



BELOVED POEMS

SATURDAY, JANUARY 15, 2022

2:00 P.M.

DIANE SEUSS	
sonnet entitled how to run the world e.e. cummings	2
MATTHEW OLZMANN	
Iskandariya Brigit Pegeen Kelly	3
JOHN MURILLO.....	
The Diver Robert Hayden	4
YONA HARVEY	
Coal Audre Lorde.....	5
MARK DOTY.....	
The God Abandons Antony Constantine P. Cavafy.....	6
CHARD DENIORD.....	
Speculation Ruth Stone	7
KIM ADDONIZIO	
Train Ride Ruth Stone, 2002.....	8
LAURE-ANNE BOSSELAAR.....	
Onomatomania Thomas Lux.....	9

DIANE SEUSS

sonnet entitled how to run the world)

e.e. cummings

A always don't there B being no such thing
for C can't casts no shadow D drink and

E eat of her voice in whose silence the music of spring
lives F feel opens but shuts understand
G gladly forget little having less

with every least each most remembering
H highest fly only the flag that's furred

(sestet entitled grass is flesh or swim
who can and bathe who must or any dream
means more than sleep as more than know means guess)

I item i immaculately owe
dying one life and will my rest to these

children building this rainman out of snow

e.e. cummings (1894-1962)

MATTHEW OLZMANN

Iskandariya

Brigit Pegeen Kelly

It was not a scorpion I asked for, I asked for a fish, but maybe God misheard my request, maybe God thought I said not "some sort of fish," but a "scorpion fish," a request he would surely have granted, being a goodly God, but then he forgot the "fish" attached to the "scorpion" (because God, too, forgets, everything forgets); so instead of an edible fish, any small fish, sweet or sour, or even the grotesque buffoonery of the striped scorpion fish, crowned with spines and followed by many tails, a veritable sideshow of a fish; instead of these, I was given an insect, a peculiar prehistoric creature, part lobster, part spider, part bell-ringer, part son of a fallen star, something like a disfigured armored dog, not a thing you can eat, or even take on a meaningful walk, so ugly is it, so stiffly does it step, as if on ice, freezing again and again in mid-air like a listening ear, and then scuttling backwards or leaping madly forward, its deadly tail doing a St. Vitus jig. God gave me a scorpion, a venomous creature, to be sure, a bug with the bite of Cleopatra's asp, but not, as I soon found out, despite the dark gossip, a lover of violence or a hater of men. In truth, it is shy, the scorpion, a creature with eight eyes and almost no sight, who shuns the daylight, and is driven mad by fire, who favors the lonely spot, and feeds on nothing much, and only throws out its poison barb when backed against a wall—a thing like me, but not the thing I asked for, a thing, by accident or design, I am now attached to. And so I draw the curtains, and so I lay out strange dishes, and so I step softly, and so I do not speak, and only twice, in many years, have I been stung, both times because, unthinking, I let in the terrible light. And sometimes now, when I watch the scorpion sleep, I see how fine he is, how rare, this creature called Lung Book or Mortal Book because of his strange organs of breath. His lungs are holes in his body, which open and close. And inside the holes are stiffened membranes, arranged like the pages of a book—imagine that! And when the holes open, the pages rise up and unfold, and the blood that circles through them touches the air, and by this bath of air the blood is made pure . . . He is a house of books, my shy scorpion, carrying in his belly all the perishable manuscripts—a little mirror of the library at Alexandria, which burned.

JOHN MURILLO

The Diver

Sank through easeful
azure. Flower
creatures flashed and
shimmered there—
lost images
fadingly remembered.
Swiftly descended
into canyon of cold
nightgreen emptiness.
Freefalling, weightless
as in dreams of
wingless flight,
plunged through infra-
space and came to
the dead ship,
carcass that swarmed with
voracious life.
Angelfish, their
lively blue and
yellow prised from
darkness by the
flashlight's beam,
thronged her portholes.
Moss of bryozoans
blurred, obscured her
metal. Snappers,
gold groupers explored her,
fearless of bubbling
manfish. I entered
the wreck, awed by her silence,
feeling more keenly
the iron cold.
With flashlight probing
fogs of water

Robert Hayden

saw the sad slow
dance of gilded
chairs, the ectoplasmic
swirl of garments,
drowned instruments
of buoyancy,
drunken shoes. Then
livid gesturings,
eldritch hide and
seek of laughing
faces. I yearned to
find those hidden
ones, to fling aside
the mask and call to them,
yield to rapturous
whisperings, have
done with self and
every dinning
vain complexity.
Yet in languid
frenzy strove, as
one freezing fights off
sleep desiring sleep;
strove against the
canceling arms that
suddenly surrounded
me, fled the numbing
kisses that I craved.
Reflex of life-wish?
Respirator's brittle
belling? Swam from
the ship somehow;
somehow began the
measured rise.

YONA HARVEY

Coal

I
Is the total black, being spoken
From the earth's inside.
There are many kinds of open.
How a diamond comes into a knot of flame
How a sound comes into a word, coloured
By who pays what for speaking.

Some words are open like a diamond
On glass windows
Singing out within the passing crash of sun
Then there are words like stapled wagers
In a perforated book—buy and sign and tear apart—
And come whatever wills all chances
The stub remains
An ill-pulled tooth with a ragged edge.
Some words live in my throat
Breeding like adders. Others know sun
Seeking like gypsies over my tongue
To explode through my lips
Like young sparrows bursting from shell.
Some words
Bedevil me.

Love is a word, another kind of open.
As a diamond comes into a knot of flame
I am Black because I come from the earth's inside
now take my word for jewel in the open light.

Audre Lorde

“Coal” from *The Collected Poems of Audre Lorde*. Copyright © 1997 by Audre Lorde. Source: Poetry Foundation

MARK DOTY

The God Abandons Antony

Constantine P. Cavafy

When suddenly, at midnight, you hear
an invisible procession going by
with exquisite music, voices,
don't mourn your luck that's failing now,
work gone wrong, your plans
all proving deceptive—don't mourn them uselessly.
As one long prepared, and graced with courage,
say goodbye to her, the Alexandria that is leaving.
Above all, don't fool yourself, don't say
it was a dream, your ears deceived you:
don't degrade yourself with empty hopes like these.
As one long prepared, and graced with courage,
as is right for you who were given this kind of city,
go firmly to the window
and listen with deep emotion, but not
with the whining, the pleas of a coward;
listen—your final delectation—to the voices,
to the exquisite music of that strange procession,
and say goodbye to her, to the Alexandria you are losing.

trans. by Edmund Keely and Philip Sherard

CHARD DENIORD

Speculation

In the coolness here I care
Not for the down-pressed noises overhead,
I hear in my pearly bone the wear
Of marble under the rain; nothing is truly dead,
There is only the wearing away,
The changing of means. Nor eyes I have
To tell how in the summer the mourning dove
Rocks on the hemlock's arm, nor ears to rend
The sad regretful mind
With the call of the horned lark.
I lie so still that the earth around me
Shakes with the weight of day;
I do not mind if the vase
Holds decomposed cut flowers, or if they send
One of their kind to tidy up. Such play
I have no memories of,
Nor of the fire-bush flowers, or the bark
Of the rough pine where the crows
With their great haw and flap
Circle in kinned excitement when a wind blows.
I am kin with none of these,
Nor even wed to the yellowing silk that splits;
My sensitive bones, which dreaded,
As all the living do, the dead,
Wait for some unappointed pattern. The wits
Of countless centuries dry in my skull and overhead
I do not heed the first rain out of winter,
Nor do I care what they have planted. At my center
The bone glistens; of wondrous bones I am made;
And alone shine in a phosphorous glow,
So, in this little plot where I am laid.

Ruth Stone

KIM ADDONIZIO

Train Ride

Ruth Stone, 2002

All things come to an end;
small calves in Arkansas,
the bend of the muddy river.
Do all things come to an end?
No, they go on forever.
They go on forever, the swamp,
the vine-choked cypress, the oaks
rattling last year's leaves,
the thump of the rails, the kite,
the still white stilted heron.
All things come to an end.
The red clay bank, the spread hawk,
the bodies riding this train,
the stalled truck, pale sunlight, the talk;
the talk goes on forever,
the wide dry field of geese,
a man stopped near his porch
to watch. Release, release;
between cold death and a fever,
send what you will, I will listen.
All things come to an end.
No, they go on forever.

LAURE-ANNE BOSSELAAR

Onomatomania

Thomas Lux

the word for the inability to find the right word,
leads me to self-diagnose: onomatomaniac. It's not
the 20 volume OED, I need,
nor Dr. Roget's book, which offers
equals only, never discovery.
I accept the fallibility of language,
its spastic elasticity,
its jake-leg, as well as prima ballerina, dances.
I accept that language
can be manipulated towards deceit
(ex.: The Mahatmapropaganda, i.e., Goebbels);
I accept, and mourn, though not a lot,
the loss of the dash/semi-colon pair.
It's the sound of a pause unlike no other pause.
And when the words are tedious
and tedious also their order—sew me up
in a rug and toss me in the sea!
Language is dying, the novel is dying, poetry
is a corpse colder than the Ice Man,
they've all been dying for thousands of years,
yet people still write, people still read,
and everyone knows that nothing is really real
until it is written.
Until it is written!
Even those who cannot read
know that.