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**VOLUME 1
ISSUE 4
APRIL 2013**

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**THE JOURNAL OF
POETRY & POETICS**

© TAB: The Journal of Poetry & Poetics. Volume 1. Issue 4. April 2013.

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www.chapman.edu/poetry

ISSN: 2169-3013

THE CENTER FOR POETRY AT CHAPMAN UNIVERSITY

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The print issues of *TAB: The Journal of Poetry & Poetics* are special editions, each published at the beginning of the calendar year. These issues reflect *TAB's* mission to create an environment that celebrates poetry in various forms and venues. The annual print issue engages the reader with poetry as a material object and asks that the reader negotiate between image and text. The design of the first issue does not assume a traditional role of quietly framing content; instead, design actively shapes the reading of the entire page. The special print editions of *TAB* will continue to experiment and explore the intersections between form and content, object and space, and reader and reading.

Monthly electronic issues follow each annual printed issue. Using these differing formats—print and digital—allows experimentation with design and materiality in a time when print and electronic dissemination coexist. *TAB* will not force either format to adapt to the other. The reading experience in virtual spaces is different than that of a printed journal. The electronic issues are shaped by Open Journal Systems, a federally funded, open-access system from the Public Knowledge Project designed to serve the public good globally. While the electronic files can be printed, each electronic issue will be formatted for ease of reading on the screen. Decisions about page size, typography, and composition are driven by the online reading experience, rather than to merely mimic a print version. *TAB* also makes use of the audio/video possibilities of digital dissemination.

To order a copy of the print issue, please send a check for \$10 made out to Chapman University to *TAB: The Journal of Poetry & Poetics*, Department of English, Chapman University, One University Drive, Orange, CA 92866. *TAB* will be available at the AWP book fair.

DAVID BIESPIEL



TO KELLER FROM SKAMANIA LODGE

—Stevenson, *Washington*

Dear Nick—

The ospreys are nesting atop the telephone poles,
And six Canada geese just threaded over and missed the window
I'm looking out of toward a mountain I gave up a marriage
On—though I haven't come here to recover so much as go on
To veer toward the false *veritas* of un-mortal life.

Part citizen, part lapsed-cognoscenti, I stare at the late air
And imagine it's braided with judgment. The wind knifes
The sky, and the moon has yet to bumper over.

Did you really mean to say that thing about faith? Sometimes,
I know, faith is the Pearl Girl, sometimes Ming the Merciless.

Like: *Fides*, I want to say *Fides, fidere*.

But, Nick, all the Latin I've memorized has left me short of breath.

Consider this: When I look out now at this long field

I see that the shrubs, the flowers, the shade, and the liverish

Alienation that lacks the pleasure of indifference

Are no more cosmetic than they are a zeitgeist for the cosmos.

You were right to say prophets are brazen

And to believe that hope is the birth of songs.

But did you really mean to say, "Yes' is a complete sentence," Nick?

Yes. I suppose you did. For me, it's fallible

And riddled as a ribbon of scarlet silk.

And, yes, Nick, I can hear lullabies of the lonely from another era.

—You would love this view! And, in the old days, this gin—

No matter. I can hear music rising now from one of the weddings

Started today in the high grass that has yet to be plowed in

And that trembles toward the river. At the end of the first wedding,

There's applause, a cello, and a revelation

That no one will understand for years.

At the end of the other wedding, the cuddly party

Weaved through the tall grass like the revelers

Panting coldly in Keats' ode—with the lacey bride

Smiling into her yellow bouquet, and the young groom

Seeming to begin to breathe again. I think you'd have loved
The uncertain crossroads, the way the *res publica* made room
For the community (it was like a window opening into a tattered wind).
Then the light got whippy and wrinkled and hovered
Over the swallows that swept the sky down to the river's calm rings.
Faith is a verb you said. OK. We'll see.

DIANE GLANCY



USE OF OWNERSHIP

Go and walk through the land, and describe it, and come again to me.... And the men went and passed through the land, and described it...in a book...and came again to Joshua...and there Joshua divided the land—Joshua 18:8-10

Walk the land. Describe it. Own it with your words.

What is land? It is thought. It is language.

Land is a plow pulled by draft horses—the blade curved as a claw.

The crows overhead—their caws, wooden cogs turning a ratchet wheel.

Land is a supply wagon.

An abundant row of trees.

Land is a pump handle.

A weapon. A mold for lead balls.

Land is signature.

Land is deed. It is act.

Hear it talk to the river—

the tree in the field

a nail to hold down.

SPEED BOAT

The constant sound of surf.

The boat He walked toward
on the sea.

The turtles with inflatable rafts upside-down
on their backs.

The orange slivers of fish saying, *carry me*.

The turtles with racing stripes
and red streaks on their necks
edge out of the boat like followers of Peter—
action figures with battery packs running low on juice
until the Holy Ghost fell on believers
and filled the air with the sound of wind
and moving tongues of goldfish.

PURVI SHAH



RARE, YET TRUE, ENERGY TRANSFERS WITHOUT CONTACT

Proxy

Warm cherry wood, the browns of childhood.

In dozens, monarchs rising, proliferating – toddler's smile.

This June summer's searing, a many-decades friendship.

Poppy paper blistering the wall/dear aunt passing.

Two typewriters clacking through the early night, an urgent conversation.

The urge to swat one's ear – buzzbuzz – of gossip.

Scent of anthurium sizzling.

•••

Proximate

The rose silk of unruffled pillow

aside impression of temple

& hair. This plump lip against finger or cheek, a cloud

hovering between water

and air. Behind storm, blue venetians

rise. The sun

unrolls, clouds

scatter. Soil encircling bulb, stalk of hyacinth

peeks, scent's edges

gathering. In a desolate field, train stop. Darling, with blossoming

eyes, pacing the station.

Long black lashes flutter. Long black lashes flutter.

Long black lashes
flutter.

•••

Proximity

The way, when you stroll into the room, the air

parts.

THE REALIST PAINTER IN EXILE DEVELOPS A LOVE OF GEOMETRY

To reconstruct the world, the painter
sketches numbers: they cannot be zero

for zero is too perfect & the heart too
scrunched elliptical for tracing smooth

paths. He—the painter—had a habit of drawing quiet
landscapes peppered by a bright horse or a particularly vibrant

ox. But one day unforeseen the landscape
rained and rained and rained and after the flood

he was left with forms—a square of cherry wood,
a triangle of sunflowers, a circle of birds' wings. So

began the new canopy—hidden in lines: a semi-face—
in a twisted/bent curve (echo of your mother's
voice)/in zigzag your lover's dreams

spoken. Now

you pause, for is the shell
of eight the curves
of a woman carrying water
on her high-held head
or hydrangeas on an elegant
garden porch? Unpuzzle.

On your own canvas a bent ray, a number

not yet named. On your canvas, so much
to decipher, so much
to chart, so much to—in your linked

hands—deliciously uncast: dawn, desire,
future in each moment, infinity of every easel

expecting.

IRIS LAW



Book review

THE PALACE OF CONTEMPLATING DEPARTURE BY BRYNN SAITO
RED HEN PRESS, 2013, \$16.95

The Palace of Contemplating Departure begins with the memory of a leave-taking: “I was born from a wolf” (19) says the speaker at the start of the opening poem, and as she exits the womb, we are launched, along with her, on a journey of many points of transience and departure.

At times transparent and vulnerable, at others, sinuous with history and the breath of the supernatural, the heart of Brynn Saito’s first full-length collection beats dangerously, exhilaratingly, close to the surface. As it weaves its network of tales and voicings, we are confronted at every turn by the poet’s delightful knack for lyric surprise. In “First Incantation,” a palm placed on the speaker’s chest opens it to reveal an interior landscape with sudden and gorgeous clarity: “the sky inside me / widened. Now the night slips me her best skin / and my mouth takes no prisoners.” Later, in “[First Daylight],” the dark wit of the image—“you took your skull / for a walk”—gives way to a moment of pale, pulsing vulnerability: “you stood in the book aisles, / breathing like a broken tulip.” In these poems and elsewhere, Saito’s lyric interventions parallel the nature of the journeys that her speaker takes throughout the collection: achingly restless, like quicksilver, never with two feet under the same sun for long.

The structure of the book is divided into four parts. In the first, “Ruined Cities,” Saito’s speaker revisits landscapes that were once important to an abandoned relationship, weaving a portrait of loss that, at times, drips quietly with sorrow, as in “Winter in Denmark,” when she recalls the tenderness of her father-in-law examining her scars: “like rain on a valley” and, at other times, vibrates with an almost animalistic ferocity, as in “Leaving New York,” where the city streets become “small black scars / crawling towards water.” In the second and third sequences, “Women and Children” and “Shape of Fire,” Saito delves more deeply into history, threading the speaker’s own present-day experiences of displacement with family traumas of estrangement and grief (a troubled sister, a brother who disappears or dies, his body bent “to the hungering earth”) and inherited narratives of loss and exile (family memories of Japanese American internment during WWII mingle with those of a Sikh roommate who is harassed after 9-11 in “The Gathering Mind,” while in “California Heartland,” the speaker watches brush fires devastate the landscape of her home). In the fourth and final sequence of the book, “Steel and Light,” Saito departs from the speaker’s voice itself, instead inhabiting the gaze of forces in her immediate environment—moonlight, a gun, railroad tracks, dawn—as she traces the progress of her grief in exile.

Throughout this luminous collection, the poet continually returns to touchstones of body, of spirit, of memory—to knife scars on the speaker’s arms; to the lidless eye of death, kept at bay by prayer, prophecy, and divine command; to the ghosts of lovers and strangers, wending their way through streets and gardens to meet the speaker wherever she goes. Saito’s speaker is perpetually transient, propelled from memory to memory, and from city to city, her continual unrootedness symptomatic of the diasporic condition; and yet, these “touchstones” serve as a binding thread, a unifying center that ultimately draws together the many nodes of her journey with “tireless wonder” and a surprising transcendence: “you exalt everything / that cannot contain you—” the speaker is told in the final poem of the collection. When she finally arrives, “I’ll know you by your joy.”

J O N P I N E D A



Book review

AND NEVERMIND THE STORM BY SOHAM PATEL
PORTABLE PRESS @ YO-YO LABS, 2013, \$8.00

Soham Patel's *and nevermind the storm* is a maelstrom of fractured narratives and elevated consciousness. Within this sequenced, chapbook collection of poems are moments individuated by a speaker's probing questions of placement, amid an imbroglio of landscapes—the 2011 earthquake off the coast of Tōhoku, Japan, the ensuing tsunami, scripts of disembodied voices, personal histories, etc.—for which even a single utterance is an accounting of survival.

Where grayed-out text references a speaker's memory of Louise Erdrich's novel *Love Medicine* in the opening section, this act of near erasure serves as metaphor and textual fulcrum for building the ambient narrative of a lost family member and those who remain to chronicle this absence: "[M]y brother, like someone from the fiction, ran away from home again this morning. Now we're driving on the dirt road looking for him. / ... / Mom repeats my brother's name between slow gasps of breath with her / head, neck and the end of her ribcage hanging out the rolled down passenger side / window."

People, animals, elements, emotions—all become transmuted by their shifting relationship with one another. Everything, in turn, is connected, even if by absence itself or, in this example, a forced relationship with absence:

Pages warp
from water spill—

dry and we read
what is left but

insert new arcs
in place
of erasure.

With the devastating aftermath of the tsunami serving as a backdrop, these highly crafted poems present the reader with landscapes rife with virgules, not necessarily ones functioning as "either/or" constructs. It is a thoughtful strategy, drawing the reader's attention to the literal and figurative shifts that will serve as a chorus throughout the collection:

grid marking affluence/color/and the sirens
turned to bone after puddles found drains
h2o/oil/skin/grit/faint smell of rubber burn
set in stone/the warbling birds out of context
pages of my braided essay street scattered

land on a map/a map landed on us/terrain
marked in lead then rubbed/chaossification

While technology has afforded us a means for defining, however temporarily, our reconfigured lives (“Any origins of / place recognizable for the people remain as redrawn borders on digital maps.”), existence and identity are dismantled and redefined through the poet’s considerations. A strained world flashes with the contradictions that compose it. Things are revealed, given a new life, and the voice, even among devastation, is a hopeful one.

Patel’s poems, clear-eyed and able, seek to expose what is hidden underneath the surface of things, as in the brilliant couplet housing within it the collection’s title, “the Garden of Eden—its oil, if freed could warm / the world for 20 years and nevermind the storm.” Out of revelation, what emerges is not simply a critique of the way in which industry has threatened the natural world, it is a document for every boundary that has been compromised.

CONTRIBUTORS

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David Biespiel is the author of four previous collections of poetry, including *The Book of Men and Women*, which was named among the Best Books of the Year by the Poetry Foundation. A new volume, *Charming Gardeners*, will be published in 2013.

DIANE GLANCY

Diane Glancy is a professor at Azusa Pacific University. She received two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships and the Juniper Prize from the University of Massachusetts Press. Her last collections of poetry, *Stories of the Driven World* and *It Was Then*, were published by Mammoth Publishers.

IRIS LAW

Iris A. Law is the author of a chapbook, *Periodicity*, from Finishing Line Press in 2013 and the editor of the online literary magazine and blog *Lantern Review*. A Kundiman Fellow and a graduate of the MFA program at the University of Notre Dame, Law currently lives and works in Lexington, Kentucky.

JON PINEDA

Jon Pineda is the author of the poetry collections *The Translator's Diary*, winner of the Green Rose Prize, and *Birthmark*, winner of the Crab Orchard Award Series in Poetry Open Competition. His memoir *Sleep in Me* was a B&N Discover Great New Writers selection, and his forthcoming novel *Apology* was awarded the 2013 Milkweed National Fiction Prize. He lives in Virginia with his family.

PURVI SHAH

Purvi Shah is the author of *Terrain Tracks* from New Rivers Press. Winner of the inaugural SONY South Asian Social Services Award for her work fighting violence against women, she also directed *Together We Are New York*, a community-based poetry project to highlight Asian American voices during the 10th anniversary of 9/11. Find more on her work at <http://purvipoets.net> or @PurviPoets.