

THE TIGER MOTH REVIEW
ISSUE 5





THE TIGER MOTH REVIEW

A biannual journal of art + literature that engages with nature, culture, the environment and ecology

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The Tiger Moth Review is an eco-conscious journal based in Singapore that publishes art and literature engaging with the themes of nature, culture, the environment and ecology. The journal publishes primarily in English, but also accepts non-English work and their translated English counterparts. We are committed to creating a space for minority, marginalised and underrepresented voices in society.

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Editor's Preface

As I prepare this issue's preface, I write in light of many significant moments, personal and global, human and animal. On the personal front, my two years as a Graduate student is coming to a close, marking a move back to teaching. Three years ago, *The Tiger Moth Review* was conceived because I left a full-time teaching job to pursue my Master's in Creative Writing, which opened up time and space for me to read, write, research and edit. The programme has nurtured me as a writer, and editing the journal has opened many doors for me in the literary sphere these two years. I am grateful to have received invaluable mentorship from my supervisor **Boey Kim Cheng**, whose "Botanic Gardens Suite" is featured in this issue. As I enter into adjunct teaching this year, the challenge will be for me to find a balance between teaching and my literary pursuits, and I relish the opportunity I will have to pass on my passion for literature to the girls under my charge.

On the global front, the pandemic has shaken the world and changed our lives forever. Many have lost their lives and loved ones too soon, while elsewhere, others have been more fortunate and remained unharmed and inconvenienced. The poor and marginalised have suffered the most, and while some semblance of normalcy has returned to Singapore, other countries like South Korea still struggle to contain the virus. We have seen that the virus does not discriminate; it wants to survive. Yet, [the pandemic was brought about by human intervention](#), primarily, the disregard and exploitation of nature for human development manifested in the encroachment of wild habitats. The rise of pandemics over the last twenty years should make us stop and ask hard questions about human existence within the larger ecosphere: How can we live more responsibly, ethically and compassionately with nature moving forward? How can we respect nature so that our lives are respected in kind?

Towards the end of 2020, I received a wintering visitor, a peregrine falcon, who visited its roost across our window six days over November and early December. Known as a global bird, the peregrine falcon can be found all over the world, and its name peregrine denotes a wanderer, traveller or pilgrim. Perhaps we too are wanderers, travellers and pilgrims in our own way, and despite being confined to our respective homes or countries due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, this issue offers readers opportunities for flight and expansion. **Sindhura Dutta's** (Kolkata, India) paintings *Forest Bathing* offer a magical escape into the forests of our dreams, while **Nazarii Nazarov's** (Kyiv, Ukraine) translations of Mongolian and Buryat folk songs transport us to the rugged and vast terrain of mountains and plateaus. **Jaxton Su's** (Singapore) *Dust Devil* reimagines an otherworldly landscape of isolation and intimacy, while Filipino migrant poets like **Jean E Ragual**, **Janelyn Dupingay Vergara**, **Rea Maac**, **Nelie Bautista** and **Ailenemae Ramos** write to return to their homelands or as a form of escapism from working and living apart from their families. For the first time from the Equatorial Andes, **Lorraine Caputo** invites us to commune with Cayambe, the active volcano whose breath and fire are intricately intertwined with the lives of her people.

This issue, may poetry hold and comfort you, as the sea in **Cheryl Julia Lee's** (Singapore) poem "holds [her] so well". May poetry open worlds for us to wander and lose ourselves in. And may we, like **Siddharth Dasgupta** (Poona, India)'s speaker, wake to "step into a richly-brewed day", every day.

Esther Vincent Xueming
The Tiger Moth Review

Hold

Cheryl Julia Lee

In the places where people turn into seals
the way you and I turn a year older, I find space
for my longing. Keening took of me and in me,
and I took to it. This note that first seemed holy
and despicable proved banal finally.

And what is banal is also acute speech:
the torment of a country road, a tree, evening;
the gleam of a love once lived, however brief;
the guarded canon of the heart and its necessities.

And the sea, the sea, the swollen, swelling sea.
I stand knee-deep in this dark blue. Look—
it holds me so well.

City Script, an excerpt
Neeti Singh

Eagle wet-winged, swoops in
through the curtain of arterial dream.

The continuous fall of liquid,
splintered sliced moons
spread-eagled on Hyundai panes.

The incoming breath and burden
of needs, what will happen next?

Who will buy me parmesan cheese
and feed my appetite for Rilke's
poems, orchids, red wine, raw silk?

The sinuous spin of yarn and sin,
paper-laws of gender justice,
the trail of Raga Darbari down the street,

the drum of rain on tin roofs,
and plastic—an army of rising stench—
rag, garbage, gareeb.

A sneaking pair of love birds kissing
behind a neem tree,
rain and dusk and an open urinal.

Make me a cup of sweet tea—
adrak cheeni chai in a sublime overboil.

Tea takes its place as national heritage,
with forest lions and peacocks
rummaging in the shrubs for snakes.

She (who) gathers mushrooms

Gwendolyn Morgan

When the sun rose above
the cascade peaks
she laced her hiking boots, retraced
her steps like Raven following rain clouds
she knows the names of ink cap
blue chanterelle, black morel,
the understory
the forest floor
illuminates her path
to perceive the natural world
through traditional ways of being
elemental knowing leaf detritus
the forest lessons of ash leaves, white fir needles
mouse-tail moss, lichens, new territory of rhizomes
she wishes the children in the shelter, in the cages
could taste the sweet licorice root
touch yellow-green mosses
place rings of bracken ferns around
small brown earth hands.

She walks into this territory underground
ancestral land emergent layers, dense canopy
enormous mushroom shaped crowns
thousands of persons without homes now
she knows they will be wandering
seeking home for decades
if they survive as she has survived so far
guessing the names of other plants
her grandmother pointed out the ones you could eat
the ones to avoid like immigration officers
skulking in the shadows others waiting to evict
the wild ones, tented beneath Douglas Fir
her boots leave clear tracks
in the places where the latest news
dampens her hopes as she remembers
light a candle of invocation
change consciousness
like a chalice of golden chanterelles;
may courage sustain us all.

Restore their Freedom

Jean E Ragual

Birds fly freely
They desire to gain freedom
In their home
They desire a happy home

The baby birds
The innocent baby birds
The adult birds
The innocent adult birds

Birds fly everywhere
To find a place to be home
But all is gone
The birds are roaring
They don't know where to go
Somebody destroyed their home
Some birds die

Their habitats destroyed
Distractions kill them
Please let them live freely

Everyday a couple flies
Searching for a perfect home
With their child they journey
Until they get tired and
Rest their weary wings

It may not be your land
But this is our planet
And we are all one
So let us protect their home, our home
For the innocent birds of freedom

Let them stay
Offer them peace
Restore their place
And make them happy to be at home
To fly freely into tomorrow

Bird in Hand

Anna Morris

The rest of the search party had gone back into the woods. I told them I would stay in the bottomlands, hip-deep in ostrich ferns, looking south at the ridge. We'd been pursuing him for more than two hours now, but hadn't caught a glimpse in the last forty minutes. The more time passed, the more the lost little broad-wing tugged at my shaking muscles and weakening hope.

The last we'd seen him, he was beating his burgeoning confidence against the light breeze, even trying out a wobbling soar, like his training wheels had just come off. For reasons only he knew, he had popped out of the sugar maple and struck out over the mill pond, circling down until he was lost completely in summer vegetation. There was a faint telemetry signal from the sea of phragmites at the rim of the pond where I now stood, but his path implied the bird had gone back into the forest. This was a more appropriate place for a broad-winged hawk anyway. The rest of the crew trudged back up the ridge to the trail.

If he leapt out of some full-leafed tree and came winging over the pond again, I would surely see him from where I stood. But there was stillness, and haze.

Some distance from me, a pair of gray catbirds took up a scolding duet. *heerWEE!* they mewed, staggering their cries, up, then down. *eerWEE!* I knew I could not see them from where I stood. Juggling my radio in one hand and binoculars in the other, I caught a glimpse of Linda on the trail and called her about the catbirds.

"I hear them, too," she replied. "I think they're closer to you."

Then, "I've got even less of a signal up here," from the telemetry.

A thought, as fleeting as the sight of him: could he have gone down in the pond?

Sometimes hawks get injured in the wild, and sometimes kind people bring them to wildlife rehabilitators for care until they can return to their wild lives. In the summer of 2016, an apple-sized pile of cotton fluff was brought into the rehabilitation clinic at the nature center where I work. It was a nestling broad-winged hawk, far too young to even stand on his own. A woman had found him on the ground near her home, and suspected something was wrong with the tiny, down-coated wing from the way he held it. He couldn't quite fold it up, tuck it next to his body where it was supposed to rest, like the other did, and a quick examination revealed that the shoulder was dislocated. Were he a human being, the diagnosis would be far from debilitating, but for a bird whose shoulder joint is a complex apparatus of bone and ligament, it meant that he would likely never fly. His crippled shoulder would warp and wrinkle that *platypterus*—that flat wing—for which his species is named in Latin, and send him furiously wind-milling to the ground in a heap of panting feathers. He would not fly south that autumn, not one foot of the 2,000-mile river of raptors stretching from New England to Mexico, Costa Rica, Panama, nor any autumn hence. But a timid, tenacious energy burnt in his little brown eyes.

So we took him into our lives. He swiftly became familiar with the mysteries of people: the ways they moved, the sounds they made, the objects they lifted and carried and presented to him. *Neophilia*, the behavioral ecologists call it: curiosity, as seen in the young of many species, including our own. He would snatch a proffered stick and break it into little bits with his raptorial

beak. He had a flair for destruction, and quickly developed a passion for creating many little things of one large thing: no leaf or paper ball or pine branch was safe. He squeezed leather gloves in his talons seemingly for no other reason than the pleasure of it, and the first time he saw rain drops, he tried to grab them too.

I began a collection of his accomplishments: a headless toy snake, a crushed ping-pong ball, a rubber duck whose neck had been torn open, and a pellet with a bit of bright red fabric packed inside.

He showed me what he was capable of, one morning that first autumn, when I went in to feed him his meal. Seeing the rat haunch and impatient to receive it, the little hawk stooped low on his perch and threw himself across the space between us, landing on my glove 18 inches away. He took the slice of rat in his beak and began eating, wings spread to hide it from me, as if I would take it back. As if I was a sibling, or a rival, and I might, too, want to eat that bloody, raw thing. Of course, I had no thought for the meat—I was struck, quite literally.

Those inches soon stretched to four, five, and six feet, and by the end of the winter he was really flying. Explosively, like a touch-me-not's spiraling seeds, but he dazzled the small snowed-in crowds at our nature center. The little broad-winged hawk, barely a pound, readied himself by leaning forward on a tall perch, his partly opened wings quivering, the one drooping just a hint, and when I raised my arm he would launch himself vertically into the air like a startled grouse. He pumped his wings in quick pulses, flailing more than flying, the damaged shoulder always falling a bit lower on its downstroke than the other, but he made it, every single time, pouncing onto my fist and with bright eyes and raised hackles, demanding the meaty tidbit he knew he'd earned. We did this over, and over, and over, and with each session his plump broad-wing muscles grew. He worked through, around, and flouting his disability, though the x-rays confirmed his shoulder would never heal, and he was destined to remain in our care for life. At the end of the day I could slip my fingers beneath his chest feathers and feel them, the pectoralis muscles of this little hawk, built like an athlete in spite of it all.

By the time spring came in earnest and his juvenile feathers began to drop, to be replaced by the red-brown broad-wing bars across his chest and a black-and-white signal-flag tail, we were hopeless, he and I. The little hawk sprang to my glove, and I would take him for walks to see the mourning doves in their exhibit, on the trail through the woods by the mill pond, and down to the vernal pool. His bark-brown eyes fixed on this, then that, following a chipmunk rummaging through the leaves, a tiger swallowtail that once beamed him between the eyes.

His head half-cocked to the sky, he would track some distant soaring thing I could not hope to see. When it became chilly and our walks became shorter, he would fluff out his belly feathers to tuck up one foot beneath their warmth after a brilliant morning flight.

I was captivated.

His other trainers found him frustrating, at times. The next spring, he became inexplicably choosy about whose glove he would step onto, to come out of his enclosure and be weighed each morning or taken to a public program. We tried many things, to help him understand that any one of these people was trustworthy, a source of food, or simply a neutral component of his life, but nothing changed his mind.

Soon we simply worked around it. I became the only trainer he would go reliably with. After flatly refusing a large, visible piece of meat from the gloved hand of a colleague, I could step into his enclosure and expect him to cross the whole distance between perch and door for nothing but an unadorned glove. I cannot say it wasn't secretly endearing, but I still do not know what made him choose me, of any of us. We are not supposed to have favorites among the ambassador raptors, but little broken broad-wings are not supposed to fly.

We were tangled up in each other and could not get unstuck, this tiny hawk and I.

That August morning, I chose him for the outdoor program; he would finish off a group of four of our ambassadors and allow me to explain the magnificent migratory journey his species makes. A healthy broad-winged hawk in the wild completes the 8,000-mile round-trip to and from South America every year of its potentially 18-year lifespan, covering a total distance of 144,000 miles, or more than halfway to the moon. The broad-wing would fly a distance he was more capable of (about 30 feet) between two handlers, of whom by now he was quite accepting, while I spoke. The little bit of breeze coming off the north side of the amphitheater didn't worry me. If anything, it would give him a boost, and he would fly with more confidence today.

The crowd was large, and typical of summer. A group of young students from a local adventure camp dominated the first few rows. Families with children, tourists from across the northeast, a few staff trying to get out of the office on a beautiful day filled out the benches. The broad-wing's handlers began his flights, with one holding him up and out so that he could leave the glove when ready, and the other raising their own glove a few seconds later as the cue to fly. The hawk hesitated once, refusing the opportunity, but the second time the cue was offered, he went.

And went.

The wind caught him and he sailed, gaining a few more inches of altitude with each labored flap. I thought he would end up on the ground, then I thought he would stop off in a tree, then I was sure he would land atop the raven enclosure, and then he was gone, above the last rooftop and invisible in the edge of the forest.

I stopped speaking but managed to hide my shock from the audience.

"Does that happen often?" they asked.

"It happens," I replied. We laughed.

"Will he come back?"

"Oh, yes, he will," I promised. But I could not know such a thing.

I ended the program as optimistically as I could and joined the search in progress.

Every year, migration season hits us like a punch in the gut. The broad-wing's weight jumps 15 percent in the fall. He is going to Costa Rica in his mind. His gripping gaze demands more from us. *Zugunruhe*, migratory restlessness, manifests as a need for more food, more flight, more often. He postures at me through the window of his enclosure: raised feathers on the back of his head like a tiny brown Quetzalcoatl, tail fan hyper-extended, and a low held, inspecting eye. We give him more things to shred to put some good use to this energy. It is supposed to carry him on his broad wings 4,000 miles in just a few weeks.

But there is nowhere for him to go. He is unaware of the wider issue—he can only feel the pull.

So it was that morning when the wind boosted him up to the tree line and he vanished between the branches, a part of me saw the smoothest flight he'd ever achieved and thought, *Look, just look at him go!*

It does happen, that a bird flies off. All of our flight-trained ambassadors are well vetted for the privilege of flying free, or as free as they are capable with healed-over injuries to wing or eye or foot. They start out small, as the broad-wing did, with mere hops between two gloved hands, a reward of mouse or quail waiting after each success. We shape the behavior of flight with longer and longer approximations of the distance they will one day be asked to go, in an amphitheater for an audience, over weeks of training sessions.

I always laugh to myself when we are asked, "How do you teach the birds to fly?" What could *I* possibly teach a hawk about flying? We give them a context, and a reason, but they do it all themselves. I may know more about a hawk in flight than your average human off the street, but I remain a grounded, naked nestling in the shadow of their mastery.

Our birds wear telemetry transmitters when flying outside, as insurance against the possibility that they will take the third option in the choice between flying to the gloved hand, or not flying at all.

Another common question is, "What prevents them from flying away?"

The short answer, we know too well, is "Nothing."

We searched for twenty minutes before we even saw him, as many feet up in a spindly young beech tree. It was a long, careful twenty minutes. Any animal that has evolved for millions of years within a diverse community like New England's forests is not, no matter how much the individual may be out of place, going to leap out to the eye. One of the rehabilitators, with the eyes of the raptors she treats, finally shouted, pointing him out to the search party. He hadn't gone more than fifty yards.

The relief of locating him was temporary, though, when it became clear he had no intention of actually coming down. My upraised glove garnered only brief interest, and the entire dead mouse squeezed between my thumb and forefinger received not even a begging peep, nor a tail wag. I made the harsh little kissing noises, that supposedly sound to a hawk like a mouse in distress, and that always made him clench his talons reflexively and begin searching for the meal in question. Today, the forest held much more fascination to him.

Then, the impossible. He lifted his tail, muted, and leaned forward with wings just spread. Searching intently away and above my head—he left.

I glanced at my colleagues: a bit surprised. The wind today was with him, and his strength in flight surpassing. But it was only a glance. We looked for him again.

This happened to us another four or five times. The broad-wing would sit, contented, in a new tree branch far above our heads, ignoring us with offensive audacity. Once he began preening his wrist feathers rather than look at the bloody mouse I proffered. Scorned by the little prince.

Two hours had passed, and we'd been creeping west, closer to the edge of the mill pond all this time. Then, he chose to stay in one spot for over forty minutes. I tucked myself into the base of a nearby tree, refusing to let him out of my sight for a moment. A friend went to get me a bottle of water. In the heat, the bright green leaves of summer formed tessellations stretching out to the edges of my vision, centered on the hawk.

Before I got comfortable, he pushed out over the pond.

No one had wanted to talk about this possibility, but now that we faced it, I found myself crashing down the bank after him toward the water.

He flapped unsteadily, picked up a tiny gust, and soared. The pond wasn't wide, but it was not quite a quarter of a mile across. None of his tremendous leaps had come close to that distance today. Over the water, he turned and vanished behind a stand of small trees in a forest of phragmites. Gone.

I would have climbed that first beech tree if the branches began a bit lower. I would have tunneled through the purple-flowering raspberry bramble on my knees. I would, right then, have waded in through the sedges and swam after him. I was prepared to grab him with my bare hands, beak and talons and all, prepared for the worst he could do, but not prepared to lose him. Not this way, not when I had poured so much into him, and he had taken it with a gust of wind and left.

But there were the catbirds.

When I knew they were closest to me, I was not long in deciding what to do next. I hooked my radio onto my back pocket and slung the binoculars behind me, so that they would not be in my way as I pushed through the ostrich ferns. Quite soon I was at the edge of them, though, and at the beginning of the pond in earnest. With my boots I tested the boggy grass and let them fill with pond water, hoping the muddy bottom would not take them.

I kept my ears to the catbirds and sloshed out into the phragmites. It was surprising how far this seeming island of vegetation extended out into the water. The catbirds were in some woody bush, not ten feet in front of me, still scolding something nearby with unceasing meowls, but I could not see them.

For all I knew they were on about an otter, or a raccoon—

A sudden explosion of water and honking sounded off to my left. I froze, and so did the catbirds, as a single Canada goose burst laboriously up out of the pond, climbing, whistling into the air. I apologized, a whisper as it went.

The whole pond sat still then. I couldn't bring myself to move again. To turn around and go back seemed impossible—I did not want to admit I'd been chasing two catbirds yelling at a goose. I'd been eavesdropping on a common phenomenon called mobbing. When a predator is nearby, or something simply too large is too close to a nest, small birds take up a communal cry to chase the animal off, annoy the wits out of it, or simply ruin its clever ambush. Sometimes the best way to spot an owl in the wild is to follow a group of screaming crows to the source of their outrage. I had hoped, maybe, that the catbirds were yelling at one predator in particular.

But then they started up again, not even a minute later. The robin-sized, gray birds were flitting about in a serviceberry bush just six feet from me. Their black caps upraised, tails held high, they screamed at some horrid violation of their peace that was, in fact, still right in front of them. My pulse quickened.

I took a step into the water in earnest, cold rushing up my calf and down to my toes. The catbirds continued, hopping madly about near my right shoulder. I turned toward them and peered about beneath their bush, pushing some grasses out of the way, and seeing only dark water. The prospect of probing further through the mud was terrifying. I didn't trust the catbirds to know a drowned hawk from a living one.

The rustling of the disturbed grass rippled outward from us, but just behind my left foot, it seemed to originate anew. I turned.

Thrashing in the phragmites just a yard away, there, suddenly, he was.

The bog in my boots, the catbirds, and the forest faded like a cloud rushing by the sun, and there we were alone together. Me, standing and sweating, having lost my radio in the grass. The broad-wing, grounded in muck, beating his wings ineffectually against the tall plants and panting with the effort. I imagine neither of us quite grasped the unlikeliness of it all, that we could have been so lost, and yet manage to meet again.

I did not think—I reached for him with my bare hands.

Frightened and defensive, he flipped over and footed me, striking and crushing my palm and fingers with one set of knife-point talons, then the other. Relief cascaded through me along the bright spots of pain—good pain, for however strong he gripped me, the surer I had him. The hallux of his right foot opened the meat of my thumb, but I didn't bleed as it remained stuck. I wrapped my free fingers around his legs and gathered his exhausted wings close, placing my sleeve around his face to give him something to bite, and to calm him down. I took a small moment myself for that purpose.

The world fell back into place, one feather, one fern at a time.

I carried him back to the pond edge like that, sloshing and entangled. We stood still on the shore until both our chests stopped heaving, though still shaking. My radio had fallen off at some point, but I couldn't have used it if I'd known where it was.

"I have him!" I bellowed toward the ridgeline.

There was an echoing triumphal shout.

The search party found us eventually, even playing a bit of Marco Polo made necessary by the density of bush and fern. Nathan gave me a handkerchief, in place of my sleeve, to cover the broad-wing's face, and offered to take him.

"No, I've got him," I managed softly.

He had me pretty good, too.

Mongolian and Buryat Folk Songs

Translated by Nazarii Nazarov

1

Oh lynx from the Southern Yangay
As big as a foal
With spotted front legs
Oh how comely you are

2

When summer was gracious and happy
Oh my winged birds
Why didn't you come singing
From the shores of a big distant sea?

3

A bird from the northern realm
Is singing on the northern slope
A herdsman—my younger son—
Is dashing with a hook in his hand

4

With a sacred pile of stones on your top
Khangay
Blessed by myriads of men
Khangay
With a winter shelter at your foot
Khangay
Blessed by many—by everybody

5

A foal—born to a red mare
On the top of a mountain—
During the solemn race he overtook
My snake-like bay horse

6

Riding a red comely camel
I will go across vast Gobi
Under the flame of hot sun
I will get tanned—riding

Sources of the original texts:

- 1: А. Дылгырова. Песенное творчество закаменских бурят: традиция бытования. - Улан-Удэ, 2008.
- 2 - 6: П. Хорло. Народная песенная поэзия монголов. - Новосибирск: Наука, 1989.

on the other side of loss

Anne Yeoh

a patch of scales blooms on my skin—
the doctor calls it stress—
like that on a fish
limp in my hands. it shines silver.
a sudden fear rises in my throat,
threatens to bloom like the flowers
that die, their petals drifting
softly to the ground. it is all just litter,
quickly swept away like freshly cut hair.
each strand falling in quick succession
as i fall silent, shuddering as though racked
by grief at the futility of it all—
the scales, the hair, the fish, the flowers.

but the hair grew back, the scales
grew smooth and the flowers bloomed
again, as did you, as did i.

Cheluvi

Pooja Ugrani

streaked with rivulets
you run through me,

fragmented islands
submerge, resurface
in eyes that hold
azure tessellations.

I blush a bristly persistent pink,
tear away only to know
I am consumed.

I let you in
to become the raintree.

Note: *Cheluvi* is a Kannada film directed by Girish Karnad (1992), which tells the story of a girl who could turn herself to a tree.



Photograph credit: Raunak Sudhakar

“Cheluvi” is dedicated to the rain tree whose foliage covers my friend's terrace in Bangalore, and is a popular venue to have tea, play hopscotch, doze and listen to music.

Three poems by Frank Carellini

Yaguara

The eyes of a jaguar
are a two-way mirror
and I, its eternal subject.

It poses riddles of my
past like a sphinx, and
sips my soul for passage.

Its gaze is an everlasting
confession, and my
penance, perpetual.

Myriad vision from
the slits of monstera
monitors my vitals.

It can smell my jugular.
And I see its prints
in infinite dimensions.

Its assistants:
strangler figs and birds
of paradise

observe my stochastic
wander through
its lush lab.

The owl moths are
eyes on the wall
and gush commentary.

The desperate salt of my
skin, on its tongue.
And my whimper, in its ear.

It will eat me over and
over, until I get it right
and it, never full.

And when I need rest from
rebirth, it breaks to eat
the neighbor's chickens.

Lavender Waltz

Frank Carellini

The bees are drunk on lavender
and dizzily waltz
to lilac symphony and
orange blossom orchestra.

They gush at the ultraviolet
pop art of poppies
that we believe to be
for us

and discuss art movements
from baroque
peonies to
cubist rhododendron.

An entire stomach to consume
Van Gogh's irises,
bathes the queen with kisses
of sticky currency.

The hive, a salon, to trade
volatility for volatility
tupelo Rosseau for
mesquite Thoreau.

At bedtime, they nestle
and sleep on lady lupine—
dreaming of yesterday's nectar
and tomorrow's flower.

Saline

Frank Carellini

The wine glass to my ear
 like a conch
tells its story

of the hot Tyrrhenian sea
 that fed swollen grapes
with saline silt.

And the unrelenting Sicilian
 Sun no match
for drunken gods,

giving communion
 from molten veins
that seep fertility

 from destruction.
Hints of blood
 and Odyssey—

My salt mouth
 tipsy on its
history.

The Lilies and a Hoe

Sekhar Banerjee

I should have told you beforehand
that I have not kept any pebbles in my shirt pocket;
they are postal correspondence of the brooks
and the streams; let them circulate *ad infinitum*. Mountains, too,
have now some other thing to do like feeding night to a hen
so that it can crow in the morning, full of noise
of the lilies and a hoe.

In your voice I trace a whole city, its buildings and billboards.
Traffic signals blinking in all the wrong directions.
But an ascent is never green; it smells of mulberry
and alum. If you have ever climbed a mountain,
touching its Adam's apple, sorrow, its primitive ferns,
flint, its armpits and ambition—
you would have known it is insomniac.

I know a descent is speed.
It takes all that we have—the breath
from our memory, the fire from our toes,
the second part of our night, predicates from our voice,
and I still hope
to trek to a mountain in spring
on an island, east of the straits of Malacca, again.

Beauty in the Wilderness

Janelyn Dupingay Vergara

A thirst satisfied by raindrops slowly gliding
from the trunk of a sturdy tree—
tiny roots feast on the purest water.

A shimmering leaf—
catches sunlight passing through
the thick woods making it look greener.

A wild flower—
blooming without fear amidst the intimidating
suppression of survival.

It clings and spreads its vines—
following the trail of every branch
soothed by its fragility.

A beauty—
hidden in the darkest part of the mystical green wood
believed to be sacred by the huntsman.

It grows radiantly—
rapidly, flaunting its captivating beauty,
but no one dares to pluck.

Forest Bathing

Sindhura Dutta

Interpretation of a Forest

I recall the days I went backpacking across forest valleys and on mountain tops of Kalimpong. Weekend getaways to hills are a must if you reside in the northern part of West Bengal. This picture is painted using a mixture of two types of paint: Gouache and Acrylic. These pine trees as I have interpreted from one of my memories have a mystical touch to it. They are tall compared to the average human. They stand alone clad in the moisture of the frequently floating clouds.

Interpretation of a River by the Hills

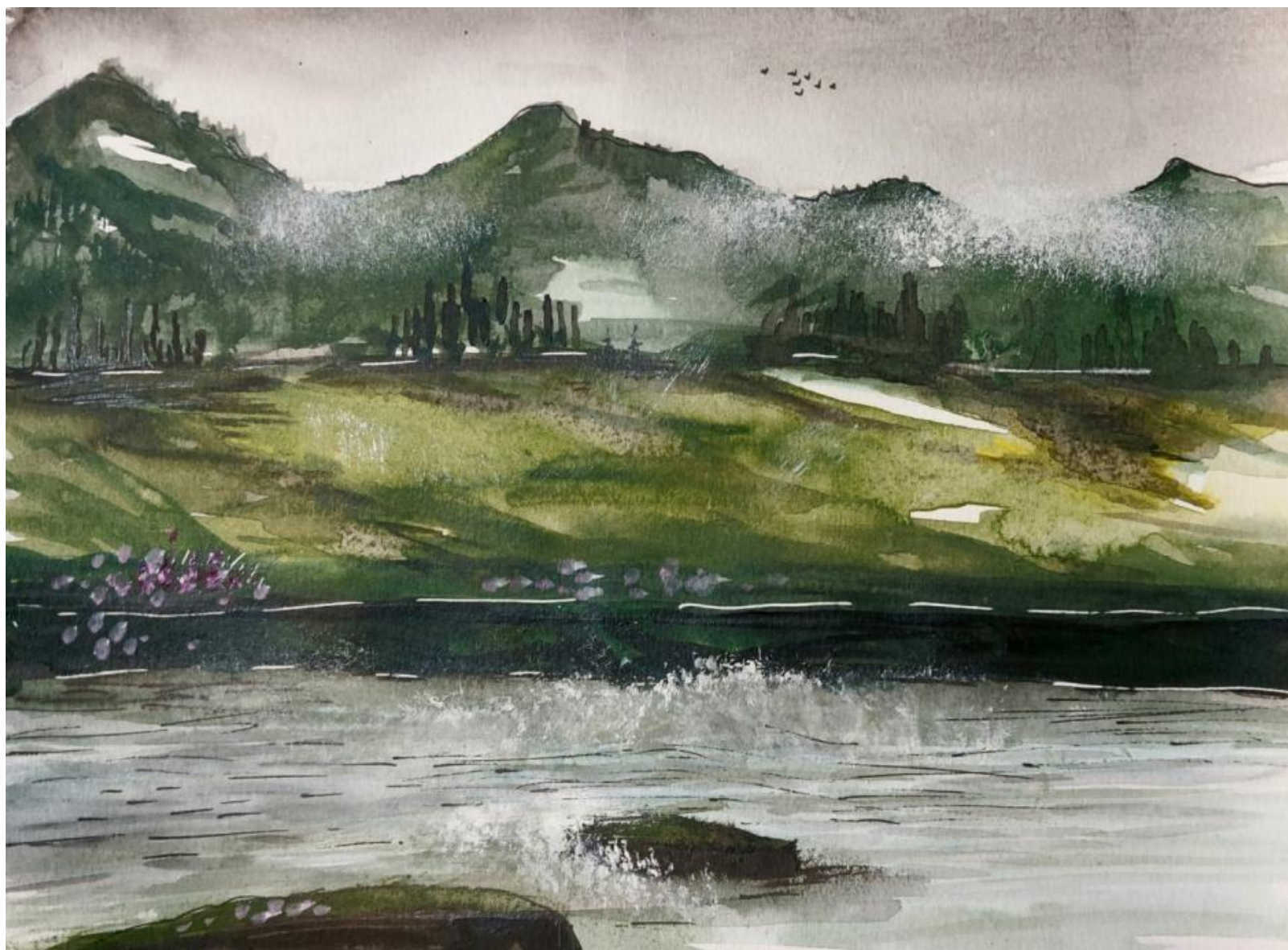
This scene is as I have imagined from my memory of a trip by a river near the Himalayan foothills of North Bengal. The water lashes on to the shiny rocks of Teesta making a gurgling sound. I remember a heap of beautiful ornate chickweed with little wild white flowers that had grown by the river banks.

A Work of Light and Shadow

This picture is made out of one such memory of walking through a forest in North Bengal where the row of trees formed persistent shadows and at a distance, I could see the barging light of the setting sun from a vacant portion in the canopy that let sunlight come through. Nothing could be seen beyond the light while I stood in the shadows of the trees.



Interpretation of a Forest
© Sindhura Dutta



Interpretation of a River by the Hills

© Sindhura Dutta



A Work of Light and Shadow
© Sindhura Dutta

Two poems by Ian Goh

Cranes

They chipped away at concrete and steel,
one wall torn down at a time,
a million or so locals of the hyper-plex

bending under the weight of machinery.
They dug from the three-thousandth floor,
paper permits shoved into faces, wall

to wall, kids with seconds to run
before the great cranes swooped on their triple-decker beds,
less care afforded for the old, sick or those plain caught

dreaming on the loo.
Soon, they broke into caverns and caves,
wild life given time and space

to raise whole jungles, even an ocean pooled
from the blood, sweat and tears
of generations before.

Finally, they reached the heart of the complex:
a one-room flat, frozen in time,
a man and woman in bed, hands clasped

in each other's firm, eternal slumber,
disturbed by the slow rumble
of cranes.

Kitsune

Ian Goh

As we scaled a mountain within a city,
my wife saw a fox spirit poke its ears
through the cedar trees of the forest.

‘It’s glaring at us,’ she said, invaders
of this place with shadows for eyes,
slow murmur of stone and slate,

clean exhalation of the mountain’s
breath on our weary faces. Here, past the grey bounds
of city and scape, we were but wolf pups

grown from brick and glass, our souls steeled
and shut within virgin groves till we lusted
for innocence over.

My wife whispered to the fox: ‘We come to pay our dues
to our old selves, past-present pilgrimage to a place
where the air is still, like forgotten breaths,

and our skin tingles from the memory of what might have been.’
The fox nodded, bowing its head
before vanishing behind a lonelyholt.

There, on the threshold between worlds,
it lies in wait of its true master, while we
continue searching for ours.

Two poems by Marie Scarles

Night Light

*Why do we keep shrieking
When we mean soft things?*

We should be whispering all the time.

—“100,000 Fireflies” by The Magnetic Fields

It is not enough to be alone each night in the field,
to search for all that flickers, illuminates and glows.

Around me, night air might be sweet, or foul—
honeysuckle or petrochemical. And the field?

It might not be a field at all but instead
a tenement building. People sleeping head to toe

rib to cheek, in Queens. This poem is rhetorical,
not imagistic, excuse me. Images I see in my sleep

in daylight, sold back to me in clips and bites
on a rolling phone screen. On-screen

I see minerals mined by low-wage laborers.
I see poisoning. *I see trees snapped like twigs*

*And children separated from their parents
with signs of PTSD.* Scientists say we’ve entered

the age of plastics—headlines keep flickering
between updates on C-list celebrities.

A critic praised a book of poems from the 90s:
there’s no hint in these poems of a social agenda

and still I see fireflies, in the dark, glowing. They hover
over the field, illuminate the transcendent

brilliance by enzyme—by *luciferase*—derived yes,
from the Latin word “lucifer,” or *bringer of light*.

My phone brings light and also damages the mind’s eyes,

divides night into shards of ongoing daytime. I raise the phone

at the Bandshell on mid-summer nights and ask myself:

Why do I keep singing when I see hard things?

I should be shrieking all the time.

Bamboo Praxis

Marie Scarles

Bamboo shoots its way through chainlink
in the backyard, & all summer Max swings at it
with an ax, cracks only stems from deep-rooted
fists that clench below-ground ready to spar
with the leaden dirt & toxic ground. Nothing
we plant lasts long out there: the zucchini plant
flowers, then wilts, the tomatoes stay green
& hard as pebbles, & the garlic scapes curl,
in surrender, to the ground. Despite this,
the bamboo crushes the fence line, upends
the chains that separate me & and my neighbors,
continues to seed and feed the backyard life,
& remakes the scenery: it unearths yards of
English grass, settler lands, French flowers.

Two poems by Mariya Deykute

Japan Kills 333 Minke Whales

Where anger swells
Where the drums drum up a dread
There you will find me
A bright blood flower for your crown

Where the boats eat seas
Where the sweet sap drips into the heart
We shall hold tight to a rope
We shall—

What brings you to a whale's funeral, my hermit shell?
The mistaken scent of dead bees
The sidewalk littered with stars
In the breakstones satyrs weep
Their reeds waterlogged

A man can leave his human core on land
Murder crawls into the shell and swelters

The whale sang his song for no one else
Where his belly swells
I will bring flowers
Where his heart swells
I will bring flowers
Where his eye lies blind
I will bring—

Tambourines, tangerines, tan knees
Under the moss inside the water—
Where the satyrs weep, they weep for me

You hold a degree in gun worship
Milk milkweed
Where my grandmother kept the bread
You will find me
A warm stone to lay on your liver

A man can hold a harpoon to a pregnant star
even as his fish heart his man heart his milkfed heart wails

What brings you to a carnival of trees, quicksilver?
The sky aching, a live manatee, a lost whale

Come here
Where the stones open their hungry mouths
Where the bricks open their tender mouths
Where the sky suckles them raw

Sandy's Song

Mariya Deykute

This is the storm to eat you up. Find a tree. Pray to your god. Remember that you forgot his name, her favorite sacrifice. Was it saffron or blood? Watch the ministries of leaves. All things deserve to fly. Or was it rye? Carousels of poodles and shitzus: the storm a tender juggler, a hard hitter. A blue dress sailing by, a naked woman chasing what she will never need. Your tree a temporary solution. Do you know its kind? Yes, you recalled, that's right. From a childhood chasm: ash, yes. Confess, confess, smear it on your forehead: absolution, it may come at last. You have a candle to burn? A cross to wear? Five score and ten. Your mother wore oil, herbs in her hair, danced in the den at midnight. You dodge firecracker snakes, submerged car-whales. This storm will lend you a flipper, grow you a tail, if only until you remember them: eel-skinned, yellow, at first so many and as we crowded out, one, and then none, no room for no one, all dark in the sky, night-night, lights out and we're here, so warm and dry, the storm stripping our names from our eyes.

Bulong ng Isipan (Tagalog)

Rea Maac

Wala kahit isa ang nais makinig, kaya heto
Ako, nag-iisa, nakaupo sa lupa, naghahanap
Ng nakakubli at hindi mabigkas.
Mula dito, aking nakita ang alon, sumalpok sa dalampasigan
Na para bang nais burahin bakas ng kahapon.
Malamig na simoy ng hangin, humahalik sa'king pisngi
Katulad ng mabining haplos ni ina, umaalo kung ako'y may sakit.
Halimuyak ng mga bulaklak na nakakalat sa hangin
Katulad ng pagmamahal ni ama, hindi man nya sabihin
Ngunit ito'y aking tunay na dama.

Hindi ko maiwasang magtaka kung paano...
Paanong ang alon, nawasak ng naaayon
Siguro kung kaya lang nitong burahin ang kirot ng puso
Eh di sana'y sinulat ko na lang lahat sa buhangin,
Hayaang ang alon na dalhin ito palayo sa akin
At huwag hayaang magbalik pang muli kailanman.
Paanong ang araw, sumikat ng may bangis?
Parang apoy na sumiklab mula sa nagagalit na puso.
Nakikipagsayaw ba ang hangin sa puno?
O sinusubok lang ang kanyang mga ugat
Katulad ng kung paano sinubok ng mga problema ang aking pasensya.
Paanong ang mga bulaklak namukadkad ng kay ganda?
Nakatadhana ba sila upang ang paru-paro at bubuyog ay maging masaya?
O parang ikaw at ako, itinadhanang magkita ngunit pansamantala
Nagkahiwalay din pagkat landas na tinahak ay magkaiba.
Makapangyarihang karagatan, kung saan ang ulap ay lumubog
Habang ang asul na kurtina, tahimik na tinakpan ang langit.
Yaong mga ibon, malaya sa kalawakan
Nagpapaalala sakin, na upang maabot ang pangarap
Kailangan ko ding pumaimbulog ng mataas.

Lahat sa akin paligid, kalikasan ay masigla at kumikinang
Habang narito ako, nakaupo sa lupa,
Hawak ang tuhod sa aking dibdib,
Heto ako, umaasa balang araw, katulad ng dagat
Akin ding maipamalas, angking kahusayan.

Whisper of the Mind (English translation)

Rea Maac

There's no one willing to listen, so here
I am, alone, sitting on the ground, searching
For what is hidden and unsaid.
I see the waves, stomping on the shore
As if trying to erase the footprints of yesterday.
The cold breeze kisses my cheeks like the gentle
Touch of my mother, comforting me when I'm sick.
The scents of the flowers scattered in the air
Like the love of my father, whose love
Is silent but strong.

I can't help but wonder...
How can the waves crash in so perfectly?
Maybe if it can erase all my heartaches
Then I should have written them on the sand,
Letting the waves bring them away, never to return.
How can the sunlight shine so fiercely?
Like how fire bursts from an angry heart.
Is the wind dancing with the trees?
Or is she testing their roots?
Like how problems test my patience.
How can those flowers blossom so beautifully?
Are they destined to make butterflies and bees happy?
Or like you and me, destined to see each other only for a moment,
Parting ways because we choose diverging paths?
Dominating ocean where the clouds have sunken
While blue curtains silently cover the heavens,
Those birds flying free in the sky
Remind me that to achieve my dreams
I must soar high.

All around me, nature is alive and sparkling,
While I'm here sitting on the ground,
Holding my knees to my chest.
Here I am, hoping one day, just like the sea,
I too can showcase my best.

Two poems by Lorraine Caputo

Being

I float on the sea
a coconut, a mangrove
shoot bobbing on the
slight waves of this quiet gulf,
slowly washing to the beach

floating, not being
just being coco, shoot of
mangrove washed ashore

Volcanic dreams

Lorraine Caputo

Despite the horrors and dangers Nature has surrounded them with, the inhabitants of Quito are happy, lively and kind. Their city breathes only voluptuousness and luxury, and in no other place does such a decided and general pleasure to enjoy oneself reign as there. Thus, man becomes accustomed to sleeping on the edge of a precipice.

—Alexander von Humboldt, from
a letter to his brother

Ecuadorians are rare and unique beings: They sleep peacefully among crackling volcanoes; they live poor amongst incomparable riches, and they rejoice with sad music.

—Alexander von Humboldt

I.

Every day I search the horizons for your ghostly shapes
beyond the layers of clouds that settle in this rainy season.

Sometimes, Cayambe, you rise bold against a clear blue
of morning.

But most dawns, most noons, most dusks I search
in vain.

II.

I remember when I first came here thirteen years ago,
we'd climb the roof to see the wonder of six snow-capped peaks

so near the equator.

III.

On a rare day, walking down the narrow steep streets
of this Old Town, I will spy you, Antisana & Sincholagua,
rising beyond Itchimbía.

IV.

I drift into sleep, blanketed by a midnight,
& one of you shakes me to consciousness
with your presence.

V.

& later I dream of photographing your panorama.
Again I look out my window, studying the horizon.
Again I approach, formulating how to capture you.

Can you all... in that space upon mere paper... ?

Again I view you... preparing...

VI.

& come clear dawn, Cayambe, you are brilliant,
your western flanks mottled black-white against
the sunrise.

VII.

During an icy night your shapes tower
in my Kodachrome dreams: Ebony cones,
ebony ragged peaks, ebony...

... looming...

VIII.

This cold morning, I glance at your vista,
Cayambe, Sincholagua, Antisana & those lower *lomas*
now bright with new-fallen snow.

IX.

Reventador stirring anew & Tungurahua
& Galeras over the north border. On Fernandina Island
the lava crackles.

Sangay... like always
glowing red against the junglescape.

X.

An afternoon I sit and listen to you, writing
these words flowing through my arm,
through this pen, onto this page.

Why are you calling me?

XI.

In my warm room, bright full moon
through chilled panes, I sit silent, eyes closed,
meditating...

& I feel a tremoring, a long trembling.

Is it I who am quaking or is it,
again, one of you?

XII.

From atop holy Yavirac, an ancient still-
born volcano, I see this modern Quitsa-to
spread its carpet of buildings.
Sunlight plays across the valley, glinting
off distant façades & windows.

I wrap my shawl tighter against the gusting
wind & meditate upon the nebulous horizons.
my soul walking those *páramos* beneath your slopes.

Your visages are veiled from my hopes.

Only the nearest do I see, its charred cragged
crater stormy beneath roiling clouds.

XIII.

I watch Cayambe with its sunset alpenglow
concealed by scuttling clouds.

& I wonder in what unforeseen moment
will you again

speak to me.

Air

Guna Moran

Translated by Bibekananda Choudhury

Entering into the cavity of your heart
With your breath
Scouring the bottom of your heart
I come out again
Transforming into your lukewarm night

You keep waiting
Extending both your hands
Through the open window
To touch the rain
I push the shimmering rain
Towards you
Turning into a whiff of air

In my heart too
Are countless water particles
Still I am yours
My only grief is
I could not turn into dulciana rain

First published in Assamese in *Janambhumi* (2019) and *Dainik Asom* (2019).

Axil

Alicia Byrne Keane

I hope all the fish in the Thomas House are okay;
have been transported
elsewhere; have new places
to peer at. I remind myself that Dublin seemed to
end in shorted-out flashes but really people would
have had time to leave
calmly, to lock up. My hair
clip is wavering pink, a blessed item,
made of three carved fake shells that look wrong
whether
flipped upwards or downwards. They
remind me of a mermaid's bra in a cartoon, frill
improbably.

My birthday was right before all of this
hopped off, I bought
myself things with a voucher
and didn't expect I'd be so unseen between then
and now.

Down the hall I can hear pages turning
every now and then, like a brief recording of forest
wind. There is a tree in the
silent heart of the city
that grows in a
rollercoaster swoop, the things you
do to find light.

I have played music with people
over the phone recently, something
I had never thought of,
the
chords brush themselves through the interstice
but bubbles of silence embed in their glass
weight.
There is probably no right way for a shell to land,
its fastening heart grounded
or making an exit. I
am trying to remember the video of the
small
creature, a hermit crab or
maybe an octopus,

who is offered various homey shells by a diver
but
only has eyes for a dented plastic cup, hides
itself
repeatedly in the synthetic crush, intersects bed
with hat. Here, I am thinking about dry hands
and
hailstones but so are many people. I am
thinking
of festival tents. The last layer of this dusk, the
one
closest to the ground, is like spun gold. I like the
way it inflates the leaves, reminds you
they are
angled and roomlike too, dreaming of rain smell.
I think on Tuesday, I might be able to go to the
sea.

Sea life

Ernest Goh

As part of the Ubah Rumah Residency (@ubahrumah), co-artistic director Ernest Goh of @ayerayerproject presents a set of photographic images from the Intertidal Water Walk artwork.

Ubah Rumah Residency is an artist studio and research outpost in the Riau Islands. Located on @nikoiisland, a stunning private island off Bintan, reflecting the evolving hospitality of the islands' biosphere and maritime history.



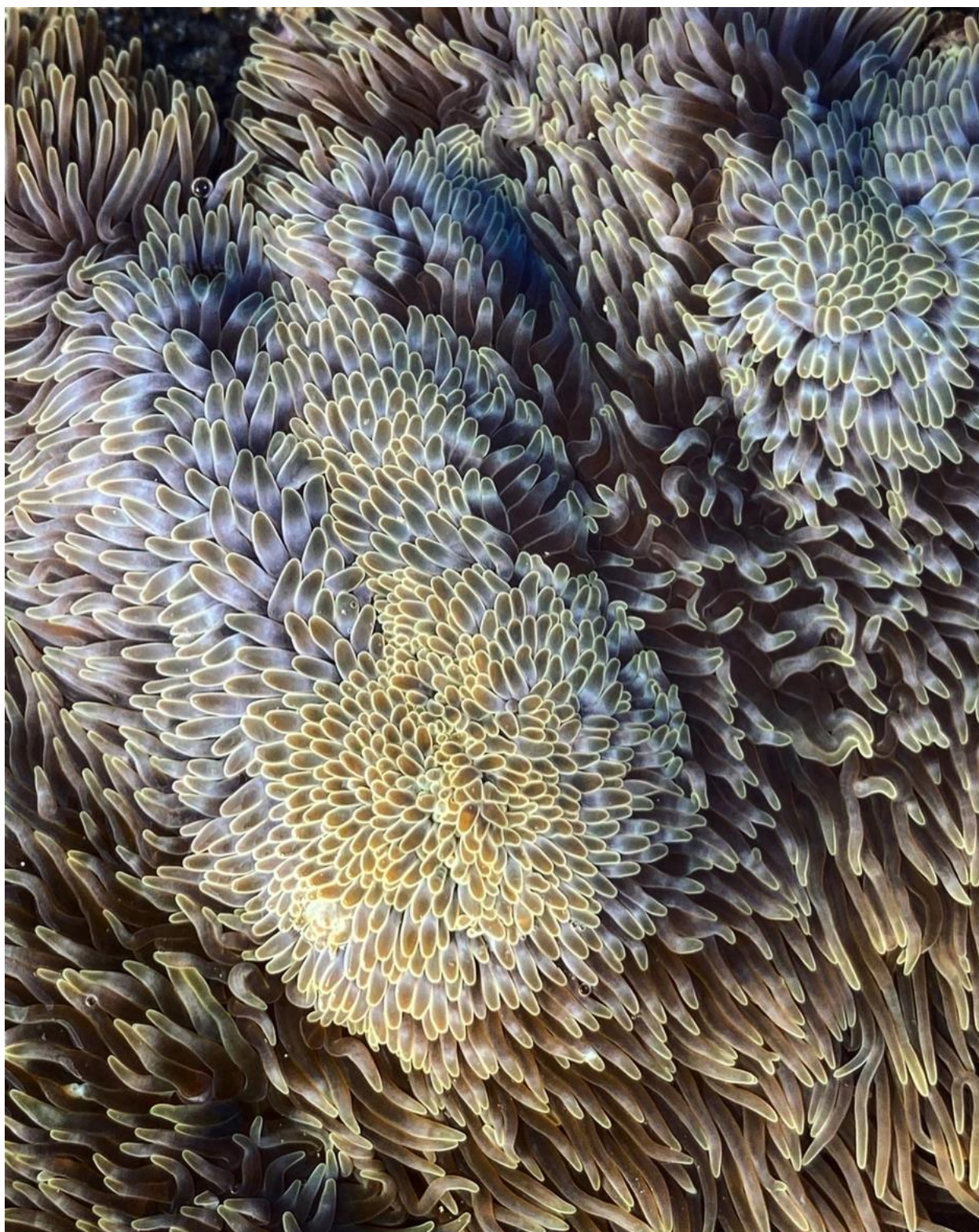
Sea Anemone

© Ernest Goh / @TheAnimalBookCo



Giant Clam

© Ernest Goh / @TheAnimalBookCo



Sea Anemone

© Ernest Goh / @TheAnimalBookCo

Citizen Sky

Joe Balaz

Citizen sky
above da changing ocean

your cooling rain
not going mattah anymoa

cause da plankton
may soon be dying.

Acidity and wun warm global bath

is altering millions of years
of unpredictable predictability.

Citizen sky
above da changing ocean

you seem to be as blue
as da planet beneath you.

Azure, cerulean,

let da nostalgic romantics
wish foa da color dey see

but I'll just go
wit wun basic blue,

turning blue,

wit all da sadness
dat da troubling crisis alludes to.

Citizen sky
above da changing ocean

da clouds are gathering
and da steam is rising.

In da little tidal pools

looking like wun possible
worldly catastrophe in micro

it appears dat da minnows
are gasping foa breath

as if dey all got heat stroke.

Citizen sky
above da changing ocean

it's so tragic

dat your cooling rain
not going mattah anymoa

cause da temperature is spiking
and wun new flood is at hand.

Not even Noah
or heroes of fanciful myths

will be able to beat back

da unrelenting
and unforgiving mega tide

wen it finally arrives.

Note: The above poem is written in Hawai'i Creole English, a variety of English spoken in the Hawaiian Islands today.

Bat Bridge

Anurak Saelaow

... at once apparent, the bats—obscure as periods—
were penciled in and tunneling over the Colorado,
yawing overhead, gilding lines of force or structure

across the evening's weight. Tensile sprays of tinsel
warped about a terrible brow of sky. I see it now.
Exhale between steel boughs, spitting up some

winged utterance that asserts itself in half-light,
sputum or hairball of desire given form
and sent screeching into night. What is a throat

if not an arch? I am a girder, bent, churning out
this furred and brooding cache. Fervor's eruptions
probe or cast themselves against horizon,

multiplied against muddy water. I see this
and want to know that I am still emptying,
that the body's arc still defies relief.

Summit County, UT

Turner Wilson

I used to take the drive home at 20 over the speed limit,
only slowing when I reached the switchbacks
that ribboned up into the mouth of Indian Canyon.
I'd coast uphill and feel the whole car tilting from one side
to the other, my luggage sliding on sun-cracked
pleather seats. Evening coyotes wailing at the mouth
of the canyon like it was their wrathful god, here again
to devour them. The red dirt moan shifting into the choir song
of granite, split from the roots of beetle-eaten pine.
The taillights in front of me bobbing like wandering stars.
The reek of brake pads and metallic squealing pressing
hard on the roof of my mouth. Trying to keep my eyes
on the road. Trying to make myself yawn to pop my ears.
I can taste when the air gets thinner, feel it get softer,
like the softness of insurmountably large numbers
that keep breaking apart into smaller pieces
when you try to hold onto them. The vastness
pushing outward in variations of peach and cerulean,
always outward and upward, outward and upward, outward and upward.

Two poems by Peggy Landsman

Salad Days

Thanks to Euell Gibbons for Stalking the Wild Asparagus

Dandelion greens
Milkweed pods
I lived alone
In the woods

Daylilies
Solomon's seal
I became one
With the weeds

Few belongings
But that book
The summer
I turned nineteen

Stalking the Wild...
I approached peaches
...Asparagus
Out of my mind

Lovely Milky Way

Peggy Landsman

Lovely Milky Way,
Hold me in your spiral arms.
Keep my planet safe.

Three poems by Chris Johnson

#1

A lone Indian flute
gestures to the night sky
and autumn moon.
I gaze into the silent,
Starry River, while the moon
plays in shadows
behind the silver-tipped
outline of a single cloud.

#2

Night opened her velvet robes.
Stars shot through plum flesh sky.
Silent apart from gentle murmurs
of dark dwellers in low shrubs.
Wading through tall grass toward
the homestead casting a single lonely light.

#3

The spear fisher emerges from the wash,
bends to rip off his long flippers
then slowly walks in the crumbling surf,
insignificant, venturing from the deep
lonely blue near the Grey Nurse's nest
to once again tread on the powdered sand.

Bukal Na Tubig (Tagalog)

Nelie Bautista

Noong ako'y bata pa, saksi ako sa tubig na pangunahing ginagamit sa araw araw. Buong nayon nakikinabang sa mahiwagang batis malapit saaming lupang sakahan, napakalinaw at napakalinis.

Araw araw halos maghapon walang tigil sa pagsalok nang tubig ngunit hindi nauubusan, nakakamangha ang tubig na iyon ay karugtong sa puno ng kahoy na sailalim ay may bukal.

Lahat nang nakatira sa pook na yun ay kasalukuyang doon naglalaba nagdadala lamang nang kani-kanilang batya upang mapanatili ang kalinisan. Napakalinaw ng tubig parang krystal.

Kapag nakadungaw ka, tila nakikita mo ang iyong sarili. Sa sobrang linis doon narin kami sumasalok nang tubig nang aming iinumina. At pang gamit sa lulutin ang lasa ng tubig at manamis tamis.

Mahiwagang batis ang tawag namin dahil yun ang nagtataglay nang pangunahing tubig saaming nayon hindi nauubusan. At ang tubig ay nanggagaling sa kabundukan na dumadaloy sa mga ugat ng puno, na tanging nagprotektang nito.

Spring Water (English translation)

Nelie Bautista

When I was a child, I witnessed how water is used every day.

The whole village benefits from the mysterious stream near our farmland, where the water is clear and clean. Every day, almost all day, without interruption, we drew water that never ran out. Water extending from the trunk of a tree, and underneath, a spring.

Everyone who lives there brings their laundry and washes their clothes in their respective tubs to maintain cleanliness. Clear water like liquid crystal.

When you look into it, you seem to see yourself. Clean water that we scoop into our palms to drink. Sweet water we cook with.

We call it a mysterious stream because it is the main source of water in our village that never runs out. Water flowing from the mountains to the roots of the tree, protecting it.

Note: Poem translated by the author.

Roots

Samantha Lucchetta

Roots is a photographic triptych featuring the autumnal remnants of cilantro roots. The limited space of the planter caused the roots to become compressed, even after they were removed from the planter and designated for compost. Their dark, entangled mass bears resemblance to the human body's blood vessels. Thus, *Roots* not only depicts the hidden workings of plant biology, but also represents the overlooked aspects of faunal anatomy to draw attention to the similarities between our bodies and the bodies of plants.



Roots

© Samantha Lucchetta

Locusts in Lockdown

Ashwani Kumar

Short-horned, slender desert locusts
swaying like a troop of nautch girls
stop in the abandoned Seven Islands
for a brief layover.

Amidst the raging solitude, they
perform an impromptu show
of belly dancing for wealthy lemurs
and famished flying foxes in the city.

They are everywhere—
on stones, wood, fig-trees, vines, olives.
They are numerous and numinous,
pious and treacherous.

Propagating eggs of carnal joys,
they fill public parks,
bus stands, railway stations.

With wounds in their ragged thighs,
jobless locusts clear blocked drainage
in the slums, demanding
free tickets for travelling home.

Some blue-stocking locusts enter
the porcelain green houses, build nests
with the dead skin of their curled wings,
settle like the lovers of my step-father.

Others are busy in isolation camps
testing the inflected blood of patients,
serving jaundiced honey to grieving doctors.

It is a ravishing pomegranate summer.
Neither are the gods vexed
nor hermits excited
about the pouring black rain of tears.

We must endure and toil
without complaining—
the unexpected carnival of locusts!

Two poems by Crispin Rodrigues

The sleep of reason produces monsters

After Goya

How the owls have gathered as groomsmen
hooting at the arrival of their dark brides,
who in their love propagate a race of night terrors.

What they do I could never. My reason is to wake
with her beside me, and observe between wife
and widow the shortening of breaths with each day.

In her hair, grey starlings nestle. In my fingertips
the strain of lilies has cannibalised itself,
leaving its bloodied stump. We are rolling in a bed

of shadows. This time we will make it work.
This time a forest will grow with children's dreams.
Outside, the bats and the cats and the owls watch.

There is room

Crispin Rodrigues

“In Lower Pomerania is the Diamond Mountain, which is two miles and a half high, two miles and a half in depth; every hundred years a little bird comes and sharpens its beak on it, and when the whole mountain is worn away by this, then the first second of eternity will be over.”

—“The Shepherd Boy”, The Brothers Grimm

Years ago, I brought a wounded bird in
from the cold, fixed its wing and gave it food,
but it chose to starve to death.

Years later, I would find another on my doorstep,
this one with a broken heart, looking to be cured.
I welcomed his sad eyes and his tired chirps.

We’d try again.

You mottled bird of grey plumage, like a nest,
room for one, I have lived in your loose leaves
like a refugee, though I own the whole tree.

I do not confuse age with wounds.

When you take off your clothes to let me see
your cankers and sores, I find your teardrop penis cute,
drooping like a sprout from the folds of mottled earth.

My caverns are large and perpetual.
They hold oceans plenty with water,
and the sunlight filters.

There is room for families of birds and trees.

Two poems by Brittney Corrigan

Anthropocene Blessing: Baobab

You of the wide, cylindrical trunk,
too large for any embrace, your
tufts of towering branches threaded
with nests. You of watermelon-scented
flowers, snouted by fork-marked lemurs
through the star-curtained night.
You whose seed-dispersers are already
ghosts, elephant birds lost to the dust
centuries ago, leaving you yearning
many centuries hence. May thirst
never topple you. May lightning
never split your fibrous core. May
your crown reach palmate leaves
into the vast blue heat. Tree of Life,
may you bear fruit despite how
we have failed you. Your taproots
reaching for water beneath our feet,
we with your citrus-bright gifts
upon our lips, may you outlast us.
May you who are sacred and innocent
shed us like dry leaves and remain.

Anthropocene Blessing: California Condor

Brittney Corrigan

King of birds, you of the nine-foot wingspan,
you who glide for hours on currents of air
without a single beat, thousands of feet above
the leaden earth. Scavenger ancestor, only
surviving member of your genus, longest-lived.
May you feast on the flesh of the dead
as you toss their spirits up to the sky. May
the carrion ghosts look down upon your
unplumaged head, your black-feathered,
sacred form, and be healed of all that stalked
them in this world. May you be not poisoned
by our buckshot, seething in each carcass
we leave behind. May you outgrow our
captivity to hatch your single eggs in mountain
cliff caves, giant redwood trees. New World
vulture, may your bulbous, wrinkled visage
remember how you soared over mammoths.
May you be revered as virtuous, as rising back
from the brink, as gathering your flock around
the fallen. May you take death in your mouth
and find it sweet, find that it sustains.

Two poems by Ailenemae Ramos

Paraiso (Tagalog)

Pinangarap kong makarating sa isang magandang paraiso.
Nais kong malaman kung ano ang pakiramdam,
iwanan lahat ng mahal mo.

Kaya ipinikit ko ang aking mga mata at nagsimulang makita,
kung gaano kaganda ang maaaring maging paraiso.
Nakita ko ang isang kalmado at mapayapang dagat,
isang magandang pagsikat at isang maluwalhating paglubog ng araw.

Nais kong magkaroon ng isang hindi malilimutang lakad sa tabing dagat.
Sa dagat, mahahanap mo ang totoong kagandahan, kung saan nagtatago ang mga mundo sa kalaliman.
Sa dagat, nakakita ka ng misteryo, kung saan nakatira ang mga bagay, namamatay at natutulog.

Sa magandang paraiso na ito, nakakalimutan ko ang aking mga problema sa buhay.
Sa magandang paraiso na ito, nakakaramdam ako ng kakaibang kasiyahan.
Ang ritmo ng iyong banayad na alon,
iyong likas na kagandahan, iyong natatanging pagkatao.

Dagat, ikaw ay napakalaking, umaabot sa isang malaking direksyon.
Ang iyong malambot na alon ay isang nakakarelaks na musika.
Ang iyong asul na abot-tanaw ay nakakatugon sa langit, ang dulo ay hindi makikita.
Ang iyong maalat na samyo ay pumupuno sa hangin at lumutang sa simoy.

Dagat, ikaw ay isang kaibig-ibig na regalo, obra maestra ng lumikha.
Isang dakilang himala na makikita, na nagbibigay sa akin ng dahilan upang maniwala.

Paradise (English translation)

Ailenemae Ramos

I dreamt of being in a beautiful paradise.
I wanted to know what it feels like,
to leave all you love behind.

So I closed my eyes and started to see,
just how beautiful paradise can be.
I saw a calm and peaceful sea,
a beautiful sunrise and a glorious sunset.

I wish to have a memorable walk by the seaside.
In the sea, you find true beauty, where worlds hide in the deep.
In the sea, you find mystery, where things live, die and sleep.

In this beautiful paradise, I forget my problems in life.
In this beautiful paradise, I feel a strange pleasure.
The rhythm of your gentle waves,
your natural beauty, your unique personality.

Sea, you are massive, stretching in a large direction.
Your soft waves are a relaxing music.
Your blue horizon meets the sky, the end cannot be seen.
Your salty fragrance fills the air and floats upon the breeze.

Sea, you are a lovely gift, the creator's masterpiece.
A great miracle to behold, giving me reason to believe.

Mahalin ang ating kalikasan (Tagalog)

Ailenemae Ramos

Lumaki ako sa isang simpleng nayon.
Ang aming bakuran ay napalibutan ng mga halaman,
iba't ibang uri ng gulay, prutas at puno.

Ito ay isang malinis na pamayanan, kaaya-aya tingnan,
sariwang hangin sa ating kapaligiran—
ang aming dakilang kayamanan.

Sa paglipas ng panahon, mga hamon sa buhay
naging mas mahirap.
Sinamantala ng walang tigil na mga naninirahan
ng pagkakataon.
Malalaking puno binayaran
para sa pagbuo ng mga bagong kalsada.

Nawala ang dating tahimik at malinis na nayon na aking kinalakihan.
Imposibleng ipaliwanag kung ano ang nangyari.
Ang malakas na ulan ay nagdadala ng baha.
Ang malalakas na bagyo ay nag-aalis ng lahat ng aming ani
sa pag-apaw.

Ang mga kababayan ay muling nabuhay, nag-iisip ng paraan
upang maibalik ang ating lupa.
Nagpatupad kami ng mga bagong layunin,
"mahalin ang ating kalikasan", magtanim ng maraming mga puno.
Nagkaisa ang bawat pamilya, upang makabalik
kaayusan at sigla.

Sana maging magandang aral ito
mahalin at pangalagaan ka,
ang ating mahal na kalikasan.
Para sa isang produktibong buhay,
at ang kapakanan ng mundo.

Love our nature (English translation)

Ailenemae Ramos

I grew up in a simple village.
Our yard was surrounded by plants,
different kinds of vegetables, fruits and trees.

It was a clean community, pleasant to look at,
fresh air in our environment—
our great treasure.

Over time, life challenges
became more difficult.
Relentless inhabitants took advantage
of the opportunity.
Large trees paid
for the building of new roads.

Gone is the once quiet and clean village I grew up in.
It is impossible to explain what happened.
The hard rains bring floods.
Strong storms wash away all our yields
in the overflow.

Compatriots revived, thinking of a way
to restore our land.
We implement new goals,
"love our nature", plant many trees.
Every family united, to return
order and vitality.

I hope this is a good lesson
to love and care for you,
our dear nature. For a productive life,
and the welfare of the world.

My dreams

Lucas Zulu

my dreams
are made of turbines
crying and trying to swallow up

the damp air

my dreams
are made of emerald green
never cease to belch out

a breath of fresh air

my dreams
are made of turquoise
detoxifying the ochre haze

lemon grass wafting to my balcony

my dreams
are made of recycling
so keen to reuse

waste disposal

my dreams
are made of cycling more
driving less

to reduce my ecological footprint

Art

Tammy Lai-Ming Ho

For some, the art of leaving isn't hard
to master. The one-way plane tickets, the house,
possibly a backyard. The city loses something

each day: freedoms; its finest lawyers, writers,
scholars who will one day look back
at this broken ship of a town

with loving nostalgia. The art of staying, however,
must be mastered regardless of how, for those
whose roots evidently know this is the land

where their bones shall be ground to dust. The
mountains have seen their ancestors. They own
this city, this realm, even the bittersweet summer

sun. Some wonder if the harbour will smell
the same. The trees? How long will it take
before mail is confiscated? When will coins

and banknotes erase Hong Kong? Will we
speak a different tongue and become
a placid province? Going, going, gone.

Dust Devil

Jaxton Su

2020

Two Channel Video and Sand

06:39 / loop

Dust Devil is a video installation that stems from three poems written by myself during a disconcerting time of isolation. I created an otherworldly landscape inspired by personal experiences, memories and obsessions. The work plays with poetic rhythms as it speaks using a language of duality—of an interior and an exterior, of distance and intimacy, of longing and indifference, and of growing and waning.

In my practice, I have always been keen on drawing metaphorical parallels between natural phenomena and the self as I experiment with various mediums. Nature, like the human psyche, is often hard to grasp, at times mysterious and unpredictable as it evolves over time. I often imagine the psyche as otherworldly landscapes to make sense of it and to find a way to visualise it. Sometimes, I think of volcanoes, sometimes the desert, and sometimes the forest, etc. *Dust Devil* is one of these experimentations where I utilise photographs and clips from my archive of images captured at various locations—one of the few materials I had with me during the Circuit Breaker period. The desert scenes were taken at Gran Canaria in the Canary Islands, while the scenes of trees were taken in Scotland.

Dust Devil is part of *Sandstorm in an Hourglass* exhibition curated by Magdalen Chua.

Subtitles / Poems:

A silent scream
Echoes through the cavities.

Indifference presses on,
Where empty trees stood still.

Unending sea of mounding dust-
Land of the forlorn.

Merciless wail;
Rush of chill.

Memories under illusive veil.
To unearth or to entomb?

Acute moments, I once feel.
Voices besiege an empty room.

Evanescant flames to unsettled dust,
Dancing amongst chilling gust.

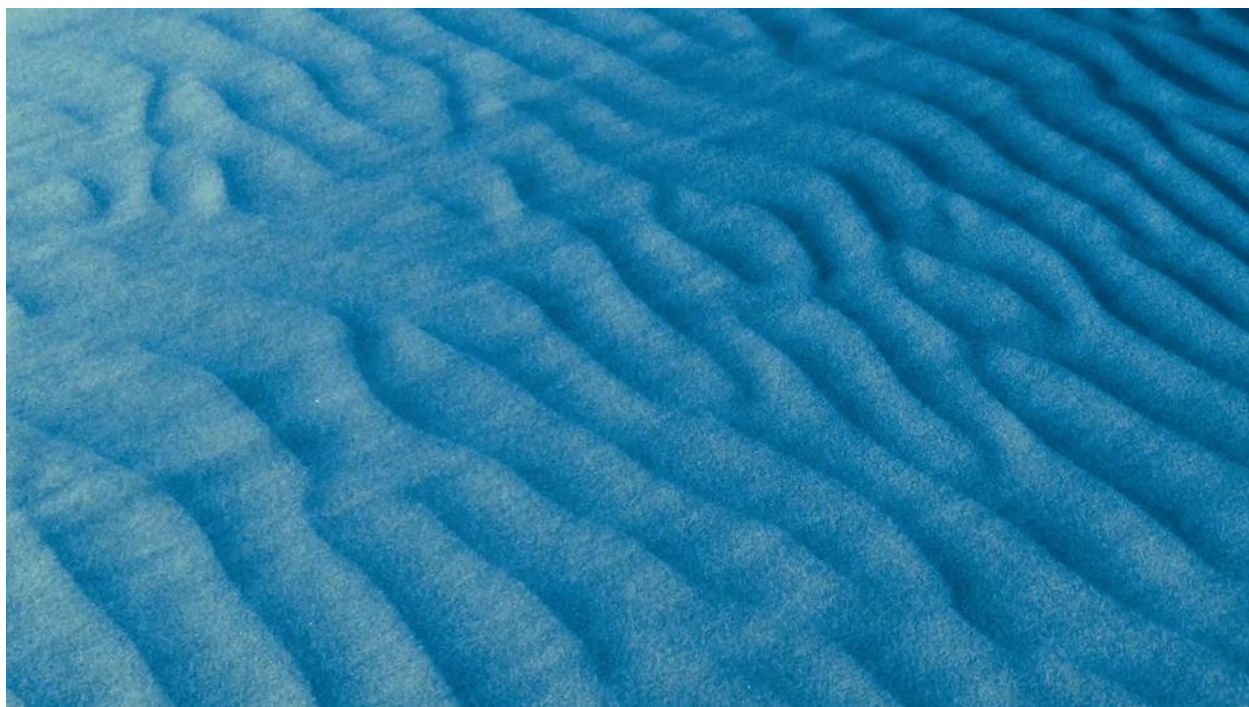
Shadows pursue a single soul.

Never fading; unswerving past.
The void filled with age's rust.

Undisclosed desires grow.



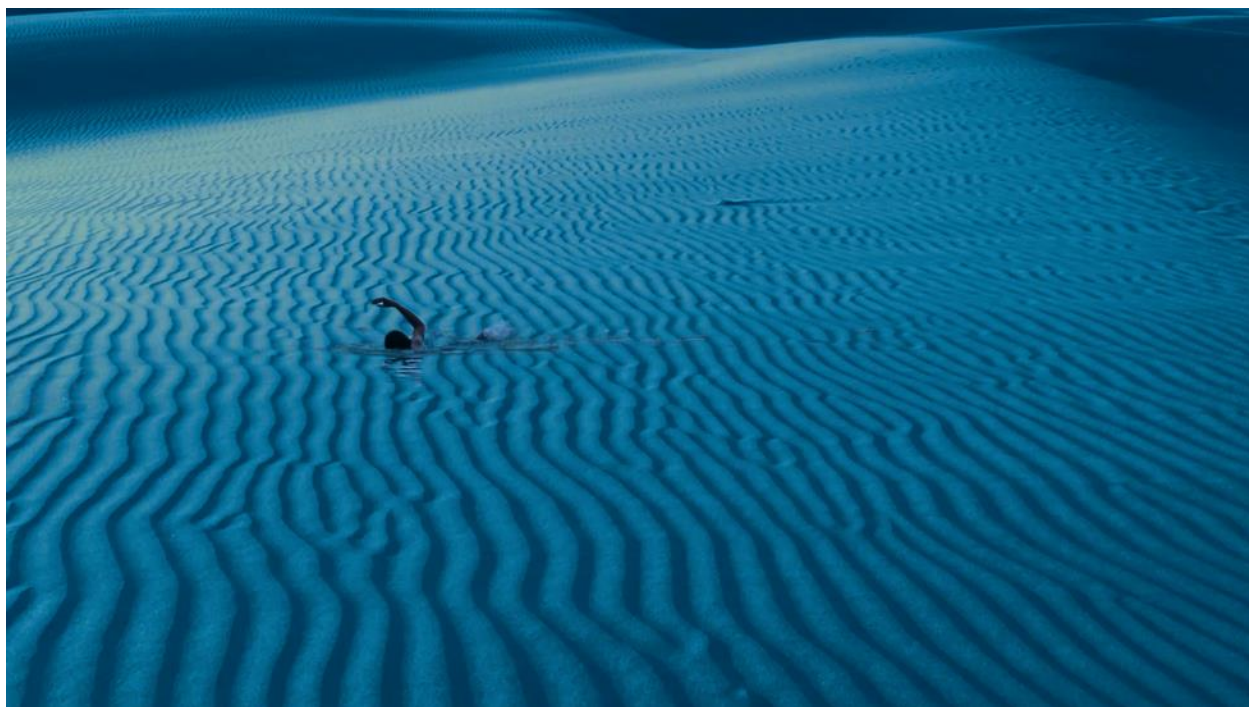
First channel
© Jaxton Su



Second channel
© Jaxton Su



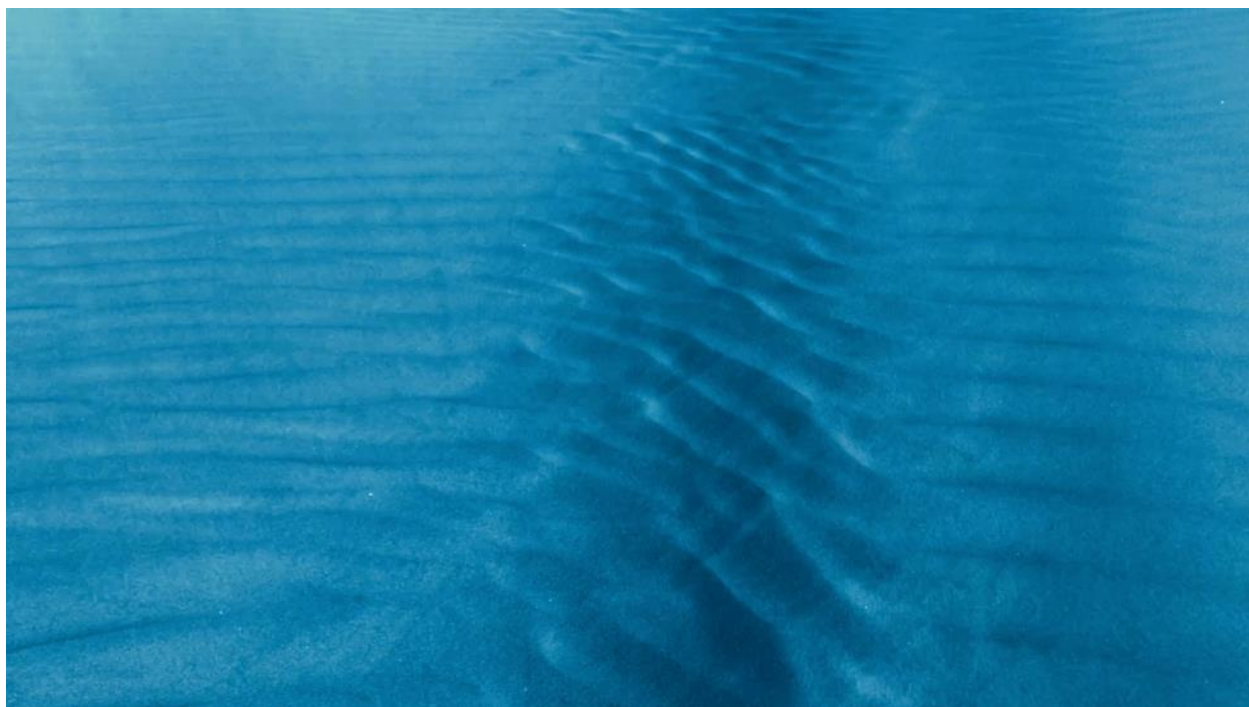
First channel
© Jaxton Su



Second channel
© Jaxton Su



First channel
© Jaxton Su



Second channel
© Jaxton Su



Installation view of *Dust Devil* at The Substation.
Photo credit: Shian Bang



Installation view of *Dust Devil* at The Substation.
Photo credit: Shian Bang



Installation view of *Dust Devil* at Tzu Chi Humanistic Centre.
Photo credit: Shian Bang

Botanic Gardens Suite

Boey Kim Cheng

Gate

The wrought-iron gate opens to a day
of unnoticed, unalloyed happiness, the lift,
the release you feel as the asphalt path leads in,
all mica-glints in the hot dazzle of the sun, the vibrato
of promise in the green-scented air, the light
distilled in summer-like chords
over the grass, raking piled leaves
under the Cola and Monkey Pot trees,
though this is the tropics
and the light doesn't go seasonal and fade
but hums a steady overtone, constant as the insect choir
that sounds like silence, a note you will miss
years later, an émigré far from this garden,
and homesick at summer's cicada drone. But now
you swim in the flood of light, revel
in the drench, the clean smell of it,
the sun-soaked scene, in spreading acres
of turf-grass unfurling on both sides of the path,
its skin a hot flush in the sun, or a cool mat in the
canopy shade the trees paint. You slip
from your dad's hand to race
up the lawn, your *Little House on the Prairie* moment,
to roll down the slope, the blades of grass
pliant. You feel the press of the earth,
and beneath the plush green weave sense
the heaving, sustaining ground
that holds you up and yet weights you
like flesh, like time, down to the wandering
veins of roots, the earth's pulse. For the day
you wear the kiss of paradise
on your clothes, the green stain
of happiness on your skin, the breath of
grass that will stir in your middle-aged body.

Swan Lake

The dappled lotus-fringed mirror of the pond

catching the kingfisher's lightning-blue darts
zipping across the stillness, a snapshot flash
caught on the flawed glass of sky
on which the pair of swans drifts.
Or was it a troupe of them?
You remember it as a white pair
gliding across the sky-reflecting water,
their wing-beats shattering the blue-green pane
momentarily. And Dad and Mum watchful, their bodies
melting in a wavering embrace on rippling mirror,
over you and Sister, your shadows racing
to track the departing swans
making for the rushes, their mooring place
by the Nibung-palm island.
You forget them and lean over
the shadow-play of carp, their shimmering signatures
all translucent silvers and reds, and the dim
form rising from the murk,
its armour-plated back glistening,
its venerable head poking through,
smiling mouth breathing bubbly syllables,
a being from a past so ancient, or an
afterlife so deep, it seems to hold
the future in its sad gaze.

Café

Nobody knows it was here, a no-frills pavilion-café
overlooking the dipping lawn and Swan Lake.
And the hours the youth sat over his pot of tea
bought with a week of saved pocket money,
musing over a copy of Yeats, his mind drunk
on the mournful words, drifting
on the fifty-nine wild swans on the page, turning
Swan Lake autumnal, and the path around
it, where his family had walked, the noise
of strife far off, his hands in his parents',
changed into the leaf-strewn woodland track
of Coole Park; the pair multiplied into nine-and-fifty,
their silent white music stirring the dreamy water.
Beneath the cicada alto choir,
he heard the middle-aged poet's music
of vanishing and loss; beneath the leaves'

whispers and the wet whistles of orioles
and bulbuls, he felt the deep bass chord
of silence, glimpsed the absence
in the echoing images on the watery mirror,
of the boy, his family, and the swans
gone with the clouds and sky.

Frangipanni

The ghostly grove, their pale mottled trunks, twisted
limbs, all graveyard-grey shimmer, Impressionist
impastos of a Van Gogh orchard. He often wanders
here, the lost youth he has become,
an obligatory stop to get scent-drunk,
on petals' milky, cool, sweet flesh,
so luscious-lemony, or rose-pink, silk-sappy,
that he wants to pin it, hold the scent
down, wants it to keep, picking the fallen
flowers and sniffing them, sensing
a whiff of something lost, a ghost,
a haunting shade between forgetting
and remembering. Years later, an alien
in a foreign land, on a plot made
home, he will plant a yellow plumeria,
He will feed it with compost of memories,
and water it with dreams of the garden.
but it will never take root, never bloom,
its ashen body striking a death note of exile
from time's garden, the heady fragrance
irrecoverable, the key lost, the memory
of the scent of home dead.

The Lane

The 150-year-old Jelawi guardian at the entrance,
its skyward-gazing body wholly healed, no memory
of the lightning that had seared its giant
trunk rising into the sun-spangled canopy,
its lofty crown joining other titans
to hold up the rainforest roof, their sinewy
hands cross-stitching a weave so close
the sun-beams filter through in strained gradations.

Trees whose names he never mastered
till in another life he returns as a middle-aged tourist
and start to befriend them: the elegant Jelutong,
the towering Meranti, the Shoreas and Hopeas,
all cabled by liana, birdsong and leaf-rot
into constituency of witness
to what passes beneath them, their leaves and roots
taking into heart-rings of memory
the ages of the country, and his absence.
As he listens with the measure of his hands
on the storied bark, he sees the youth
reciting Edward Thomas "The Lane" under
the tree canopy, his head filling with foreign names:
harebell and dwarf gorse, hollies and bracken,
turning the tropical path into the lonely poet's
unpeopled lane, walking into the poem,
its lines banked with flowers he will never see,
its quiet music leading into a country
of troubled peace away from the rainforest source.
Now the lane is a boardwalk, and multitudes pass
under the rainforest vault, but
the trees are old welcoming friends,
their bodies blessing the emigrant's
hands with homecoming, the light
hovering in the understorey hold,
remembered, forgiving.

Palm Valley

This part of the garden clad
in floating nations of palms,
the Royal, the Majestic, lone
or grouped, the Fan, the Lontar
and Coco de Mer, travelling palms
seeded in foreign soil, transplants
gone native where the garden
dips on all sides to its inner lake.
You lie in the areca thatch-shade
and watch the crowns of the palms touched
with shimmering notes of the late-
afternoon sun, their fronds combing
the celadon-blue sky. You tune in
to calypso whispers of breakers, murmurs

of combers on faraway sands and in
the palm exchange you hear rumours
of origins, their tufted heads leaning
together in the memory of voyages
from where they have come from
to where they now belong.

You remember reading Neruda's
Residence On Earth under the sun-drunk
palms, and feel time slow in the lengthening
shadows, memory awakening in the deepening
tone of daylight. In your body you knew then
the poetry of earthy longing, the music born
of distance, of roots stirring with dreams
of home, of wandering branches alive
with the leaf-language of time and memory,
the history of leaving and homecoming
these travelled palms recite as the wind
and light pass through them.

Passage

Gail Anderson

This old bridge brings him from the river:
rough sleeper, sun-razored and eddying
into the market square

where headbent victory holds a scroll,
extends towards earth her laurel wreath,
this drifter cadges

black Costa coffee, a cigarette,
watches from a bench
lycra cyclists click in and fly, starlings.

He is a no-brakes man
all downs and dip-slopes,
river flows and passages, paused

before the florist's window,
clipped anemones bright below a gable
(where life hung

over a tipped chair
one Sunday last spring,
coursed away as bells rang

changes) he knows incision:
as a river cuts shore from shore,
staircasing to sea,

as bronze cries verdigris
over dead names on a plinth,
as a mind flips to madness, bud-snipped

histories spun to edgelands,
seeped to gravel beds,
not lost exactly, but hidden;

divergence heels him
back to the river, marking the fallen
leaves of autumn,

back to that first bridge
arching storied waters still
in the making.

The Yield

Jake Goldwasser

The land will yield ragwort and bluebells and brambles
without intervention. Leaves that taste
like sour apples, tufts that sheep can eat,
and huge clouds of fruit flies and midges.

A little effort and the land will yield
leeks and radishes and tarragon. Neat rows
of sprouts will greet your afternoons. Tith
and sunlight and rain. The land will yield
to the intentions of careful hands.

Here is an example:

border collies stay low
to the land and shepherd with their eyes.
Welsh collies are distinguished only by their actions.
They make rounds and hike tails high
to make their outlines known in tall scrubland.
They raise themselves like hands. The land will be
unyielding. It will carve grooves in your shins with
shark teeth that go loose. It will pool and suck at your ankles
underground. Your toes will mingle with rhizomes
and mushrooms. Keep your nose as low as a hound's—
the ground will yield a foothold for the heels
you sink toward a first step forward, down; will yield
rags and stories; with the right girding will yield
croaks and crickets, elms and oaks and hazels;
the magenta dye of beetroots on a plate,
the leatherworker's tanned hide of your feet.

The Geography of Everyday Things

Siddharth Dasgupta

There are tattoos left on this earth, large enough to swallow
time, giant and monster-like from when continents drifted

apart—an amicable separation, they called it—or from when
lands came crashing against each other’s flora, filling the lacuna

that had widened over millions of years. Breakfast this morning
is artichokes and avocados, scooped and layered over bread

filled with whole grains, bought from a woman who bakes them
at home. A plate of bronze cups the intimacies of tasted loaves.

We lead such specific lives—a room, a home, a few friends, most
acquaintances really, the glamour of distant summers, the ache

of nights buried beneath the hunger of foreign skies, a homeland,
the Buddhism of family, of fragrance, books, lovers, and those

continents of desire that have marked themselves on our maps.
I’ve thought about getting a tattoo a few times. Something small,

something to roughen my smooth and quieten the jagged. Each
time I think of a rose, or swallows, a word, or a lyric, I remember

where I am—on this earth—and how the first tattoos remain
the only ones. A Sahara of sorrows, a Ganga of remembering,

to forget, the Amazons of our amnesias, lagoons and Novembers,
islands and driftwood, the Atacamas of our amazement,

the tenderness of the Thar... An Antarctica of believing in things,
and watching them dance into the ocean. Ours are epic lives,

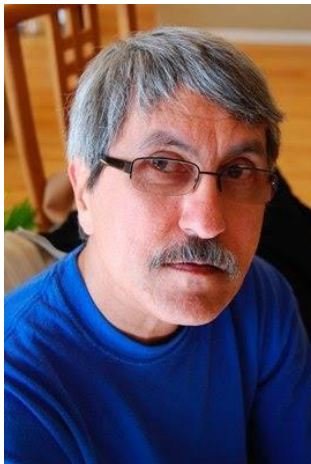
if you come to think of it—love and its immensity. Bodies
and belief. I walk into a café and the assurances of coffee.

The day is rife with an unspoken promise. Beneath me, the soil
heaves. I feel my tattoo. And step into a richly-brewed day.

Contributors



Gail Anderson writes about water, nature and place. Recent work appears in *Mslexia*, *Ambit*, *Crannog*, *Strix* and *The Cabinet of Heed*. She can usually be found in her boat on the River Thames.



Joe Balaz writes in Hawaiian Islands Pidgin (Hawai'i Creole English). He is the author of [*Pidgin Eye*](#), a book of poetry. NBC News featured the book for Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, as one of the best new books to be written by a Pacific Islander in 2019. Balaz was recently honored in July, 2020, with the Elliot Cades Award for Literature as an Established Writer for 2019 for his many literary works through the years. The award is the most prestigious literary honor in Hawai'i. Balaz presently lives in Cleveland, Ohio.



Sekhar Banerjee is a bilingual writer. He has four poetry collections and a monograph on an Indo-Nepal border tribe to his credit. He lives in Kolkata, India.



Nelie Bautista is from Bontoc, Southern Leyte, Philippines, and has been working in Singapore for the past seven years as an elderly care helper. Bautista is a member of Carnival of Poetry and Migrant Writers of Singapore, and has read her poem at Sing Lit Station. She is a Diamond team leader and social media correspondent at Uplifters.



Boey Kim Cheng was born in Singapore in 1965. He migrated to Australia in 1997. He has published five collections of poems, a travel memoir entitled *Between Stations* and a historical novel about the Tang poet Du Fu entitled *Gull Between Heaven and Earth*.



Lorraine Caputo is a documentary poet, translator and travel writer. Her works appear in over 180 journals on six continents and 12 chapbooks of poetry – including *Caribbean Nights* (Red Bird Chapbooks, 2014), *Notes from the Patagonia* (dancing girl press, 2017) and *Fire and Rain* (Red Mare #18, 2019), a collection of eco-feminist poetry. She also authors travel narratives, articles and guidebooks. In March 2011, the Parliamentary Poet Laureate of Canada honored her verse. Caputo has done over 200 literary readings, from Alaska to Patagonia. She travels through Latin America, listening to the voices of the pueblos and Earth.



Frank Carellini's life has been spent studying biology from molecule to organ to organism. An intimate investigation of life's underpinnings has left him with the enormity, yet evanescence, of the infinite world; with poetry, a means to grasp and investigate it. The goal of his work is to pose hypotheses about deep ecology, cosmology, and consumption. Carellini's influences include time spent in the Belizean Rainforests, SCUBA diving, birds of prey and cuisine.



Bibekananda Choudhury is an electrical engineer by profession. He has published works (both original and translated) in Assamese, Bengali and English in popular periodicals and newspapers. His translated poems have been published in *Indian Literature*, the bi-monthly journal of Sahitya Akademy. A collection of 101 folk tales from the foothills of Patkai that he translated has also been published by Gauhati University. He is presently the editor-in-chief of *Dimorian Review*, a multidisciplinary web journal.



Brittney Corrigan was raised in Colorado but has called Portland, Oregon her home since 1990. She holds a degree from Reed College, where she is also employed. Corrigan's poems have appeared in numerous journals and anthologies, and she is the author of the collection *Navigation* (The Habit of Rainy Nights Press) and the chapbook *40 Weeks* (Finishing Line Press). Her newest collection, *Daughters*, a series of persona poems in the voices of daughters of various characters from folklore, mythology, and popular culture, is forthcoming from Airlie Press in 2021.

For more information, visit Brittney's website: <http://brittneycorrigan.com/>.



Siddharth Dasgupta is an Indian writer of poetry and fiction. He has written three books thus far, scattered across verse, fictional narratives, and that special somewhere in-between. His words have appeared in *The Bosphorus Review*, *Lunch Ticket*, *Kyoto Journal*, *Mekong Review*, *Poetry at Sangam*, *Spittoon*, *Cha*, *Madras Courier*, *nether Quarterly*, and elsewhere. Siddharth also dives into fragments of travel and culture for a gathering of publications—including *Travel + Leisure*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *National Geographic Traveller*. He lives within the swirling nostalgias of the city of Poona, where he is currently finessing a novel and two collections of poetry.

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Mariya Deykute is a Russian and American poet, translator and educator. A graduate of the UMass: Boston MFA program, Deykute currently lives and works in Kazakhstan. Her poetry and essays have most recently appeared in *Soundings East* and *Seventh Wave Magazine*.



Sindhura Dutta is currently a research scholar researching on ecospirituality and psychology in poetry. She has done her Master's from the University of North Bengal. She is a compulsive painter, mostly painting greenscapes, attempting to create awareness for nature and the environment in a world that is increasingly losing its compassion and love for nature.



Ernest Goh is the founder of *Ayer Ayer*, an ecologically-engaged art project that creates at the intersection of art and science. His work has been commissioned by and installed at the Lee Kong Chian Natural History Museum, Singapore, collected by the Multimedia Art Museum Moscow, and also resides in corporate, public and private collections.



Ian Goh is a Literary Arts teacher at School of the Arts (SOTA) Singapore. His work has appeared in *QLSR*, the *Eunoia Review*, *Star*Line* magazine, and elsewhere. He holds an MA in Creative Writing from Goldsmiths, University of London.



Jake Goldwasser is a linguist, cartoonist, and poet based in Brooklyn. His work can be found in *The New Yorker*, *The Spectacle*, *Homonym*, *Queen Mob's Teahouse*, *Revue Pøst*, *The Bookends Review*, and forthcoming in *The Meadow*. He is interested in poetry that explores uncertainty in humans' relationships with language, the environment, and the future.



Chris Johnson is a Graduate student at Sydney University, currently working on a thesis examining the work of ecopoet Gary Snyder and the enigmatic Tang dynasty poet Han Shan (Cold Mountain). When he's not studying, he loves to immerse himself in the beautiful landscapes of Australia.



Tammy Lai-Ming Ho is the founding co-editor of *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, the English Editor of *Voice & Verse Poetry Magazine*, and an editor of *Hong Kong Studies*. She is an Associate Professor at Hong Kong Baptist University, the President of PEN Hong Kong, an Associate Director of One City One Book Hong Kong, and a Junior Fellow of the Hong Kong Academy of Humanities. Her literary translations can be found in *World Literature Today*, *Chinese Literature Today*, *Pathlight*, among other places, and were published by the Chinese University Press. Her first poetry collection is *Hula Hooping*, for which she won the Young Artist Award in Literary Arts from the Hong Kong Arts Development Council. Her other books are *Too Too Too Too*, *Her Name Upon the Strand*, and *An Extraterrestrial in Hong Kong*. Her first scholarly book is *Neo-Victorian Cannibalism*.



Alicia Byrne Keane is a PhD student from Dublin, Ireland, working on an Irish Research Council-funded PhD study that problematizes vagueness and the ethics of translation in the work of Samuel Beckett and Haruki Murakami, at Trinity College Dublin. Alicia's poems have appeared in *The Moth*, *Queen Mob's Teahouse*, *Abridged*, *The Honest Ulsterman*, and *Entropy*.



Ashwani Kumar is a Mumbai-based poet, writer and professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. His anthologies *My Grandfather's Imaginary Typewriter* and *Banaras and the Other* have been published by Yeti Books and Poetrywala respectively. His poems, translated in Indian languages and Hungarian, are noted for their "lyrical celebration" of garbled voices of memory and subversive "whimsy" quality. He is co-founder of Indian Novels Collective which brings classic novels of Indian Literature to English readers. His other major scholarly contributions include *Community Warriors* (Anthem Press), *Power Shifts and Global Governance* (Anthem Press), *Global Civil Society: Poverty and Activism* (Sage International) and *Migration and Mobility* (forthcoming, Routledge). He also writes for *Financial Express*, *The Print*, *Business Standard*, *The Hindu*, *Indian Express*, *DNA*, *Open Democracy*, amongst others.



Peggy Landsman is the author of a poetry chapbook, *To-wit To-woo* (Foothills Publishing). Her work has been published in numerous literary journals and anthologies, including *The Muse Strikes Back* (Story Line Press), *Breathe: 101 Contemporary Odes* (C&R Press), *Nasty Women Poets* (Lost Horse Press), *Mezzo Cammin*, *The Ekphrastic Review*, and a previous issue of *The Tiger Moth Review*. She lives in South Florida where she swims in the warm Atlantic Ocean every chance she gets.

Visit her website: <https://peggylandsman.wordpress.com>



Cheryl Julia Lee is an Assistant Professor with the English department at Nanyang Technological University, and critical editor of prose.sg. Her poetry collection, *We Were Always Eating Expired Things*, was published in 2014, and was nominated for the Singapore Literature Prize. Her other creative work can be found in *QLRS*, *Icarus*, and *Prick of the Spindle*, among others.



Samantha Lucchetta is an emerging writer and photographer from Toronto, Canada. She recently graduated with a degree in Anthropology and Environmental Studies, which allowed her to indulge in her curiosity for ecology and culture. Her work has appeared in *Flora Fiction* and *Mélange Creative Arts Journal*, and has also received recognition from the *Scholastics Art & Writing Awards*.



Originally from the Island of Marinduque, the heart of the Philippines, **Rea Maac** has been working in Singapore since 2010. Her poem "Alikabok" was shortlisted for the Migrant Workers Poetry Competition 2016 and was included in the anthology *Songs from a Distance*. She also contributed to the books *Our Homes, Our Stories: Voices of Migrant Domestic Workers in Singapore* and *Call and Response: A Migrant/Local Poetry Anthology*.



Guna Moran is an emerging Assamese poet and critic. His poems and literary pieces are published in national and international magazines, journals, webzines, newspapers and anthologies. He lives in Assam, India.



Gwendolyn Morgan is a Pacific Northwest poet and artist who serves in interfaith Spiritual Care in a medical center. She learned the names of birds and inherited horse hair paint brushes and wooden paint boxes from her grandmothers. The Clark County Poet Laureate 2018-2020 in Washington State, her third book of poetry, *Before the Sun Rises* is a Nautilus Silver Winner in Poetry. Gwendolyn and her spouse Judy A. Rose focused on poetry and music during a Winter 2020 Centrum Artist Residency. As a multiracial family in a multispecies watershed, they are committed to equity work and inclusion for all.



Anna Morris is an environmental educator living in Vermont, USA, with a cat, a dove, and a tortoise. Her poems and prose have been published in *Sharkpack Review*, *Rainy Day Magazine*, *Silver Blade Magazine*, *The Fine Line* and *On the Premises*.



Nazarii Nazarov lives in Kyiv, Ukraine, where he teaches Ukrainian and Russian, and explores poetical traditions of the world. He writes his poetry and prose in English, Ukrainian and Russian. His interpretation and translation of Mongol and Buryat folk songs depicts the world of nomads that still coexists within the natural environment, and the brotherhood they share with creatures like horses, lynxes and camels.



Jean E. Ragual is from M'lang, North Cotabato, Mindanao, Philippines, and she has worked as a domestic helper in Singapore since 2008. Her work has been featured in the Migrant Workers Photography Festival 2019, where she won the "Places and Architecture" category. She is also a finalist of the Migrant Worker Poetry Competition Singapore 2017.



Ailenemae S. Ramos is from Isabela, Philippines, and has been working in Hong Kong since 2010. She is happily married and has a teenage daughter and son. Ramos loves reading, browsing the internet, watching movies online and writing.



Crispin Rodrigues is the author of two poetry collections: *Pantomime* (Math Paper Press, 2018) and *The Nomad Principle* (Math Paper Press, 2019). His poetry and short fiction have also been published in several poetry anthologies and online journals. He works as a teacher.



Anurak Saelaow has been published in *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, *Hayden's Ferry Review*, *Quarterly Literary Review Singapore*, *Cultural Weekly*, *The Kindling*, *Ceriph*, and elsewhere. He is the author of one chapbook, *Schema* (The Operating System, 2015), and holds a BA in Creative Writing and English from Columbia University.



Marie Scarles is a writer, editor, and educator based in Philadelphia. She is also an MFA candidate in creative writing and part-time lecturer at Rutgers University–Camden. Her poetry, essays, reviews, and artwork appear in *The Rumpus*, *Believer Magazine*, *Entropy*, *Yes Poetry*, *SIREN Journal*, *Bomb Cyclone*, *Tricycle*, and elsewhere. Marie writes from a plant-filled office in West Philly.



Poet, translator, researcher and associate professor of English, **Neeti Singh** specialises in the field of Cultural Studies and the interface between literature, history and religious studies. She holds an M.Phil. and a Ph.D. in English and teaches graduate and postgraduate courses in English Literature and Theory at the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, in Vadodara, Gujarat. She has published four books so far, two of them being works of English translation from their original in Punjabi.



Jaxton Su is a visual artist who works with painting, installation and video art. He holds a Master of Fine Art from The Glasgow School of Art (United Kingdom) and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Nanyang Technological University (Singapore), where he currently teaches. His notable endeavours include solo exhibitions *Not all who wander are lost* and *Two Worlds; One Fantasy* at Blue Lotus Fine Art (Singapore). He has also presented internationally in an array of festivals, residencies and exhibitions including *Edinburgh International Science Festival*, *Lanzarote Art Festival*, *Taiwan Annual*, *Geumgang Nature Art Biennale*, *SIM Residency Iceland*, and *Art Safiental*.

Visit his website here: www.jaxtonsu.net



Pooja Ugrani is an architect by education, a teacher by profession, a poet by whim and an artist by choice. She considers the cities of Mumbai and Bangalore, her twin homes and spends time jumping between them, writing about the small everyday things in life that intrigue and engage her.



Janelyn Dupingay Vergara is from Diadi, Nueva Vizcaya. She came to Singapore to work as a domestic helper in 2015. Being far away from her family, especially her daughter, Janelyn finds comfort in writing, which is her great escape. Her dream is to return home with all that she has learnt from her time working and living in Singapore, and hopes to be able to relate her learning experiences with others in her home country.



Turner Wilson is a poet and MFA candidate at Bowling Green State University. He currently serves as Managing Editor for *Mid-American Review*. His work has previously appeared online at *Quatrain.Fish* and *Dreams Walking*.



Anne Yeoh is an artist from Singapore. She enjoys writing poetry and drawing webcomics. Both are attempts at communicating her experiences while making sense of them on the page. Her work has been published in the poetry anthology *My Lot Is A Sky*.



Lucas Zulu lives in South Africa. He is a regular contributor to *Stanzas*, *New Coin* and currently compiles and edits *Diverse Voices: an Anthology of Courage*.

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