Hello from Belgium, this lovely old land, best known now-a-days for its beer and chocolate. However it should be recognized, among other things, for its many fine poets, now little known outside their home country. We hope to rectify that with this special issue being published in cooperation with the University of Liege.

Here you will find a cross section of some of Liege's best Francophone poets (We published a special featuring its Flemish poets in 2007 and a few copies are still available for $6.50)

Since this issue is being published in Liege I thought I might include a little poem that I wrote on my first visit to that lovely city.

LIEGE (Liege, Belgium in May)

Sad faced hurdy-gurdy girl,
City of cobbles,
Where the muddy Meuse
Marks cathedral floors
With fingers of flood.

Your gay Parisian tune
Contradicts the rain
As umbrellas translate
Into flowers and gray skies
Brighten into summer.

I especially want to thank Prof. Christine Pagnoulle and all those in Liege without whose assistance none of this would have been possible.

Before closing I want to note the recent passing of several of our finest English language poets: Adrienne Rich, Seamus Heaney, John Hollander and Louis Simpson (a Pulitzer Prize winner whose poetry appeared a number of time in our journal).

As always, please remember to take a moment to renew now, as it really does save us postage and paper, also your tax-deductible donations are always welcome and help to keep these issues coming.

Thanks, Brad
Les Saisons, 1979

The heart insists on consulting the leaves.

But the foliage obstinately remains superficial and quivering.
There will be no evidence that I walked through the wood.

* 
Who can remember that the cherry used to be a flower?

Who will say that the tree was a bouquet beyond the world’s understanding?

Is there no tolling bell to warn us about death through beauty?

* 
Light enters the wood like an epiphany.

It follows trails that the leaves do not know.

Everything becomes visible and inexplicable.

The mind is dumbfounded by the notion of a fatality that sheds light.

*
rumbles in the birch tree.
Space frolics with folly when
It's too immature.
I can't be like that.

In conclusion, it's useless. I must fast in the grave.

I am not a genius.

Those are incomprehensible.
* I can hear the tree extolling economy in expression.

All through a season it will be devoted to polishing its monotony.
Its silence already
defeats
human struggle to
find the right
word.
The landscape is fixed. It is that powdery yoke which bogs down in its whiteness. Its axles sink deep in the despotic innocence of the snow. Though not quite lost, we start to dread nowhere, and especially that inclement silence which thunders against the affront of all travel.

(Philip Mosley)

*
Jacques Izoard, 1936-2008

La Patrie empaillée, 1973

You live in a leg where a blue trail runs.
You breathe without veins.
You tear your deserted clothes.
Writing and lightning are sisters.

* I speak Arabic, tree.
I like pumice stone, barbaric hummus.
I speak to those who speak.
I speak as I write as I speak.
Write speak and throw handle and bucket.
The empty water fills the glass.

Corps, maisons, tumultes, 1990
Lips say the word 'lips'.
And word run on the lips.
Lips say the word 'mouth'.
And the mouth is a coffin of water.
The mouth is a backyard of saliva.
A little palace of thyme.
Words wash the tongue,
Naming sleep or crash.

* 

The bi cycle is within the barn. It is tainted with something. The h
our eyes is invaded with caref
fuls of poppies.
Who carries mirrors from one empty room to
another empty room?
Who are these lamanders?
Two girls under the snow. A
our roof small through under the blooming wisteria.
Luce Binot (died 2013)

_Couleur du temps_, 1973

The house near the railway

The hazel knew.
The lilac wouldn't say
And the chickens hardly thought of it.

The gooseberries laughed.
The rhubarb was quietly sleeping
A bearded god was cutting wood.

Only celandine with the orange spirit within had at times warned us.

For it ran along the hedge,
In broad daylight, the dream dragon,
Spitting fire and wrath.

What could be seen from a moving train

Quarries of silk that open,
Summer columns, anger of leaves,
Wells of shadow where a red star sleeps,
Anda gain the green horses of the dream.

The journey is held on a thread
That goes up and down the hills of the sky.

And the passive windows attend
The silky riot of the leaves,
Life passing, but in what direction?
Where a sad face leans,
Some woman called Héloïse
Nailed to the arrow of the fence,
Watching in thoughtful windows
Green landscapes going by.

**André Romus, 1928**

*Un visage parfois,*
2009

We lived in the gods, the gods lived in us.

But our steps no longer cross their steps
in these places empty of snow and wheat.

* Trees were waiting for the rain; and we,
for the sea wave on our thirsty hands.
Now there will be
no storm or sea
Only frozen suns
blazing in the
blue.

* 
Under fogs of
blood crossed by
lightnings and
birds,
only the wind's
hungry mouths
will
understand the
stones' words,
number the gods' 
remains.

* 
What shall we
leave to the rivers
of words, to their
deltas of sand and
shadows?

What shall we
leave
under the fissured
walls of time
that no song can
climb?

Gaspard
Hons,
1937

Visages
racinéants,
1999

so much virgin blood
in the white
Edmond Jabès

Impassable
virginity
Snatched from the
glacier,
Eternity
Wrapped in the
shadow of words.
Snow
On an mule's back
Delivered as
bundles of washing

Roses
imbrûlées,
2013

Jean Tortel’s black cherries
are falling into our needy hands:

unlikely cherries
or roses
or cherries absent
from all fruit tree
desire
from all desire of shadow

°
black cherries are born
from some dark fire
some painted word
of silence
like the supernumerary elements
of a future delivery of empirical roses

°
against the wall a being
close to toppling into the void
and a dormant rose

play the game
of having lived
before being born
And me, unrecognizable, I am the season seizing you between memory and beyond when the light shrinks away. I am a handful of ashes a fist of frozen fire the folded corner in a diary.

* A hand on my shoulder: the gods’ blessing? No, danger. I am running headlong in a maze of stairways, ruins, wild weeds. A plump virgin in black velvet throws the grater and the knife stops on the verge of summer offers pearls and rubies: St John’s berries held in ice.

Rain

\( T \)

\( o \)

\( L \)

\( is \)

\( a \)
Rain slips between your fingers, poet of the rain, it slips between your lines, a sketching, an etching, a bubbling of joy.

What you will not say: half a bucket of water per family; every other day; at the end of a long queue; dust; scorching; leveled guns; as earlier; as before, so far away, so close to us. What they say about you: rain runs in her voice, promise of garden. We stand, together, in the poem’s cool breath.

*Portrait de l’avenir en passant,*
2010

**Tactile**

The jailer comes and fetches me. Time for my daily exercise and for old pictures: setting sun goldening the wheat, poplars close ranks on a painting from another age.
I’m walking with the jailer behind.
The horns of a shuddering heifer get caught in the barbed wires as she comes sniffing.
She wants to be stroked and looks with pleading eyes.

With my fingertips I skim the sun on her forehead.
Burning:
a horsefly bites my left breast, which turns red and inflamed.
The man says: ‘Mustn’t be touched on any account!’

**What pages?**

I’m in solitary confinement.
The door is locked.

They left with me a lamp and books, a range of goose feathers, a tamed octopus coughing its ink, and a ream of paper, which they change like a shirt: when black they take it away to hand in a white one, unblemished untainted.

But I may be wrong.
I may not have written anything...
No one to talk to.
Separate blood
dawn blued with
the breath
of ice violets.
Silt layering
in the widower.

Throughout the
valley
the innumerable
solitary.

Belly belch
opening
its blights of
stones in spate.
Under the
drowned girls, the
hair
a crumpled letter
swims up,

asking the obscure
question
that is forever
silent.
to say rivers spattered like a rain sheet, covering small islands for the softness of cress or, taking by storm, uncovering stones for battle with bows of glass crust, migrating a promise of colors to ravines, washing soft shores of which can be said how many things and also of this man, a cigarette stub in the sky's mouth, who talked about convalescent blue after the rain, of earth uplifted by a single whispered name, outbursts from the heart's case on these very long afternoons in childhood when

* to say river was frantic belief, in some world's end, near bushes of gorse, oxalis and acacias, flowing together like golds in icons, to fill a full bucket
with promises hidden under the threshold, and remain a child as much as the flower is still a flower, only concerned with angels’ speech that can drown grief when the candle itself would be sick with living without the saliva of soft light, when

* only to say river can draw a face, away from cities without memory, on ever higher walls erected by thousands of wheelbarrows, trowels, hammers, iron rivets, for dilapidated human caravans labouring at leaden lives allied to a customary metre, when near the little bridge with the words I love you reeling and speaking start at dawn, leaving with crow’s feet of pilgrim gods a thick height of shadows, echoes of springs,
Marie-
Louise
Andreux, 1949

When life dives
between
nettle and thistle,
at each
attack
of
tearless grief
life slashed with a
gash
no words
emptiness
settles
like the
bed of a dry
torrent
Neither the slight
quiver in the
hands
nor the mind-
wrecker turning
dark
with this sliver of
ice
dug deep in his
forehead,
but the hardened
rut
of a charred
plowed field
but the abrasion
of a back
knotted
with
heavy straps
Wear the
invisible
uninhabited grief
and
become a
flowerless garden
bound
with silence
Ulysse, Nestor,
Michel,
my branded
fathers
hammered on the
anvil of wars
ravaged by the
snare of fear
my fathers with
gagged futures
your kindness
gave birth to me
On your
tombstone
from afar
I scream
with open veins.
At the bottom of
the slope
to sit on a
milestone,
like a buoy,
to watch the
broken line of
hills
the clearer gap
the vague
meandering of a
trail
the breath of the
rising sun
to look for a
trickle of water
to look for a
stubborn heart
taking off
attuned to the first
light of day.
A red
feather whirls
down
my eye
shelters in it.
In the garden
Jasmine climbs
and cascades
down
my hand scoops
up the fresh earth.
The word
light throbs and
grows.

Archibal
d Michiels,
1951

Territoire
s, 2013
Parable

That of the
useless servant
yet again
the one they find
asleep under the
leaves
lost in a tale
in which they are
absent

they greet him as
you greet
strangers
in a country
where they are not
welcome

they watch as he
eats
slowly
the food of the
other
the food that
doesn't feed

if he talks we
don't want to
know
what he says let
him say it
unheard.

Brigitte
Liebecq, 1953

Twenty
thousand
weddings under
the earth

spoils of love
dilution of dance
damp within the
bones
of ragged moons
bubbles of dead
dragonflies
feast in frolicking
sand coves
invasive pistils
ash of daisies and
poppies
dust of yesteryear
and me caught in
the icy chime
Eugène Savitzkaya, 1955

Cochon farci, 1996

You will open my lips, what little lips I still have, what little flesh, flesh of apricot tree or lizard, sweetness, flesh of fresh salmon, as thin as see-through paper, we ate after noon, evening falls, the wind is turning, leaves are plastered to the back of my hand, pierced leaves, bits of vanished skin, spit, you will give my lips the little salt I still have, the tongue that was of the family of tongues, tongue against steel, tongue on the ash when the ash is spattering us, when the tongue pierced me through I was with my brothers near the burning nettle or sitting on the roof, on the slope shards of broken quicksilver were tumbling, head exploding against the first tile, then it rained, arrows among the scattered straw, you will enter my mouth, the beetle
is sleeping there already
like a triton is the mud, only its tail
twitches,
badly swallowed it titillates its uvula,
it stalks my space,
spawns in my abyss, I am a pot
and in the pot fall the eggs of the icy spring,
you will lick the earthen pot, your forehead against its paunch,
a supple gymnast,
you will spit on it,
you will drop pearls, you will speak
my sweet hackberry tree.
walls collapse into my garden
is it a sign
stones and bricks tumble into my garden
is it a sign
the weather is fine on this Monday
the 12th of March
is it a sign

I dug up the soil
saw a fat worm I spared
piled the stones and the bricks
looked at the raked earth
the perspective of the terraced gardens
to the great leafless chestnut tree

I thought of nothing
I saw the buds on the blackcurrant bush
on the hazel on the peonies
I sat on the scarlet bench
I didn’t say a thing
I went up the stone stairs
I fetched the fork to turn up the bare spots to sow later

I dug up
I threw the stones
I leveled the earth
on this Monday
the 12th of March
Karel Logist, 1962

Une quarantaine, 1997

Not living but in life
Careful especially to lose myself
in the five horizons of the present,
in pleasures tailored by my senses
I write to keep ajar
the door to a poem just glimpsed
I live slightly less well. I weep into the wind, I turn around
What is this trembling nothing worth?
Half empty, half alive,
slightly more man than poet.
If near the edge I play the fool
Who is left if I lose my footing?

(Kate Armstrong)

Retours, 2001

It all starts here with the sounds of childhood climbing the stairs while we sleep

They return towards evening fists turned blue from all that knocking
snow between the eyes
the school roads
are the nicest returnings
*

Before, if everything blackground
music

birds

born

of

picture

books

meticulously

rainbow-

col
good
firm
grip
where
it
doesn't
hurt
pushes
me
and
we
for
A Chinese theatre put in place by the night, bedside shadows clash on the wall.
My hand the wolf
two fingers the
fairies
the hunter's index
finger aims at
the forest's
menaces
A voice perfumes
bedroom
thresholds

Mum puts us to
bed
and Dad sets the
sun.

(Kate Armstrong
with Christine
Pagnoulle)

* ‘What's
our world
coming
to’ she
grumbles.
The
unhurried
bus
moves
like a bear
Cuddled
on the
back seat
laughing
lads with
slender
bodies
two
teenagers
are
snoochin
g
'what's
happenin
g to our
morals',
he
concurs.
They are
old as the
hills
disapprov
e with
one heart
talk about
trivial
things
of
pleasures
and days
She is going to her second husband’s grave
He is going to the hospital
Maybe a tumor
He asks for the right stop
‘Just before the cemetery’ she says
I alone am smiling in my beardless beard.

* Already the storm has resheathed its lightnings
already the sea has retreated without waves
already the world’s voices have silenced your time
already the outlines of your vain face are fading
and I am still ignorant of several laws of love:
: where it invades us from
: how it manages to blind us
and why it deceives us.
Serge Delaive, 1965

Art farouche, 2011

Lumps

Who is I
scattered and
floating adrift
between one and
many
plots of identity
among whom a
poet
not another
but one among
others
all those gathered
as I
a poet looking for
some imperfect
music
lumping on the
skin
scars and shavings
dismantling of
self
at the seams of
language
inextricable
conflation
of muscles and
mandibles
that may save –
at times?

The small
pain or the
unquiet

Every morning
these days
I wake up with a
knot
hardening at the
core of my belly
extending to my
brain
obliterating
thought
reducing it to the obsession
of death and its trimmings
in a series of unquiet waves
whose angry tops come and lick my incantatory spirals
similar to the ocean’s hair
that is called spray.

A quarter moon
draws our shadow
son the cold smooth sand and I think of all I’ve lost
mine
you
say
look
at
the
parting
clouds
but
all
I
perceive
Islands
almost
pontoon's into the
sea
outposts of
civilisations
the private's
deadends
growths on the
skins of
continents
in-between of
vague lands
when the ground
gives way or tears
and salt water is
not yet ocean
promontories of
our hopes and our
declines
pedestals for
lighthouses
slashed by fog
waves raised in
blasts
bitter ultimate for
lost sailors
sheltered lair for
pelagic birds
whose flights
survey our
wanderings
mirrors
dispossessed of
void
whose people we
are.
'Hospital brothel purgatory hell jail'
down there at the fourth level under
ground of Tower 2
in the huge clinic
more
crowded than
a station on a
day of
departure
down there where
the hustle slows
down
where steps
become cautious
shy wary
where all is clean
and proper
where hands are
washed again and
again
where faces tend
to get covered
with white masks
with green masks
that underline the
eyes
where chattering
luminous
machines ring
inco
mpre
hensi
ble
and
threa
tenin
g
where at times the
machines scream
strident
martial
martian
where in the sleepless anteroom
the pararoom the premortuary
on the antibed in the precoffin
was it him still
his hands shackled
like two convicts
two madmen
this tearless and ageless man
this extraordinarily thin and much too smooth body
eaten up
eaten up by suffering
— physical suffering eating up moral suffering
the mind eaten up by the body and the pain killers
the present eating up the past eating up the future
and the suffering eating up the present of the body

eating up the mind of the past
like some Borromean ring
in a Moebius strip
— the relentless Æsculapian snake eating its tail
like those agglutinated tubes that violated his mouth and perforated his throat
venomous and salutary
tapeworm taping
into his solitude
in the fog soft and
solid like silence
of his gelatine
coated eyes
was it him still?

*

Purgatory hospital

at the fourth level
underground

in the sleepless
room

Purgatory hospital

was it him still?

at the fourth level
underground

in the sleepless
room
the anteroom the
antibed

dreadfully
thin

this tearless ageless
man
his hands shackled

in the motionless fog eating him up

his body eaten up

pain eating him up
tell me was it
him still?

the present
outstripped

b
r
a
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e
a
t
e
n
u
p

b
y
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d
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h
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 e
 a
t
 s
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p
Embarrassing situations whose primary meaning is that of their duration and rhythm. They need a long time to develop to their most extreme and unlikely limits. We can, for instance, think with dread of a roof terrace filled with naked, filthy and writhing bodies with touching turning to fucking and fucking turning to menacing to some parasitic bewildermen. Of raised hair, of appalled eyes watching at day break a broken jaw in a tub whose scattered pieces you attempt to
fish up through the means of tiny hooked spoons with cheap zircon encrustations.

* WE READILY ACKNOWLEDGE that fascism is the synthesis of mysticism and bestialism — i.e. the paradoxical coincidence of lust and inhibition — but we are more reluctant to consider the consequences of the frequent transformations of the common sense of fear into a resolutely modern, civilized, egalitarian discourse on social and economic relationships.
You know the puddles
Have no high tide
A low tide
wrecked against a wall
The man in the avenue watches
the drift
Of a tangerine’s Skin
For it is Christmas already!

* Since the voice of fountains tickles
the throat
The man on the pavement tries to whisper into the scarf
Of a woman walking along
Like water she runs away
She cannot see that his beard
Is made of foam

* In the city where the heart is cold
A circus is a bedside lamp

* He walks to find the step he’ll fall upon
Wonders about the pavement’s caution
To tuck in a man
who hasn't had
too much
As you add road trip to road trip, you catch yourself dreaming of a road along the sea, with a mountain on the other side which is still growing in fits and starts. Spring expands in your nostrils, cherry blossoms show the way to an end of April when you can wither slowly, when the wave turns into drizzle, when the drizzle magnetizes your skin, when aquamarine for ever encloses your pupils. So far so light your foot suddenly responds to the songs of the siren and steps unwittingly on the gas pedal.

* 
In your car you reach the sea, wavy market when the wave wraps
your petty
purchase
in papers of foam.
The algae woven
basket gives
butter a taste of
salt,
a taste of garlic
iodine
a taste of shrimps
with wafers.
Seagulls dispose
of the inevitable
blarney.

* 
In the car you
lower the seats,
relax your back
muscles,
stroke your
passenger’s
buttocks
with your hand. In
the car
you chew on
crunchy nylon,
explore the
smooth and
angular
soil of her thighs,
the soft and warm
soil of her belly.
In the car
you find yourself
on the attack,
receiving blows
from the door
and the back
mirror.
You write some
last thought on
the steamed up
windscreen with
the hair of your
backside
before collapsing
gasping
sweating coming
on the back
and the buttocks
of your passenger.
François Jacqmin
Jacques Izoard
Luce Binot
André Romus
Gaspar Hons
Rose-Marie
François
Christian Hubin
Pierre Gilman
Marie-Louise
Andreux
Archibal Michiels
Brigitte Liebecq
Eugène Savitzkaya
Emmanuelle
Imnhauser
Karel Logist
Serge Delaive
Laurent Demoulin
Michel Delville
Luc Baba
Pascal Leclercq