

THE ROOST

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

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

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

LIEGE (Liege, Belgium in May)

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

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

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

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

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

Thanks, Brad

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#89

(Belgique / Poètes liégeois)

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**François
Jacqmin,
1929-1992**

*Les
Saisons,
1979*

The heart insists
on consulting
the leaves.

But the foliage
obstinately
remains
superficial and
quivering.

There will be no
evidence
that I walked
through the wood.

*

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

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

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

*

Light enters the
wood
like an epiphany.

It follows trails
that
the leaves do not
know.

Everything
becomes visible
and
inexplicable.

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

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I can hear the tree
extolling economy
in expression.

All through a
season it will be
devoted to
polishing its
monotony.

Its silence already
defeats
human struggle to
find the right
word.

*Le Livre de
la neige,
1990*

The landscape is
fixed. It is that
powdery
yoke
which bogs down
in its whiteness
Its axles
sink deep in the
despotic
innocence
of the snow.
Though not quite
lost, we start to
dread
nowhere, and
especially
that inclement
silence
which thunders
against the affront
of all travel.

(Philip Mosley)

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**Jacques
Izoard,
1936-2008**

*La Patrie
empaillée,
1973*

You live in a leg
where a blue trail
runs.

You breathe
without veins.

You tear
your deserted
clothes.

Writing and
lightning
are sisters.

*

I speak Arabic,
tree.

I like
pumice stone,
barbaric hummus.

I speak
to those who
speak.

I speak as I write
as I speak.

Write speak and
throw
handle and
bucket.

The empty water
fills the glass.

*Corps,
maisons,
tumultes,
1990*

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

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**Luce
Binot
(died
2013)**

*Couleur du
temps,
1973*

**The
house
near the
railway**

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

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

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

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

**What
could be
seen
from a
moving
train**

Quarries of silk
that open,
Summer columns,
anger of leaves,
Wells of shadow
where a red star
sleeps,

And again the
green horses of
the dream.

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

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

**André
Romus, 1928**

*Un visage
parfois,
2009*

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

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

*

Trees were waiting
for the rain; and
we,
for the sea wave
on our thirsty
hands.

Now there will be
no storm or sea
Only frozen suns
blazing in the
blue.

*

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

*

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

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

**Gaspard
Hons,
1937**

***Visages
racinéants,
1999***

*so much virgin blood
in the white
Edmond Jabès*

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

bundles of
washing

***Roses
imbrûlées,
2013***

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

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

◦

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

◦

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

play the game
of having lived
before being born

**Rose-
Marie
François,
1939**

*Fresque
lunaire,
2000*

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

*

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

*La Saga
d'Ishânas,
2007*

Rain

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

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

*Portrait de
l'avenir en
passant,
2010*

Tactile

The jailer comes
and fetches me.
Time for my daily
exercise
and for old
pictures:
setting sun
goldening the
wheat,
poplars close
ranks
on a painting
from another age.

I'm walking with
the jailer behind.
The horns of a
shuddering heifer
get caught in the
barbed wires
as she comes
sniffing.
She wants to be
stroked
and looks with
pleading eyes.

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

What pages?

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

They left with me
a lamp and books,
a range of goose
feathers,
a tamed octopus
coughing its ink,

and a ream of
paper,
which they change
like a shirt:
when black they
take it away
to hand in a white
one,
unblemished
untainted.

But I may be
wrong.
I may not have
written anything..

Noone to talk to.

**Christian
Hubin,
1941**

Alliages,
1974

Separate blood
river
dawn blued with
the breath
of ice violets.
Silt layering
in the widower.

Throughout the
valley
the innumerable
solitary.

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

asking the obscure
question
that is forever
silent.

**Pierre
Gilman,
1948**

*Presque
bleu, 2010*

to say rivers
spattered like a
rain sheet,
covering small
islands for the
softness of cress
or, taking by
storm, uncovering
stones for battle
with bows of
glass crust,

migrating a
promise of colors
to ravines,
washing soft
shores of which
can be said
how many things
and also of this
man,
a cigarette stub in
the sky's mouth,

who talked about
convalescent blue
after the rain, of
earth uplifted
by a single
whispered name,
outbursts from
the heart's case
on these very long
afternoons in
childhood when

*

to say river was
frantic belief,
in some world's
end,
near bushes of
gorse, oxalis and
acacias,
flowing together
like golds in icons,

to fill a full bucket

with promises
hidden under the
threshold,
and remain a child
as much as the
flower is still a
flower,

only concerned
with angels'
speech
that can drown
grief when the
candle itself
would be sick with
living without the
saliva
of soft light,
when

*

only to say river
can draw a face,
away from cities
without memory,
on ever higher
walls
erected by
thousands of
wheelbarrows,

trowels, hammers,
iron rivets,
for dilapidated
human caravans
labouring at
leaden lives
allied to a
customary metre,

when near the
little bridge with
the words I love
you
reeling and
speaking start at
dawn,
leaving with
crow's feet of
pilgrim gods
a thick height of
shadows, echoes
of springs,

**Marie-
Louise
Andreux, 1949**

When life dives
 between
nettle and thistle,
 at each
attack
 of
tearless grief
life slashed with a
gash
no words
 emptiness
settles
 like the
bed of a dry
 torrent
Neither the slight
quiver in the
hands
nor the mind-
wrecker turning
dark
with this sliver of
ice
dug deep in his
forehead,
but the hardened
rut
of a charred
plowed field
but the abrasion
of a back
knotted with
heavy straps
 Wear the
invisible
uninhabited grief
 and
become a
flowerless garden
 bound
with silence
Ulysse, Nestor,
Michel,
my branded
fathers
hammered on the
anvils of wars
ravaged by the
snare of fear
my fathers with
gagged futures

your kindness
gave birth to me
 On your
tombstone
 from afar
 I scream
with open veins.
At the bottom of
the slope
to sit on a
milestone,
like a buoy,
to watch the
broken line of
hills
the clearer gap
the vague
meandering of a
trail
the breath of the
rising sun
to look for a
trickle of water
to look for a
stubborn heart
taking off
attuned to the first
light of day.
 A red
feather whirls
down
 my eye
shelters in it.
In the garden
Jasmine climbs
and cascades
down
my hand scoops
up the fresh earth.
 The word
light throbs and
grows.

**Archibal
d Michiels,
1951**

Territoire
s, 2013
Parable

That of the
useless servant
yet again
the one they find
asleep under the

leaves
lost in a tale
in which they are
absent

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

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

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

**Brigitte
Liebecq, 1953**

**Twenty
thousand
weddings under
the earth**

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

**Eugène
Savitzkaya,
1955**

*Cochon
farci, 1996*

You will open my
lips, what little lips
I still have, what
little flesh, flesh
of apricot tree
or lizzard,
sweetness, flesh
of fresh salmon,
as thin as see-
through paper, we
ate after noon,
evening falls, the
wind is turning,
leaves
are plastered to
the back of my
hand,
pierced leaves, bits
of vanished skin,
spit, you will give
my lips
the little salt I still
have, the tongue
that was
of the family of
tongues, tongue
against steel,
tongue on the ash
when the ash is
spattering us,
when the tongue
pierced me
through I was
with my brothers
near the burning
nettle or sitting on
the roof,
on the slope
shards of broken
quicksilver were
tumbling, head
exploding against
the first tile,
then it rained,
arrows among the
scattered straw,
you will enter my
mouth, the beetle

is sleeping there
already
like a triton is the
mud, only its tail
twitches,
badly swallowed it
titillates its uvula,
it stalks my space,
spawns in my
abyss, I am a pot
and in the pot fall
the eggs of the icy
spring,
you will lick the
earthen pot, your
forehead against
its paunch,
a supple gymnast,
you will spit on it,
you will drop
pearls, you will
speak
my sweet
hackberry tree.

**Emmanu
elle
Imhauser
, 1959**

*Mise en
page, 2012*

walls collapse into
my garden
is it a sign
stones and bricks
tumble into my
garden
is it a sign
the weather is fine
on this Monday
the 12th of March
is it a sign

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

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

I dug up
I threw the stones

I leveled the earth
on this Monday
the 12th of March

**Karel
Logist,
1962**

*Une
quarantaine,
1997*

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

(Kate Armstrong)

***Retours,*
2001**

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

They return
towards evening
fists turned blue
from all that
knocking

snow between the
eyes

the school roads
are the nicest
returnings

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*

A Chinese theatre
put in place by the
night
bedside shadows
clash on the wall

My hand the wolf
two fingers the
fairies
the hunter's index
finger aims at
the forest's
menaces
A voice perfumes
bedroom
thresholds

Mum puts us to
bed
and Dad sets the
sun.

(Kate Armstrong
with Christine
Pagnouille)

*

'What's
our world
coming
to' she
grumbles.
The
unhurried
bus
moves
like a bear
Cuddled
on the
back seat
laughing
lads with
slender
bodies
two
teenagers
are
smoochin
g
'what's
happenin
g to our
morals',
he
concur.
They are
old as the
hills
disapprov
e with
one heart
talk about

trivial
things
of
pleasures
and days
She is
going to
her
second
husband's
grave
He is
going to
the
hospital
Maybe a
tumor
He asks
for the
right stop
'Just
before the
cemetery'
she says
I alone
am
smiling in
my
beardless
beard.

*

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

Serge
Delaive,
1965

*Art
farouche,
2011*

Lumps

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

The small pain or the unquiet

Every morning
these days
I wake up with a
knot
hardening at the
core of my belly
extending to my
brain
obliterating
thought

reducing it to the
obsession
of death and its
trimmings
in a series of
unquiet waves
whose angry tops
come and lick my
incantatory spirals
similar to the
ocean's hair
that is called spray.

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**Islands
almost**

pontoons into the
sea
outposts of
civilisations
the private's
deadends
growths on the
skins of
continents
in-between of
vague lands
when the ground
gives way or tears
and salt water is
not yet ocean
promontories of
our hopes and our
declines
pedestals for
lighthouses
slashed by fog
waves raised in
blasts
bitter ultimate for
lost sailors
sheltered lair for
pelagic birds
whose flights
survey our
wanderings
mirrors
dispossessed of
void
whose people we
are.

**Laurent
Demoulin,
1966**

*Même
mort, 2011*

'Hospital brothel
purgatory hell jail'
down there at the
fourth level under
ground of Tower
2
in the huge clinic
more
crowded than
a station on a
day of
departure
down there where
the hustle slows
down
where steps
become cautious
shy wary
where all is clean
and proper
where hands are
washed again and
again
where faces tend
to get covered
with white masks
with green masks
that underline the
eyes
where chattering
luminous
machines ring
inco
mpre
hensi
ble
and
threa
tenin
g
where at times the
machines scream
strident
martial
martian

where in the
sleepless
anteroom
the pararoom the
premortuary
on the antbed in
the precoffin
was it him still
his hands shackled
like two convicts
two madmen
this tearless and
ageless man
this
extraordinarily
thin and much too
smooth body
eaten up
eaten up by
suffering
— physical
suffering eating
up moral
suffering
the mind eaten
up by the body
and the pain
killers
the present eating
up the past eating
up the future
and the suffering
eating up the
present of
the body

eating up
the mind of
the past
like some
Borromean ring
in a Moebius
strip
— the relentless
Aesculapian
snake eating its
tail
like those
agglutinated tubes
that violated his
mouth and
perforated his
throat
venomous and
salutary

tapeworm taping
into his solitude
in the fog soft and
solid like silence
of his gelatine
coated eyes
was it him still?

*

Purgatory hospital

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at the fourth level
underground

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in the sleepless
room

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this tearless ageless
man

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his hands shackled

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his body eaten up

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pain eating him up

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the present
outstripped

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tell me was it
him still?

**Mich
el
Delvi
lle,
1969**

*Le
Troisième
Corps,
2004*

THERE ARE
EMBARRASSING
SITUATIONS
whose
primary
meaning is
that of their
duration and
rhythm. They
need a long
time to
develop to
their most
extreme and
unlikely
limits. We
can, for
instance,
think with
dread of a
roof terrace
filled with
naked, filthy
and writhing
bodies with
touching
turning to
fucking and
fucking
turning to
menacing to
some
parasitic
bewilderment. Of raised
hair, of
appalled eyes
watching at
day break a
broken jaw in
a tub whose
scattered
pieces you
attempt to

fish up
through the
means of
tiny hooked
spoons with
cheap zircon
encrustations

.

*

WE READILY
ACKNOWLEDGE

that fascism is the
synthesis
of mysticism and
bestialism
— i.e. the
paradoxical
coincidence
of lust and
inhibition —
but we are more
reluctant
to consider the
consequences
of the frequent
transformations
of the common
sense
of *fear* into a
resolutely
modern, civilized,
egalitarian
discourse on
social and
economic
relationships

**Luc
Baba, 1970**

*Tango du
nord de
l'âme et 30
vilains
petits
poèmes,
2012*

You know the
puddles
Have no high tide
A low tide
wrecked against a
wall
The man in the
avenue watches
the drift
Of a tangerine's
Skin
For it is Christmas
already!

*

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

*

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

*

He walks to find
the step he'll fall
upon
Wonders about
the pavement's
caution

To tuck in a man
who hasn't had
too much

**Pascal
Leclercq, 1975**

*Les virées en
voiture, 2013*

Road trips

As you add
road trip to road
trip,
you catch yourself
dreaming of a
road
along the sea, with
a mountain on the
other side
which is still
growing in fits
and starts.
Spring expands in
your nostrils,
cherry blossoms
show the way
to an end of April
when you can
wither slowly,
when the wave
turns into drizzle,
when the drizzle
magnetizes your
skin,
when aquamarine
for ever encloses
your pupils.
So far so light
your foot
suddenly responds
to the songs of
the siren and steps
unwittingly
on the gas pedal.

*

In your car you
reach
the sea, wavy
market
when the wave
wraps

your petty
purchase
in papers of foam.
The algae woven
basket gives
butter a taste of
salt,
a taste of garlic
iodine
a taste of shrimps
with wafers.
Seagulls dispose
of the inevitable
blarney.

*

In the car you
lower the seats,
relax your back
muscles,
stroke your
passenger's
buttocks
with your hand. In
the car
you chew on
crunchy nylon,
explore the
smooth and
angular
soil of her thighs,
the soft and warm
soil of her belly.
In the car
you find yourself
on the attack,
receiving blows
from the door
and the back
mirror.
You write some
last thought on
the steamed up
windscreen with
the hair of your
backside
before collapsing
gasping
sweating coming
on the back
and the buttocks
of your passenger.

François Jacqmin
Jacques Izoard
Luce Binot
André Romus
Gaspar Hons
Rose-Marie
François
Christian Hubin
Pierre Gilman
Marie-Louise
Andreux
Archibal Michiels
Brigitte Liebecq
Eugène Savitzkaya
Emmanuelle
Immhauser
Karel Logist
Serge Delaive
Laurent Demoulin
Michel Delville
Luc Baba
Pascal Leclercq