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V  
POETS YOU'VE  
NEVER READ



introduced by *definitely*  
V  
POETS YOU LOVE

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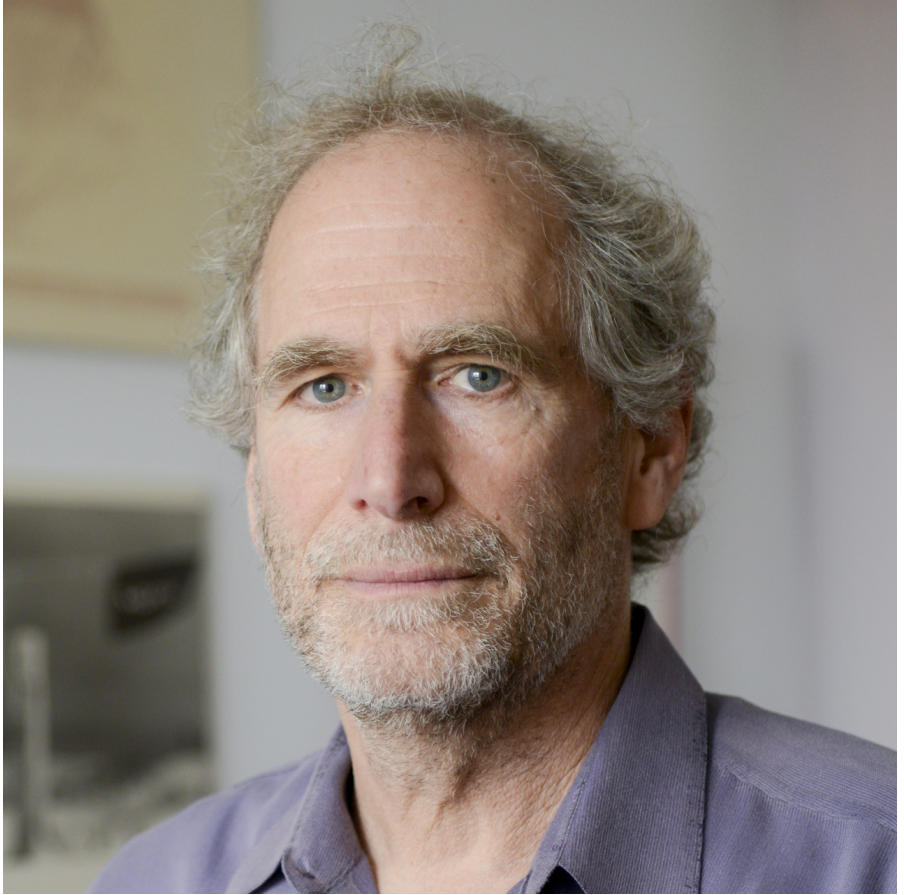
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**BOB PERELMAN**





I've known Bob Perelman since 1975. He is one of the original "language poets." It seems odd, perhaps, to describe him as forgotten. His work appears in numerous anthologies. Frederick Jameson even used his poem "China" to illustrate a point on the supposed schizophrenic nature of postmodern art. But ours is a very present-oriented culture. Bob is still writing good poems. His recent book *Jack and Jill in Troy* is terrific—yet I don't hear or see him discussed much these days. I thought it would be useful to reintroduce him, especially since he doesn't put himself forward very often. Despite what Jameson said, Perelman's work is direct, often funny, and full of emotional and political urgency.

—Rae Armantrout, author of *Finalists*

## VIRTUAL REALITY

It was past four when we  
found our feet lifted above our

accelerators, only touching them at intervals.  
Inside, our car radios were displaying

the body of our song, marked  
with the static from Pacific storms. Outside

was the setting for the story  
of our life: Route 80 near

Emeryville—fence, frontage road, bay, hills,  
billboards changing every couple of months.

It was the present—there was  
nothing to contradict this—but it

seemed stopped short, a careless afterthought,  
with the background impossible to keep

in focus. We weren't pleased with  
the choices, words or stations, and

our desire pouted in the corners  
of our song, where it clung

self-consciously to the rhythm-fill or bass  
or the scratch in the voice

as it pushed the big moments  
of the lyrics over the hump.

We were stacked up and our  
path was jammed negotiation for every

forward foot. Hope of automatic writing,  
of turning the wheel freely in

a narrative of convincing possibility, was  
only a byproduct of the fallen

leaves lifted in the ads and  
drifting sideways in slow motion as

the BMW cornered away from us  
at forty. We were recording everything,

but the unlabeled cassettes were spilling  
over into the footage currently being

shot. This was making the archives  
frankly random. A specific request might

yield a county fair displaying its  
rows of pleasures: candy apples, Skee-Ball,

two-headed sheep, the Cave Woman. She  
looked normal enough, standing in her

Plexiglass cage as the MC spieled:  
the startled expedition, capture, scientific analysis.

But suddenly she interrupted him, breaking  
her chains, thumping the glass and

grunting, as a holograph of a  
gorilla was projected more or less

over her. The MC turned his  
mike up and shouted, “We can’t

control her!” and the lights went  
out, which apparently was the signal

for us to stumble out of  
the tent, giggling, every hour on

the hour, gypped certainly, but possibly  
a bit nostalgic. We had already

fashioned nooses out of coded nursery  
twine to help the newscasters with

their pronunciation, and whipped up stampedes  
of ghost dancers from old westerns,

not that we could see them.  
If we lived here, in separate

bodies, we’d have been home long  
ago, watching the entertainment morsels strip

and hand over everything, and telling  
the dog to sit and not

to beg. But the more commands  
we gave our body the more

it gaped and clumped together, over-excited  
and impossible to do anything with.

We turned to analysis, negotiation, persuasion,  
cards on the table, confession, surrender.

But there was no refamiliarizing. Our  
machines filled the freeway with names

and desires, hurling aggressively streamlined messages  
toward a future that seemed restless,

barely interested. We could almost see  
our hands seizing towers, chains, dealerships,

the structures that drew the maps,  
but there was no time to

read them, only to react, as  
the global information net had become

obsessed with our body's every move,  
spasm, twitch, smashing at it with

videotaped sticks, validating it, urging instant  
credit, free getaways, passionate replacement offers.

## CHAIM SOUTINE

I

Unclose your eyes, you look ridiculous,  
untip your head, shut your lips.

Listen. I'll tell you a secret.  
I learned this when I left the *shtetl*

-- that means home town,  
everyone's from the *shtetl*. That bottle

you're clutching. In the *shtetl* it's called  
the bottle of last things.

Everyone gets one. It's supposed to be  
invisible, it's bad luck to mention it, they say.

But take it down from your mouth.  
You didn't know you're holding it!

They say that's good luck,  
and the tighter you close your eyes the better.

The world in there, all yours:  
visions, powers, messiahs.

But now that you know—hoist it back up,  
run your tongue around the rim,  
feel the glass, if it's beveled smooth,  
curl your tongue into the neck,  
do whatever. It's yours.

But the big secret is . . .  
It's empty! Glug glug!

You've swallowed it all! Tasted good?  
Who knows! All gone!

Bottoms up must have been  
your very first word!

And guess what that means?  
Nothing left! Bad luck!

Finis! Curtains! Triumphant openings, Picasso elbowing over to chat—  
nothing, forget it!

I've found out the hard way.  
But at least I'm not in that ridiculous posture anymore,  
squeezing the neck, eyes screwed shut, piously sucking.

Here's my advice: throw it away.  
smash it on the curb,  
go heave it through some stained glass.  
Just get rid of it! Now:

head level, mouth shut, eyes open,  
forward march . . . we're big doomed heroes!

## ALL-PURPOSE DISASTER POEM

It's your fucking fault  
that it's like this.

Hand me the remote, would you?  
Do you need another? I'm having one.

It wasn't ever like this  
and now it's always like this  
and it's your fucking fault.

Before, nobody imagined anything like this  
but now, nobody can think anything else  
and it's your—let's just leave it,  
but we can't just leave it  
and that's your fucking fault.

Not that I'm blaming you.  
There was nothing you could do, really.  
The friend of my enemy's bff  
who just happens to be the boss's lapdog  
and one fine day some drone  
just happens to blow him to shreds.  
And there's really nothing anyone could have done  
or have not done  
so who's to know  
and that it's that random  
is your fucking fault.

Hand me the remote, would you?  
When did the guy say he'd be here?  
Two hours ago. Right?  
And he's bringing . . . what? *Coors?*  
*Coors Lite?* Honestly,



fuck you. *I* would never, you're saying *I*  
ordered Coors Lite? You can't be serious.  
Give me the remote. Mad Men's on.

Remember when they tried to cancel  
the Sixties? They're always trying to  
cancel the Sixties. The Sixties are dead.  
Deader than psychedelic rock. And whose fault is that?  
Whose fault is it that nature  
pisses off my white-identified neighbor?  
Think, because it didn't just happen  
that it'll never snow enough  
to cool down my being pissed off  
and that's your fucking fault.

Of course I walked around  
in my red corduroy bellbottoms.  
Wherever I wanted to go.  
And I'm sure you walked around  
wherever you wanted to go  
in your red corduroy bell-bottoms.  
Why not? It wasn't as if there weren't enough  
red corduroy bell-bottoms to go around.  
You're missing the point.  
The point is we lost the Sixties and all the revolutionary  
potential and the specific point is  
it's your fucking fault.

It could have been anyone.  
Which goes without saying.  
Population is a fact of life.  
Evolution is a fact.  
A great number of facts.  
There are more people than either of us has time for.

Fact: outer space exists.

Fact: fish are disappearing and the seas are rising.

Not quite on cue, but we all get the idea.

Giant parking lots destroy manners.

It's not really a question.

Patriarchy sucks the pleasures out of life  
at an unreplenishable rate.

We agree, every drop, goes without saying,  
sue me for breathing,

or let's just shut up

and wait for our fucking Coors Lite.

But can we at least agree that it didn't have to happen?

But it did.

It could have been anyone

but it was you.

Where's the remote?

## CLASSIC SUNRISE

Red-nosed dawn arose  
—but it had been worth it!

All those gulps and gasps  
had made the edges

of her eyes so sharp  
that now when she finally

did heave herself up out of  
the tossing sea

barely into  
the eggshell sky

temples throbbing  
—that goes without saying

without saying without saying—  
she could see

all that was not her,  
see the immortal not-self

perfectly, as in a spotless mirror.



**ROSEMARY CATALALOS**



Rosemary Catacalos (1944 - 2022) was our shining star poet of San Antonio for so many years, but her influences reached deeply into more places than one. Her grandparents were Greek and Mexican immigrants and her writing sprang from deepest affection for place and ancestry, as well as myths, folklore, history and culture. Journalist, educator, arts administrator, and first Latina poet laureate of Texas, she received a Stegner Fellowship to Stanford University, a Dobie Paisano Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship. She published one full-length collection twice - 30 years apart. These poems are from that collection, *Again for the First Time*. She also published some chapbooks and left a posthumous collection to be titled *Sing!* currently being edited by Jim LaVilla-Havelin. She was my best poet friend for 51 years and we had absolutely contradictory philosophies about publishing. I miss her with all my heart.

—Naomi Shihab Nye, author of *Everything Comes Next*

## LA CASA

The house by the *acequia*,  
its front porch dark and  
cool with begonias,  
an old house, always there,  
always of the same adobe,  
always full of the same lessons.  
We would like to stop.  
We know we belonged there once.  
Our mothers are inside.  
All the mothers are inside,  
lighting candles, swaying  
back and forth on their knees,  
begging the Virgin's forgiveness  
for having reeled us out  
on such very weak string.  
They are afraid for us.  
They know we will not stop.  
We will only wave as we pass by.  
They will go on praying  
that we might be simple again.



## ONE MAN'S FAMILY

*in memory of Bill Gilmore*

There was the Dog Man again today,  
bent under his tow sack,  
making his daily pilgrimage  
along St. Mary's Street  
with his rag tied to his forehead,  
with his saintly leanness  
and his bunch of seven dogs  
and his clothes covered with  
short smelly hair.

Pauline, the waitress up at  
the White House Cafe, says  
he used to be a college professor.

In a college. Imagine.

And now he's all the time  
with them dogs.

Lets them sleep in the same room  
with him. Lets them eat  
the same thing he eats.

Pauline don't like it.

All them eyes that light up in the dark  
like wolves'.

I imagine he carries his mother's  
wedding dress around in that filthy sack.  
I imagine he takes the dress out on Sundays  
and talks to it about the dogs,  
the way he might talk to Pauline  
if she ever gave him the chance.  
About how to him those seven dogs  
are seven faithful wives,  
seven loaves, seven brothers.

About how those seven snouts bulldozing  
through neighborhood garbage and memories  
give off a warmth that's just as good  
as all the breasts and apple pies and Christmas trees  
and books and pipes and slippers  
a man could use on this earth.

But mostly about how they're dogs.

Friends that don't have to be anything else.

About how nothing could be more right

than for a man to live

with what he is willing and able to trust.

## HOMESTEADERS

*for the Edwards Aquifer*

They came for the water,  
came to its sleeping place  
here in the bed of an old sea,  
the dream of the water.

They sank hand and tool into  
soil where the bubble of springs  
gave off hope, fresh and long,  
the song of the water.

Babies and crops ripened  
where they settled,  
where they married their sweat  
in the ancient wedding,  
the blessing of the water.

They made houses of limestone  
and adobe, locked together blocks  
descended from shells and coral,  
houses of the bones of the water,  
shelter of the water.

And they swallowed the life  
of the lime in the water,  
sucked its mineral up  
into their own bones  
which grew strong as the water,  
the gift of the water.

All along the counties they lay,  
mouth to mouth with the water,  
fattened in the smile of the water,  
the light of the water,  
water flushed pure through the  
spine and ribs of the birth of life,  
the old ocean,  
the stone,  
the home of the water.

## KEEPING THE VIGIL

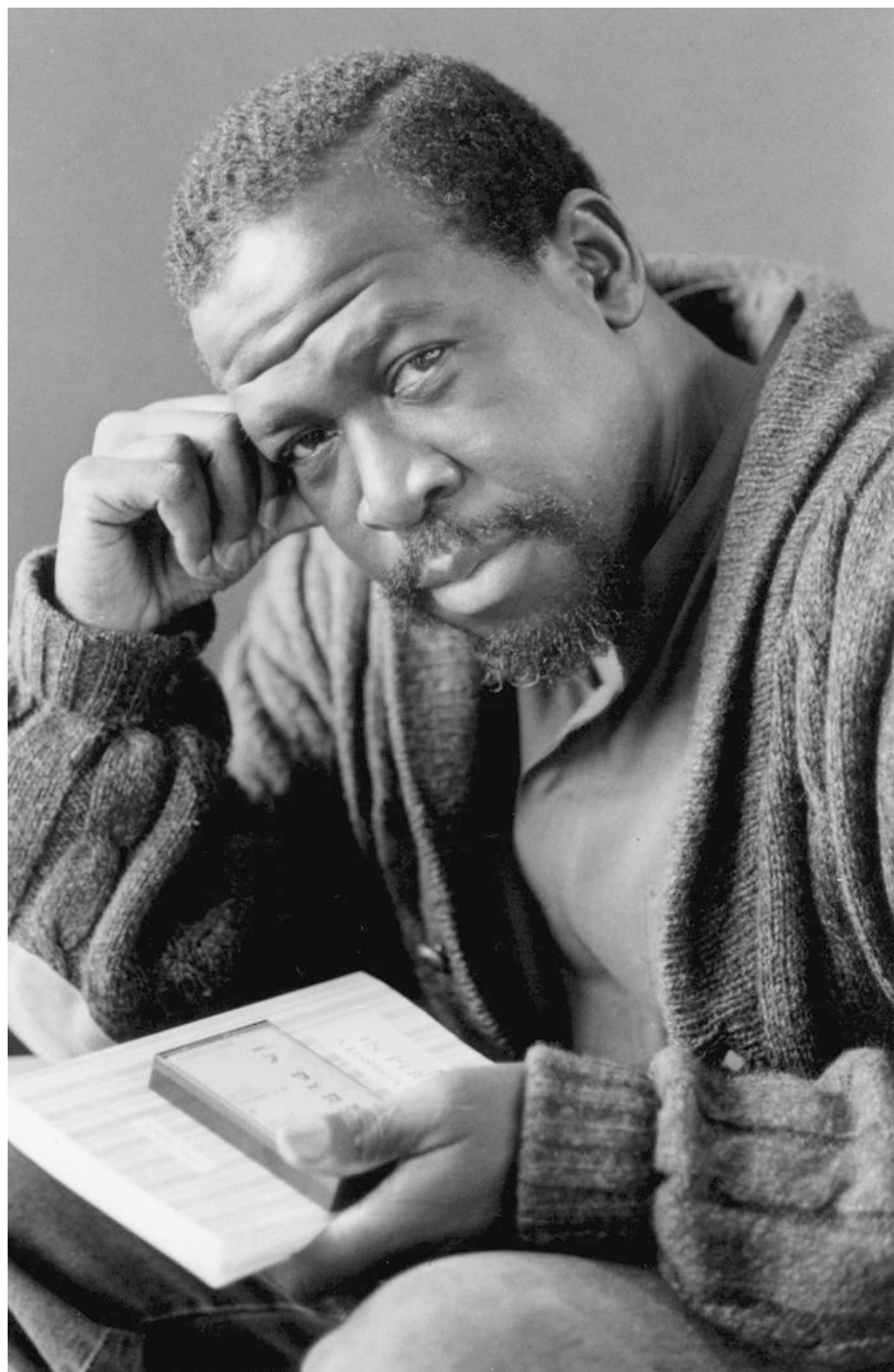
*for Naomi Shihab Nye*

The doors of the temple are ajar as though a child had accidentally left them that way. *People bring me food, medicine, music.* Some dream of me all night and also of giant trees with visible roots. Others want me to tuck white flowers into my hair and dance on the poles of the earth. *Some even say they will pray for me.*

“We need some dancing,” you say, alarmed at the hole slit sideways in my belly, the hole that will not heal, not stop bleeding. Sleep now, little sister. The pain will have its long feast. But your fat candle, glowing among all the other loved ones’ charms hanging from the roots of the tree, will help see to me.

Soon the morning will open again in the simple sighing of roses, in the beating of goatskin drums like hearts. Soon the table will be set outside under the trees, this time for the Easter feast. You will hold my hand, reach for another. We will dance, all of us, in the sight of the stars that can only be seen by day.

We will be learning the moonstruck  
skills of gauze and hot water  
again for the first time.



**PRIMUS ST. JOHN**





In his poem, "Like van Gogh, I Can't Begin in Prose," Primus St. John writes "And so we have come to know: what is sacred is / the storm." His poems are forged in the storm, that crucible where doubt and wonder are locked in pitched battle. This requires him to make surprising demands of language. St. John's work features associative leaps, sharp turns, and difficult questions that move the reader into unexplored and sometimes uncomfortable territory. His poetry covers a wide range of subjects—from family and romantic intimacy to pieces with undeniable sociopolitical resonance concerning race, gender, power. Primus St. John has said, "In my work I try to be as comfortable with anger as I am with tenderness. With both imaginative daring and raw determination to say what can't be said, I believe he more than succeeds.

—Tim Seibles, author of *Voodoo Libretto: New and Selected Poems*

## *Pentecostal*

All night  
I kept my loneliness to myself  
Like the wind god Amalivaca  
Did for many years,  
Then folded it up  
Into the ends of the morning darkness  
In small enough pieces  
To blow through my four-hole flute.  
I am looking for a circle of dancers  
Who touch  
By the nature of their unusually  
Long shadows;  
I am looking for a drumbeat  
To accompany  
What is a bloodknot of kindness  
Between us,  
Taken  
From the great strength of a healing music,  
Taken  
From the sanctuary of a singer's open hands  
That eventually  
Will plait us into strands  
Of the everlasting hair  
That make up the forgiving rainbow.

## *The Sniper*

That night  
when the sky showed me  
every star it had  
and the biggest moon  
I'd ever seen,  
I aimed my gun  
for the first time  
and shot him.  
Being nineteen  
I rolled on my back  
and chewed grass  
and counted everything carefully.  
Now when my students ask me  
"What are their names again?"  
I wonder who will forgive me.

*"Fictive kinship ties probably resulted from relationships among those who had been on board slave ships together from West Africa."*

We came to know each other  
Through the constant touch of our bodies,  
The endless devotion  
Of our mingled sweat;  
Finally I said,  
"You stink," in my language.  
"Yoruba man, son of a Lagos beast,  
So do you," he said  
In his own language.  
Almighty God, Olofin-Orun,  
Discerner of hearts,  
I did not kill him;  
It was good to know  
He too was still human,  
For we have come to live  
In the enormous hole  
Of a world that creaks,  
That rocks from side to side  
Like the astonishing breast  
Of the full moon.  
A world fertile with death,  
Seductive with madness,  
With enough pain to produce crops;  
And in this world  
We have become as rancid  
As salt fish after an enormous journey,  
Rancid  
With stories of enigmatic love  
And profuse loss –  
So Olorun  
It was because we sensed

We were some last precious gift  
For some lost future kin,  
It was in that spirit  
Wattled and daubed in our own shit  
That we reached into the darkness  
And became brothers.

from The Dreamer

*There Are Always Fish Here*

I keep remembering the date;  
it's like the large rock  
in the middle of the stream  
he likes to stand on.

Tall trees near the bank  
on his left  
wildflowers to his right  
glamorous in the riparian...

1807

"Witnessed a large-scale  
transportation of African slaves today."

I wonder if he can see that far  
when he casts.

*Lyric 13*

With emotion  
The wind holds out its empty hands.  
Let's stop all this; let's stop.

The dry grass stands up  
In the dust it must learn to live with  
And laughs and laughs.

Such tormented lovers  
Have at last found trust.  
And I wonder this morning

Outside near the edge of everything  
Was I really awake when I saw this.





**JULIA RANDALL**

Thanks to our hosts tonight for this delightful project to sing the unsung. Among the presently unsung because too-soon forgotten, you'll find many fine women poets who were once known, but whose names now bring only a blank stare. I was lamenting once, with poet Elizabeth Spires, how frequently women's reputations are mislaid, to which Beth replied: "First we get laid, then we get mislaid."

So, from among the mislaid reputations, I wish to recall the lyrical power of poet Julia Randall, who died in 2005 in her 81st year, having published seven books, for which she received notable prizes and honors in the mid to late 20th century, but who is no longer much known. Tonight's poems are from her last book, *THE PATH TO FAIRVIEW: New and Selected Poems*, 1992 (L. S. U. Press).

Julia Randall was an elder whose musical ear, formidable intellect, sharp wit and contrarian nature I much admired. Though intimate with the Western literary tradition, she is anti-traditional in the way she makes free with it; in her poems, she is a self-assured woman on a first name basis with the Great Dead; the personal and the perennial live together in her lyric voice—original in both senses: being both new and of the Origin.

What she wrote in a review of a fellow poet reveals beautifully her own intentions: “the poet’s job, strangely enough, is to ‘unwrite’ by going back to the beginning; to make such speech as we have faithful to ‘things as they are’ rather than to our arrangements of them; to make language live by confronting things with the ‘innocent’ mind of an Adam, by naming them to themselves afresh through the powers of that mind which is somehow continuous with them.”

—Eleanor Wilner, author of *Before Our Eyes: New and Selected Poems 1975-2017*

## End of Leave

The day the cow stepped on the bicycle  
was the day: summer is over. No more biology,  
but only history, history, history.

No more

wind in the hair, for the hair must be set,  
and the windshield wiped against the wet  
ruin of sight.

For I cannot see  
(says history) through a bead of rain, I cannot hear  
with too much wind in my ear, and too much green  
defaces my fair city.

To live as a green thing  
is to live alone. Human action  
requires a gray suit, a raincoat,  
a comb, a contraceptive, and a hat.

Put away  
your poplar-skin; put in  
your class eye: fear stone.

## Farmer Blake

1

A spade of speech invented whole  
from my limbs' wood and loin's oil,  
that would I have for my life's tool.

And turn with it, and turn with it  
a terrain yet unmined of man,  
not some cisalpine Rubicon,  
Achaean cave, or Syrian desert.

Be this my green and pleasant land,  
the common field of tares and corn,  
where I would plant myself and sing  
how man is born, how man is born.

2

I dug a garden deeper down  
than roseroot or dividing worm,  
past buried babes I once had known  
and past their father's published name,

until, when spade could strike no stuff,  
but swang on void bottomless,  
I cursed me for a laboring fool  
and flung off my depending tool,

and followed him into the wound  
and struck the earth on which I stand,  
brother to birds and the north wind  
whose roots are not in any ground.

3

I farm the air with my bright tongue.  
A farmer was my father's name,  
who left me flints and blades of stone  
and acres where no blood had been.

This is the land, he said, Grow it,  
brief as lily, deaf as chuck.  
Servant to the stars and coming light  
is my bloodroot, he said. Grow it.

## Cumae

There are two doors here, according to the story,  
both leading out of sunlight into gold  
of a different sort, treasure of a different sort.  
Trees that have grown in darkness, blooming light,  
come by the cave-mouth, where even the bats are silent.  
Here comes the hero, craving the late voices  
of friends, of fathers, those who dreamed this shore,  
but blind in sight of it, looked earlier  
upon the fields where (some say) flowers ply,  
and others, fires. That hero enters.

The temple door, where come  
the people out of the punishing sun  
of these regions, stands open,  
Under a roof of gold  
a craftsman, it is told, put off his wings  
of wax, the conversation of queens,  
old crimes, old voyages, and all the freight  
of vengeance in the provinces. Of these  
he made, in memory, stone images.  
But one  
he could not master, and his hands dropped down  
and emptied, for his son  
lay, failing artifice, on the seafloor,  
dumb to his hand, deaf to the temple whore.

## The Wilderness of This World

Any place in which a person feels stripped of guidance, lost,  
and perplexed may be called a wilderness

-- Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Novel*

So it might be like  
driving in Boston, finding a footpath in  
Sussex, doing the income tax.  
Or it might be how to deal  
with an old stray beagle.

Or it might be like  
the dream of the runaway car, your foot  
helpless to reach the brake.

Or it might be like the fear of death (a place  
we're bound to pass)  
or of sin, or surgery. One can see  
"The Hospital" as a final Kafka plot:  
the polyglot  
corridor, the gentleman from Peru,  
the Okie baby in for a transplant  
liver, the principessa, and who knows what  
unspeakable labyrinth of tube and chart.

But it is not  
the arches (you may thirst) of the Utah desert,  
and it is not  
(you may hunger) the hooded River of No Return,  
Beartooth, Sawtooth, backcountry Yellowstone,  
Sinai or Samburu, Out there  
good guidance comes by prayer, being the one  
possible conversation. You may freeze,  
burn, crack, or die,



but somewhere in the clear eternal eye  
you are one, not long bewildered, with pronghorn,  
lupine and columbine, red rock,  
white water, rattlesnake,  
and all the fabled folk  
of first creation. Lost  
perhaps, but overruled,  
cleanly delivered back  
along the errant track  
to promise—not that rancorous hold  
of slaughter, of the ram or of the son,  
but the one sky  
where lamb and lion lie  
present in peace, and wilderness  
retreats, and paradise  
settles our shuffling eyes.

Of course, being domestic  
as dogs, who when abandoned  
slink to the nearest shack or garbage can,  
we should not last a week  
in any tent not made by man.  
We are not romantic  
about blisters and backache. Turning home we cast  
a sunset eye up to the last blue ridge  
and face, with skins ashine, our heritage.

## **Meditation in Time of War**

The Curriculum Committee  
is meeting in the Board Room of the Library  
deciding whether a familiarity  
with Xenophon is essential  
to the educated man.

Downstairs in periodicals  
the dirty newsprint tells  
in half a dozen languages (but all  
Greek) how blood still reaches the sea  
out of Asia,  
Africa, Chicago,  
out of the Library window  
where the Judas tree  
blazes one root,  
road rather, out of the heart  
of every humanity.

All we can betray  
is the facts.

I usually put  
History on the kitchen floor, against dog tracks,  
boot tracks, sink splashes, and spilled beer.  
The tortured children stare  
up, and remind me of the dead  
no-name of suffering unsuffered  
massy creation. I have had  
my world as in my time beer in the hotel bed-  
room, publication, and promotion.

I have had property, and found it good,  
oiling the kneehole desk, and the upright knees.  
I have dressed for faculty teas.  
I have taught how the poet felt  
in Cumberland, the hills about his head,  
flat France a memory, and the unwed  
partner of his child  
paid off, "The weather was mild  
on Sunday, so we walked to Gowbarrow." I walked to Carvin's Cove  
with the dogs. My cousin Xenophon  
broke camp, and marched  
our of the parched basin  
toward the redeeming sea that smacked of home.  
The tide for Athens! and the long watch  
toward the prophet slain,  
and exile over again.

The sun wings downward toward the time to drink.  
The sea is very far, and yet I hear  
untidy sailors in the stacks  
weary from ropes, and swearing, And I think  
of Grissom walking weightless into the sun,  
And yes, I think  
I will vote for Xenophon.



**VASKO POPA**



Vasko Popa was a Serbian poet, born in 1922, died 1991. His poems are precise, grounded in the natural world, and permeated by insights only possible in dreams. Like many central European poets, he writes with an impeccable logic bent to poetic purpose. The poems have the quality of entries in a magical dictionary. He often writes in series, in which a certain animal or object — a wolf, a pebble, a ring — takes on unexpected, gradually more complex, and illuminating realities. Popa was an immense influence on many poets of my generation (born in the 1960's). Though he has several excellent translators into English, we discovered him through those of Charles Simic, whom we also revered. We saw in Popa an imaginative precursor to a poetry that could feel both accurate to the world, as well as dreamlike and free. In the series of poems I will read, translated by Simic, the character is a little box.

—Matthew Zapruder, author of *Story of a Poem*

## THE LITTLE BOX

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### *THE LITTLE BOX*

The little box gets her first teeth  
And her little length  
Little width little emptiness  
And all the rest she has

The little box continues growing  
The cupboard that she was inside  
Is now inside her

And she grows bigger bigger bigger  
Now the room is inside her  
And the house and the city and the earth  
And the world she was in before

The little box remembers her childhood  
And by a great great longing  
She becomes a little box again

Now in the little box  
You have the whole world in miniature  
You can easily put it in a pocket  
Easily steal it easily lose it

Take care of the little box



## THE CRAFTSMEN OF THE LITTLE BOX

Don't open the little box  
Heaven's hat will fall out of her

Don't close her for any reason  
She'll bite the trouser leg of eternity

Don't drop her on the earth  
The sun's eggs will break inside her

Don't throw her in the air  
Earth's bones will break inside her

Don't hold her in your hands  
The dough of the stars will go sour inside her

What are you doing for God's sake  
Don't let her get out of your sight

## THE TENANTS OF THE LITTLE BOX

Throw into the little box  
A stone  
You'll take out a bird

Throw in your shadow  
You'll take out the shirt of happiness

Throw in your father's root  
You'll take out the axle of the universe

The little box works for you

Throw into the little box  
A mouse  
You'll take out a shaking hill

Throw in your mother pearl  
You'll take out the chalice of eternal life

Throw in your head  
You'll take out two

The little box works for you

## THE ENEMIES OF THE LITTLE BOX

Don't bow down before the little box  
Which supposedly contains everything  
Your star and all other stars

Empty yourself  
In her emptiness

Take two nails out of her  
And give them to the owners  
To eat

Make a hole in her middle  
And stick on your clapper

Fill her with blueprints  
And the skin of her craftsmen  
And trample on her with both feet

Tie her to the cat's tail  
And chase the cat

Don't bow down to the little box  
If you do  
You'll never straighten yourself out again

## THE VICTIMS OF THE LITTLE BOX

Not even in a dream  
Should you have anything to do  
With the little box

If you saw her full of stars once  
You'd wake up  
Without heart or soul in your chest

If you slid your tongue  
Into her keyhole once  
You'd wake up with a hole in your forehead

If you ground her to bits once  
Between your teeth  
You'd get up with a square head

If you ever saw her empty  
You'd wake up  
With a belly full of mice and nails

If in a dream you had anything to do  
With the little box  
You'd be better off never waking up

## THE JUDGES OF THE LITTLE BOX

To Karl Max Ostojić

Why do you stare at the little box  
That in her emptiness  
Holds the whole world

If the little box holds  
The world in her emptiness  
Then the antiworld  
Holds the little box in its antihand

Who will bite off the antiworld's antihand  
And on that hand  
Five hundred antifingers

Do you believe  
You'll bite it off  
With your thirty-two teeth

Or are you waiting  
For the little box  
To fly into your mouth

Is this why you are staring

## THE PRISONERS OF THE LITTLE BOX

Open little box

We kiss your bottom and cover  
Keyhole and key

The entire world lies crumpled in you  
It resembles everything  
Except itself

Not even a clear-sky mother  
Would recognize it any more

The rust will eat your key  
Our world and us there inside  
And finally you too

We kiss your four sides  
And four corners  
And twenty-four nails  
And anything else you have

Open little box

## LAST NEWS ABOUT THE LITTLE BOX

The little box which contains the world  
Fell in love with herself  
And conceived  
Still another little box

The little box of the little box  
Also fell in love with herself  
And conceived  
Still another little box

And so it went on forever

The world from the little box  
Ought to be inside  
The last box of the little box

But not one of the little boxes  
Inside the little box in love with herself  
Is the last one

Let's see you find the world now

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