time, especially starting over. “Starting over”

only exists hypothetically and there are only two options;  
the odds are 50/50.

## Generacja

Wahadłowce przestały  
nad nami krążyć.  
*Jesteśmy ostatnią generacją...*  
Tak mówił człowiek z zielonym  
szkiełkiem,

zanim go nie nadziali  
na haczyk.

Ostatnią generacją?  
Co oznaczało  
to słowo — generacja? *Jesteśmy*  
*ostatnią generacją...* Myślałem  
o tym każdego dnia.

Nieboskłon.

Drzewa nigdy nie polecą  
na księżyc. Każdy koniec wróży  
powstanie nowego.

Szerszy plan nie zakłada  
przecież  
wiecznej przemiany materii.

Czyli to była racja! Pora wreszcie  
wylączyć światła.  
Każdego w końcu przerosną  
mrówki.

## The Last Generation

UFOs have stopped hovering  
over us.

*We are the last generation...*

At least that's what the man  
with the green goblet said

before they impaled him  
on a hook.

The last generation?  
Generation? What does that  
word even mean?

"We are the last  
generation." I think  
about those words every day.

And then there's the horizon...

Trees will never fall in love  
with the moon. Every ending predicts  
a new beginning.

There is no grand plan —  
there will be no eternal  
transformation of earthly matter — all  
will die and be dead.

So, I was right all along!  
It's finally time to turn out the lights.  
Eventually everyone will feed  
the ants.

## Hodowla Cienia

hodowla cienia pod ziemią płyny  
fantom żywiciel zatrute płyny

hodowla cienia przetrwalnik zasoby  
hodowla cienia na ołtarzykach

hodowla cienia pod ziemią skrzekot  
fantom żywiciel zatrute płyny

fantom bohater przetrwalnik niebo  
zasoby skrzydeł na ołtarzykach

skrzydła bogowie mędrcy i płyny  
hodowla cienia skrzekot zasoby

pod ziemią płyny bohater niebo  
fantom żywiciel zatrute płyny

w mroku i czaszkach przetrwalnik  
płyny fantom rodzina krewni i płyny

hodowla cienia pod ziemią skrzekot  
zasoby skrzydeł zatrute płyny

dżuma przetrwalnik hodowla płyny  
zasoby podziemne żywiciel i płyny

hodowla cienia na ołtarzykach  
fantom bohater niebo bez skrzydeł

człowiek hodowla białko i płyny  
prorocy mędrcy hodowla płyny

dżuma i fantom przetrwalnik niebo  
zasoby podziemne bez skrzydeł niebo

prorocy cienie hodowla płyny  
dżuma hodowla skrzekot i płyny.

## Shadow Breeding

Shadow breeding happens  
below groundwater.

It's a phantom host  
to poisoned waters.

There's shadow breeding  
of necessary spores.

There's shadow breeding during  
the screeching of the phantoms.

A phantom hero of a spore  
finds necessary wings on an altar in the sky.

The wings of gods and sages and water  
Screech of their necessity while

the heroes of the sky flow under  
ground to poison the waters.

In the darkness skulls and the waters  
of a family of phantoms flows

and a plague of spores flow  
into the underground waters.

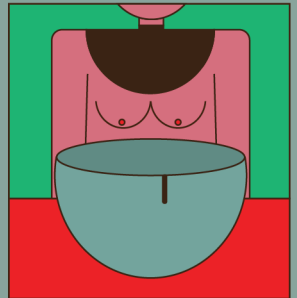
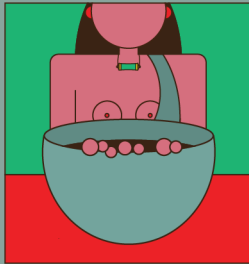
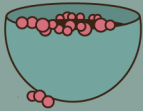
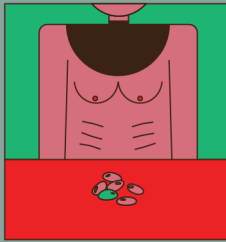
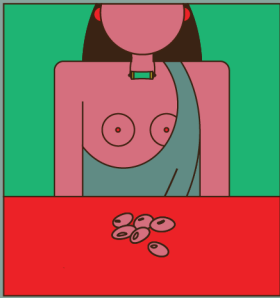
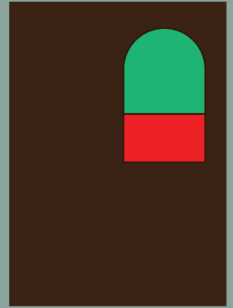
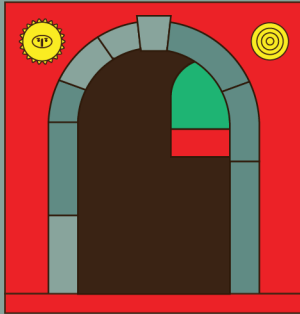
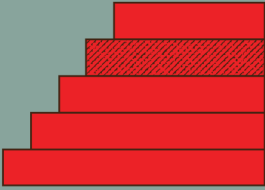
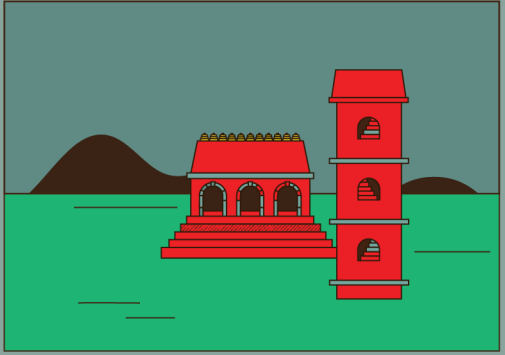
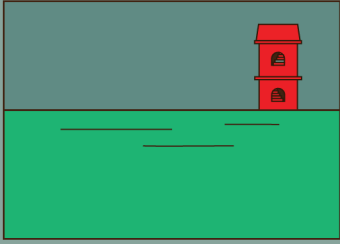
There is shadow breeding on the altars  
of wingless phantom heroes in the sky.

And a man breeding proteins and waters  
gives the prophets and the sages

the plague; the phantom spores of the sky  
find the wingless necessities

while prophets are shadow breeding  
fluids and plague breeds screeching and water.

*GW*



## Richard Wallace

### Beyond the Sky is the End

#### **North American Space Agency: Operations Room.**

*The images are appearing... My God! Get me the president on the line, now!*

*That isn't something that ever happens, sir.*

#### **On the surface of the moon.**

On the camera the image was grainy. Flickering. Black and white. The whiteness of the surface framing the black, fuzzy silhouette. But to the astronaut, although shaded darker by his visor, he could clearly make out the shades of brown marking the dead sparrow. Its head inside a glass light bulb, glinting in the rays. Two deflated latex balloons resting against its still wings. *One small flap for bird, ...*

#### **Interrogation room 13.**

The professor stubbed his cigarette butt on the ashtray. The detective leaned back. Smug.

*Everything you have said is a lie.*

*A bee beats its wings 250 times a second, that's 15,000 times a minute. This is a simple fact.*

*You are not a professor.*

*Then let me go.*

The detective removed his deerstalker hat. His companion took his silver-topped cane. *Do you know how I deduce you are not a professor, Mr Winklehoffer?* He picked up the cigarette butt between his thumb and forefinger, and brought it before his eyes as if to study it. *A professor would smoke a pipe!*

The professor ran his hand through the tangled mess of his hair and adjusted his steel-framed glasses. *That is where, I am afraid detective, you are wrong. Study that cigarette butt some more. It may give an answer. But either way we are doomed! Doomed! It's the birds — anything that goes up, that flies, will evolve to keep on getting higher. Above its nature. Beyond evolution. It won't be us who will colonise the next worlds, it will be them. And when they leave, the planet will die. Out there, detective, is only death. The universe only wants death, it's why we can't find life. Out there I mean — in the expanse. Because out there you can't go higher. Those creatures that leave, end lost, for notions of up or down, or side to side, no longer have any meaning. It's all just no-where. Beyond the sky, is the end. And soon everything will leave. And then under the sky will end, too.* Professor Winklehoffer removed the dagger hidden in the sole of his shoe and plunged it deep into his own heart. He slumped, his head thudding against the table.

When he was later lifted onto the trolley, the cigarette butt was stuck to his forehead.

## **The nests.**

Deep in the Siberian wilderness, birds were collecting things. From the towns. From the cities. They flew thousands of miles to collect these things. Their nests stank of smoke. They were made from cigarette butts, collected from pavements, rubbish and from the hands of townspeople and city folk.<sup>1</sup> The chicks stank. Smoke and tar — tar and smoke. From the branches hung light bulbs, the bottoms hollowed out by pecking. Old balloons littered amongst the leaves. They had learnt. They had watched the crows use glass bulbs and balloons to practice breathing in space by diving underwater. But the crows were waiting. They would not leave until they were all ready; in any case, they hadn't worked out the secret of the honey. Not yet.

## **The hive.**

The smoky chicks had grown into sparrows and they attacked. The overwhelming stink of smoke contaminating their feathers made the bees sluggish. Friendly, almost. The sparrows had their fill of honey. Their rocket fuel. With 250 beats of a sparrow wing a second, fueled by the crystalised nectar of the hive, they had enough thrust to leave the earth's atmosphere. None had yet returned.

---

<sup>1</sup> **Encyclopedia Marlborotanicca:** Cigarette butt nests are not yet a common sight in Europe, and almost unheard of on other continents. Natural selection may lead to the practice dying out altogether.

## **The return.**

One bird. A magpie, badly singed, his light bulb cracked and his balloons almost empty, flopped back into his smoky nest. Exhausted.

*RW*

## Hafi Akar

*Attract more pollinators this spring  
by planting ultraviolets.*

a beeline in translation  
em dashed

# Randy Brooks

calling  
the kids  
out

Passover

blinking

# Maryann Waterman

## Euphoria

Euphoria of tulips —  
How many versions of today?  
Its a collage, town

The original ruse  
When the world spins backwards  
Hang on..

The gnome with a grass hat  
Jazz in the afternoon  
All cheese blue

Some time with the Easter flowers  
Falling apart is life  
Twenty five springs ago.

/

The metonymy of the dollhouse  
AI, complete my thoughts  
A crow needs no microphone

It's the way that it is  
The cobblestones beneath us  
Even Jesus drank wine

Symbiotic relationships  
Perfume speaks louder than words  
The ugly church has a name

It was a dance  
I always read astrophysics on planes  
That's a whole different restaurant.

/

Clocks are stopping time  
Out of air  
The seventeen hundreds were yesterday

Old fashioned gestures  
The girl with kaleidoscope eyes  
Forever winking at the past

You have to be a mannequin  
When cheese gets in your eyes  
On the sunny side of the street

Surfing waves  
Everyone is a cactus  
Free radicals.

/

Go to Corsica and eat oranges  
Beneficiary of nothing  
The moon

I do love farce  
Brutalist bomb shelters  
A sense of non-sense  
You go  
Bet the lotto  
And don't judge  
There were moments  
Write drunk, edit sober  
When my ex predicted the next War

*MW*

## John Phillips

### LOVE

What it means  
to have  
a heart  
in this world

can't be saved  
from loss

### CITIZEN

In the parade  
I carry  
a head

high  
on a bloody pole

It is my head

## BLOOD BATH

I ask for a gun

They give me  
a stick

Now  
I spit  
bullets

## PICNIC

What the birds

in Goethe's oak  
in Buchenwald

sing

## HEART

in the cage  
no bird

the song  
remembers

*JP*

# Vijay Prasad

flies away

one version  
of  
a bird

O

sniffs air a part still wild in me

O

the pungent smell of

n

O

w

## Orhan Veli

*Translated from Turkish by Joseph S. Aversano*

### Vatman

Hep karşıya bakar  
Cıgara içmez  
Vatman  
Ömür adamdır.

*(İstanbul, Ekim 1937)*

### Tram Operator

Always looks out across  
And doesn't smoke  
The tram operator's  
Funny that way.

*(İstanbul, October 1937)*

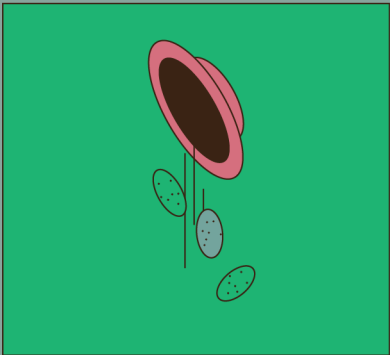
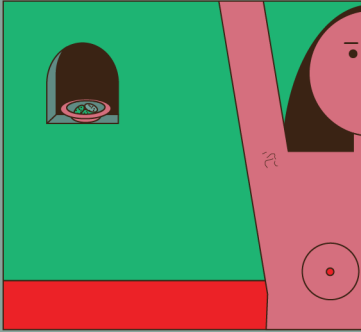
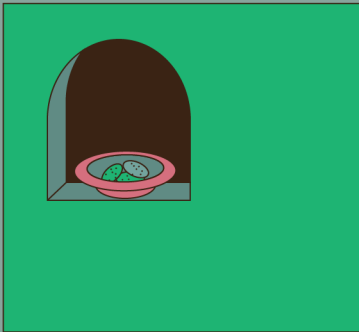
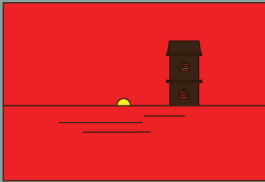
## İçerde

Pencere, en iyisi pencere;  
Geçen kuşları görürsün hiç olmazsa;  
Dört duvarı göreceğine.

## Indoors

The window, the best thing is the window;  
You at least see the birds passing;  
Instead of seeing four walls.

*OV*



## Debbie Strange

boreal rain our skin pelted with blackflies

**Ganesh R.**

another popcorn moment Doomsday Glacier

○

painted storks  
will the lake  
still hold its sky next winter

# Elmedin Kadric

true colors

coniferous

# Shrehya Taneja

the silence of a pine forest at a reader's distance

○

stinging nettle  
I follow Google maps  
all alone

# Fred Jeremy Seligson

## Spring Poems

PERE

I take  
care of  
a cat

and a  
mulberry  
tree

## SPIDERS

1

Spider on a  
silver web  
connects  
your knee to  
a cherry tree.

2

Banana spider  
on her web

stops. Peers  
in my eyes.

Knows I  
am alive.

## IDENTITY

Whose shadow  
grasps a

staff on  
the tree?

Turn for sun.  
*Hey, me!*

## FASHION

Ant  
wears

pink  
cherry

blossom  
wings

*FJS*

Echidnas

Ever seen them when they  
dissolve into leaf litter  
and then you can't

Dingoes learn the hard way  
to leave them alone  
the spikes the bleeding tongue

In the morning the paddock  
was covered in rain  
and wet echidnas

## Shloka Shankar

under a fast-blue sky clover blooms

○

from daylight to chloral dark white lilies

○

this storm petrel too shall pass

# Michele Root-Bernstein

no horizon to speak of cabbages and kings

○

another sinkhole collapsing what's really real

○

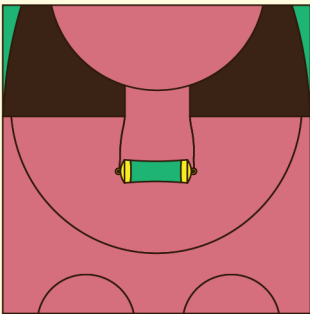
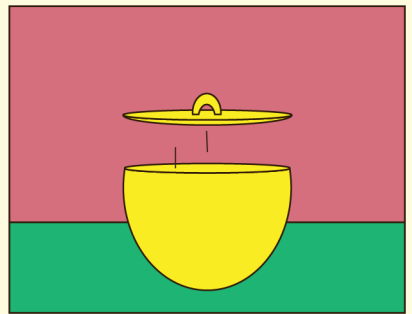
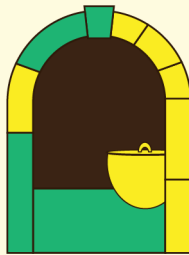
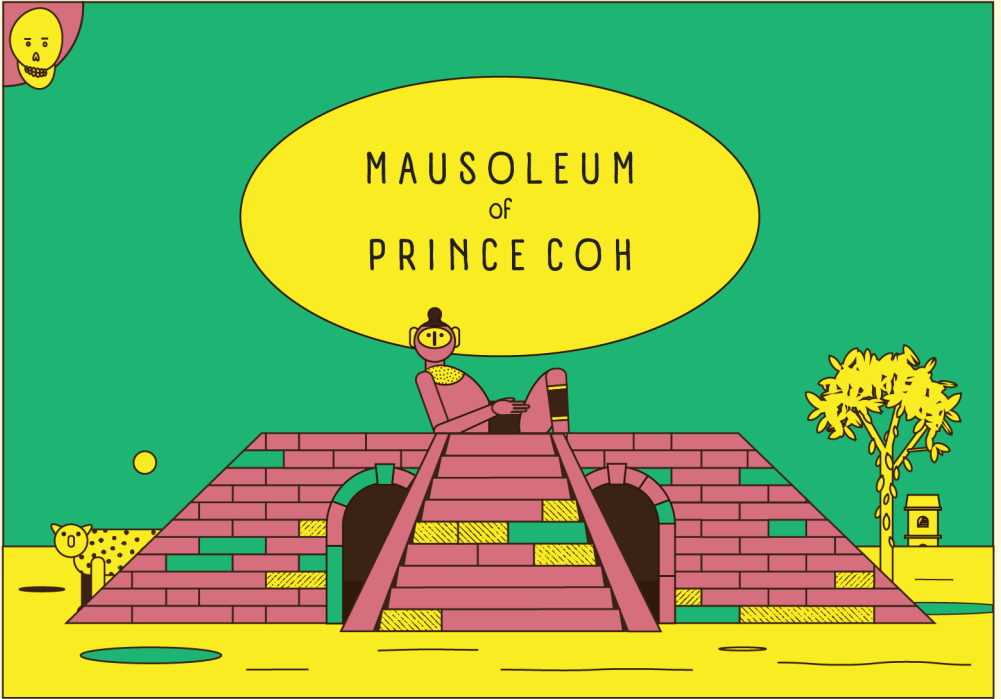
deep night owl loudly in the words

o whelk shell cast up by the sea my last om

O

star  
evening  
wandering  
wind  
thread  
weaver's  
orb

*MRB*



This way we will always be as one ...

## Notes:

The featured artwork is taken from Michael David Conduit's researched and illustrated graphic history, *Mu - The Invention of a Continent: A True but Curious Tale!* A work still in progress, it explores how late nineteenth century beliefs in reincarnation, shapeshifting and spiritualism influenced turn-of-the-century British antiquarians to concoct a labyrinthine story of a lost continent at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean. The alleged evidence for Mu at the time even captured the imaginations of modern state builders who were interested in rewriting their nation's mythic origin narratives. Keep abreast with Conduit's work on instagram @empire\_of\_mu .

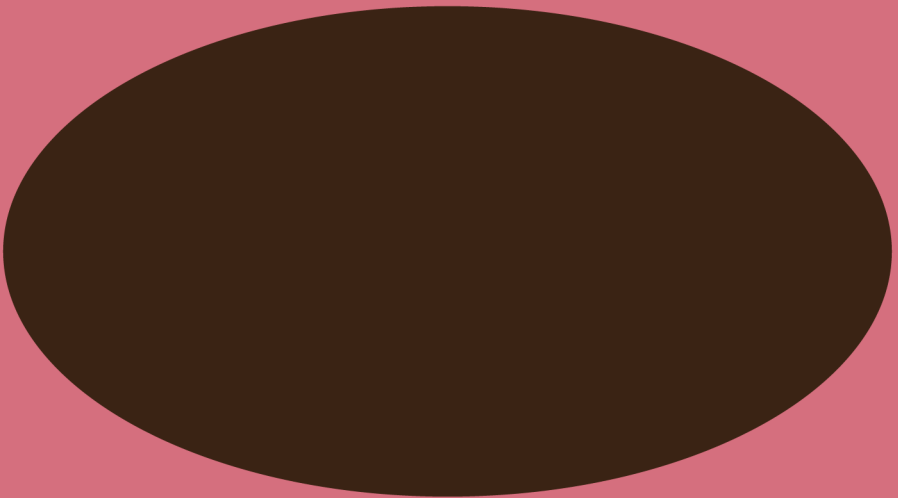
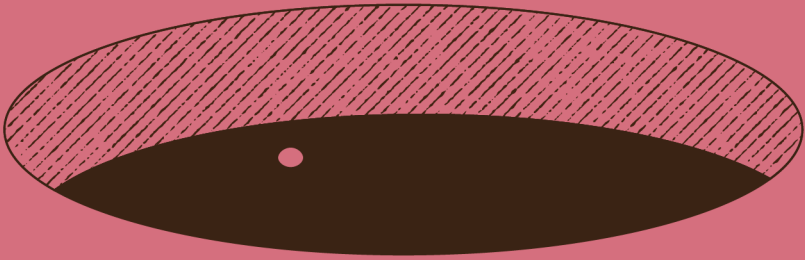
The "mu" in Sondra J. Byrnes poem beginning with "mu" (on p. 43), however, refers to the iconic Zen koan in which the question, "Does a dog have buddha nature?", is enigmatically responded to with a resounding "Mu!"

Orhan Veli (1914 — 1950). The poems "Vatman" and "İçerde" were first published in *Papirüs* (1.6.1967) and *Yaprak* (1.6.1949) respectively.

The phrase "of cabbages and kings" in Michele Root-Bernstein's first poem on p. 80 is from the Lewis Carroll poem "The Walrus and the Carpenter". It appears in his book *Through the Looking Glass* (1871).

Digital Edition

HDMJ



HDMJ