

OREAD

**AN INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE
OF LITERATURE IN TRANSLATION**



Summer 2020

OREAD

**A MAGAZINE OF LITERATURE
IN TRANSLATION**

Published by OREAD Poetry Magazine Ltd.

Managing Editor: Antonio D'Alfonso

Managing Editor: Stephen Bett

Circulation manager: Bernard Gastel

Oread welcomes manuscripts and letters, but we take no responsibility for their safe return. If you would like your work back, enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Do not send original artwork. All texts will be edited for clarity and length, and authorship checked; please include all contact information.

Oread is published four times a year in Victoria, BC. Back issues are available at \$11.00. A one-year subscription is \$30.00. Please send a cheque payable to

Oread.

Oread mailing address for all inquiries:

Oread

1251 Rudlin Street

Victoria, B.C. V8V 3R8

Canada

phone & fax: (778) 350-0883

Copyright © 2020 *Oread* for the contributors

Printed in Canada

OREAD

Contents

Joanne Morency	
Au vent le corps, multiplié	6
Body to the wind, multiplied (excerpt)	7
Hugues Corriveau	
Rome (excerpt)	20
Célyne Fortin	
First Window	30
Corinne Larochelle	
Butterfly Hunting (excerpt)	36
Yolande Villemaire	
Violet Night (excerpt)	44
Claude Beausoleil	
Jackie & Billie in the Blues of Night (excerpt)	48
Louise Cotnoir	
Woman, keep the darkness in mind (excerpt)	58
Jack Keguenne	
On Love (excerpt)	66
Lise Gauvin	
Mirabel Blues	74
Contributors	81

Joanne Morency
Translation by Jill Varley

from Song of the Open Sea

Au vent le corps, multiplié

De vieux arbres s'écroulent autour de nous, le tronc creusé par l'épuisement.
On arrache les souches, on les brûle. On abandonne les cendres aux vents
qui en veulent bien.

Il semble que le paysage ne s'en remettra jamais. Pendant des mois, nos yeux
ne captent plus que cette étendue inoccupée.

Puis, peu à peu, même le vide s'en va. Il nous faut rechercher, sur de vieilles
photos, la forme que prenait le ciel autour des branches.

Body to the wind, multiplied (*excerpt*)

Old trees collapse around us, the trunks hollowed by exhaustion. The stumps are uprooted, they are burned. The ashes surrendered to the will of the winds.

It seems that the landscape will never recover. For months, our eyes see nothing beyond this empty space.

Then, little by little, even the emptiness departs. We have to rediscover, on old photos, how the branches once hemmed in the sky.

Le jour viendra où les nuages éclateront. Des traces d'enfance roulant sur nos joues, nous jetterons les fatigues par-dessus bord avec les sacs de sable.

Nous en aurons fini avec le classement des fossiles, le dénombrement des poussières. Nous percevrons le tintement cristallin des étoiles contre le silence des morts.

Nous n'aurons plus pour solitude qu'un corps. L'appétit humain.

The day is coming when the clouds will burst. With traces of childhood rolling down our cheeks, we will toss our worries overboard with sandbags.

We will be done with classifying fossils, counting dust particles. We will hear the crystal ringing of stars against the silence of the dead.

We will have nothing but a body for solitude. Human hunger.

Tu avances, à court d'air. Juste une bouffée, par-ci par-là. Cette odeur de grisaille. Persistante. Qui chatouille la gorge. Et pourtant, tu n'ès rien, que le lieu des sens. Tu te frottes aux flammes sans te brûler vraiment. Tu ne connais rien des guerres véritables. Tu te sens loin des dieux et des hommes. Tu continues d'avoir mal ici, alors que tu es ailleurs.

Le rêve serait-il plus réel parce qu'on se tient debout ?

You advance, short of breath. Just a gasp, here and there. The smell of gloom. Persistent. Tickling the throat. And yet, you are nothing, only the site of senses. You rub up against the flames without really getting burned. You know nothing of real wars. You feel estranged from gods and men. You continue to suffer here, while you are really somewhere else.

Could the dream be more real because we are on our feet?

Un chaton réinvente la verdure, fait du jardin un paradis terrestre. Il ne distingue pas les fleurs de leur ombre, joue avec l'irréel, l'agrippe entre ses pattes.

Nous trouverons des fondations autour de vos tombes. Une maison en construction. Nous empilerons les blocs de couleur. Tracerons des chemins, des rivières, sillonnant les années.

Prendront vie, une par une, de petites figurines en pâte à modeler, capables de chanter, de rire, de danser. Chacun de nous élèvera un totem. Une clarté, debout.

A kitten reinvents green, making the garden a paradise on earth. He doesn't distinguish flowers from their shadows, but plays with the unreal, pinning it between his paws.

We will find the foundations around your graves. A house under construction. We will pile up the coloured blocks. We will plot pathways, rivers, meandering through the years.

Little statues of modelling clay will come to life, one by one, able to sing, laugh and dance. Each of us will raise a totem. A beacon, standing tall.

Le silence secret du langage, juste au bord des paupières. Aucun signe, rien de connu, que des rides chuchotées. On est frappé par les bulles d'air en suspension. Serait-ce le vent calme du pardon ? La simplification des nombres ?

Un oiseau disperse le bleu du bout des ailes et la cage, tout à coup, s'agrandit.

The secret silence of language, just on the edge of the eyelids. No sign, nothing familiar, only whispered furrows. We are struck by bubbles of air left hanging. Could it be the calm wind of forgiveness? Numbers made plain?

A bird scatters blue from its wingtips and, in an instant, the cage grows larger.

L'indispensable horizon : une pause, sans la mort. Et l'on reprend consistance. On entre dans chaque journée comme dans l'amour. La chair emmêlée à l'air, la face gorgée de prières. Au vent le corps, multiplié. Les saisons à rebours, en dehors de toute tâche raisonnable.

Nous ferons de l'absence une contrée accueillante, des gestes d'antan, des gouttes de rosée.

The vital horizon: a pause, without death. Then our solidity returns. We go into each day as into love. Flesh mingled with air, face sated with prayers. Body to the wind, multiplied. Seasons go backwards, against all reason.

We will build a welcoming land from absence, and wring dewdrops from bygone gestures.

Une voix éraillée. La même cicatrice, à plusieurs. Que faire quand chacun des regards perce un trou ? On voudrait enfermer les ouragans, tous les mirages en mouvement.

Ce grand écart de la conscience. Des prisons à dates fixes. Il faudra redéfaire le monde, étage par étage. Dégager chaque larme de sa dette. On fera sonner le réveil, jusqu'à l'étranglement des jours.

Et puisse être la terre une simple photographie apprise par cœur.

A gravelly voice. The same scar among many. What can be done when each glance drills a hole? We wanted to lock away the hurricanes, all the shifting mirages.

This great gap of consciousness. Regular intervals of prison. The world must be demolished again, floor by floor. Each teardrop must be freed from its debt. We will sound the alarm until time is stifled.

And may the earth be a simple photograph learned by heart.

Hugues Corriveau

Translation by Antonio D'Alfonso

from Words for the Traveler

Rome (*excerpt*)

I

I would like to write of a suite of words so precise that they would seem self-sufficient, organs swollen with sensuality, herbal sugar we sip through leaves when it is morning. Common sense, however, says no. We can't press an entire vocabulary into a single poem ready to talk about the beauty found in a single hour of tranquility. No! My teeth crush sand as if it were salt, erasing the birth of the world in the tiniest of syllables! The gale's dry cough.

II

We wish for words to name distant cities, hearts and bodies. This is a week of happiness. Very much needed. If I want to survive the anxiety of clocks, the so unexpected cracking of worn-out bones. Age is slippery. In the heart of self, there is cold-blooded music that is languishing. I need to breathe in noisy cities, sleepless, and lonely movements welcome people's luck. I yearn for the body that becomes hard, straight, facing guns and hostility.

III

I have neither eyes nor tongue. Beating snare drum,
irrigation of blood revives. With words found, we have
this duty to speak. My mouth is filled with marbles,
bubbles of ink as screams. On my wrist, my name in
plastic to identify my skin smooth in the hospital. I
wander through the street since forever, noting, be it
for an instant, the footsteps of others under my own.

IV

Struck head on the dancing steps of a person much too beautiful, *Viale dei Quattro Venti*, I lose my breath! With the dice of luck in my hands the stranger's intimate world imposes itself. I am steeped in fear in the heart of a child's dreams. I then hear the familiar noise of tram wheels on their steel rails. Let's not forget these unimportant resounding offenses banging inside my mind like Christmas tinsel or fresh fruit on my tongue.

V

With the toss of the hand, we send our children up to the stars before they fall asleep. So it is, we confess to the obviousness of wind and with a pang of emotion, the intuition of surrendering to the movement of crowds. Then there is the image of a sky-blue burqa as beautiful as a veil on a concrete madonna, as sinister as a cope of lead. Blue watering the Roman sky, while I daydream about the apathy of my neighbor across the hall.

VI

An age-old doubt flashes through my mind whenever oracles rise before me, like childhood lingering in the voice forecasting a storm. The misery of empty bones if we hear during sleep the body tossed about by a nightmare. I wander around, *Piazza Cinque Lune*, sluggishness of night when its round eyes opened onto a room filled with holes that lead to the underside of the world. During this hour of names, from one spot to another, we might mistaken an alley for a street, the task of a geographer with that of a geometrician.

VII

I go back to a younger-than-me who finds beautiful,
Piazza Campo dei fiori the flowers in bloom before the
palace's façade. A hand holds them out confirming the
permanence of the hour that the campanile clocks
chime. But be careful! A sickly young woman is
coming towards me, her eyes sunken since dawn,
pushing a disabled woman all the way to a miracle! No
one believes in the incredible anymore. Cobblestones
uneven under my feet are the only reminder of the
accuracy of history.

VIII

The landscape underscored by the morning glow: this entanglement of electric wires guides trams from one street to the other. On *Viale di Trastevere*, a train waits under palm-trees, strayed, stuck in history all the way to astonishment. I'm sitting there while the traffic desperately tries to break the hours into fragments of loud noise. I can't breathe except what emanates from thoughts fleeting into improbable dwellings I don't have the key to step into. Life goes on. Life, there, at the hour when noise appears, passes by. I suffocate.

IX

I'm hurting because I'm unable to multiply myself for every person that walks back home to supper, each acquainted to the intimate fragrance of children. I would enjoy tasting lentils, pasta, snails, couscous, or pita bread... I should myself be against anxiety, against certitude being outside this world. I'll have to hang onto real noise in this country with its crazy vowels, so rapidly turning into dragonflies. I too would scream to stop the racket, the misery, the erosion of the stucco. We would hear the strange accent of the Gitane Blue's voice.

X

The river carries green plastic bottles and corks that get tossed with the city garbage. The unrest of the drowned who hang onto branches heavy with needles and syringes. In the wagons rolling behind, I hear gypsies playing accordions and untuned violins. Then, there, right at the end of *Isola Tiberina*, the island of the sickly, sitting at the foot of the *Ospedale Fatebenefratelli*, a couple kiss. Angst takes root because beauty tears lucidity apart.

Célyne Fortin

Translation by Donald Winkler

from Wabakin, or Four Windows Onto Snow

First Window

I have come to set my papers in order
and my thoughts
and what I plan to read.
And my feelings as well.
To set them all in order before the great clean sweep
the grand disruption
here in Abitibi.
In this place where I've so often set down words.

*

In La Sarre, where the streets are broad as hope.
There where the river the “Amikitik” or *white fish*
runs its ever darker waters
higher still towards the North
to where the waters divide
in that land the Amerindians named Abitibi.

La Sarre-Wabakin.
Where “there are mountains of hard wood.”
Where I could not grow.
But where I return to write.
La Sarre that saw me born.
Land of my childhood.

Wabakin.
The chipping sparrow’s tiny there and soft
with a large white feather in its beak.
Like me, is it trying to rebuild a nest for itself
in this village lost in sleep?

*

When the Abitibi sky is blue
it is deep
and luminous.
Is it to free our minds
from the blizzards and the long winters'
hard cold?

A strange winter here.
There are no birds.
Not even a crow.
Is it the Arctic cold
or have I arrived too soon?
It's the beginning of February.

*

In planting his spruce trees
did Monsieur Dubuc suspect
I'd be admiring them still
sixty years on?
One now has two crowns
and they rise
majestic
before this imposing dwelling
with its New England allure.
Painted green and white since forever
it's made its way down the decades
and still parades its Sunday best.
In recent years
it's become a safe harbour
for many poor people
who go there often
to fill their shopping bags
and stay alive.

*

Does this feeling of fullness
derive from the landscape's serenity alone
or from me looking upon the landscape?
Does the serenity stem from my presence
cast over the image being observed
or is it heightened by the prospect
presented to my gaze?

In my glasses the colour
alters
when darkness drops over my eyes.

*

Coming out of school.
You whirl your full-to-bursting bag.
You shift it from shoulder to shoulder
from hand to hand.
A child wheels on himself
whips at an icicle
or a hard hunk of snow
with a branch.
Shouts from afar.
Cries to urge on the straggler.
The littlest drags his feet
his big bag in tow.

It's been many many years
since my friends and I
took the same street home from school
our delight renewed each day
by a girlfriend's larks.

Corinne Laroche

Translation by Antonio D'Alfonso

from Woman with Camera

Butterfly Hunting

Predator of secrets
I detect the fragile world
bursting at its seams.

Baptism day
in Washington Square Park
for my brand new Pentax.

A young Puerto Rican stares at me,
feet on enemy line.

The gap between us tapers
while a star sparkles
on our foreheads.

I become a double iris
firm on solid ground
at the corner of Fifty-Seventh Street
and Fifth Avenue.

I am snatched rapidly
and pulled outside of myself
by the lives of strangers.

I fill the frame
with his young body,
and gulp down a couple
of soluble tablets.

Getting closer
to the boy with a beret,
I will munch on the line
of his open mouth.

I will fasten his eyes
to the strap of surprise.

The camera is cruel:
a monster in a box
that grabs hold of you.

Tirelessly following
the glitter of motion
the weird press releases
pinned outside train stations
on car-free streets.

As long as the universe is abuzz
I can choose the proper angle
and catch stars
shooting out of people's eyes.

*Diane Arbus

Thrown out of paradise at a young age, she begins to shoot photographs. She jots down the addresses of funeral homes, and classifies the settlings by age and sex. An area in Eden where fruits are scattered over tablecloths and the keys she will rattle striding into her labyrinth. Depending on which day it is, and with more or less inventiveness. Depending on the organ as well, her beating heart. She possesses a legitimate ambition: soliciting the body.

One a.m. She is marching out of the subway, her eyes swollen by anomaly. Those who rummage through the grotesque find the dark flashes of light sculpted on the gypsum. People glean the leftovers of dignity from the mouths of sewers. They are testing the quality of new elegance by polishing it against sidewalks. She stands out with her arrows, the moon's crescent engraved on her forehead. A beast's face noticed, she begins to talk to it, then slips into its costume.

Streets, alleys, lightning.

On the building's rooftop
childhood looks down,
impossible to see through thick clouds.

Zooming down on details
I point my instrument
on passers-by fleeting away.

Campers in Central Park.

At daybreak
I slide into his daily habits:
empty bottles to amass.

A baby carriage loaded with glass
rolls down Third Avenue.

The refined man explains etymology to me
scraping up fragments of a broken mirror.

His mind wanders off to Sophia Loren
as he bites into a maraschino cherry.

He and I share common ancestors,
the bridge of our nose,
the horizon welcomed,
a protruding vein.

Life is beautiful.
Thank you, Mr. Mack.

She spots everything: solitude, strangeness, a woman and her oversized hat, a man and his loneliness, grief on bone's end. Ever since she was young, she recognized her own talent for nabbing the rarest of butterflies. The human mosaic, a beat on which she could hum. Traveling toward lasting equilibrium, the most exquisite tattoo on her heart.

Yolande Villemaire

Translation by Antonio D'Alfonso

from Night Blues

Violet Night (*excerpt*)

Wait, but wait
the Guide of the Lost Ones whispers to me
let
let the violet night
seep down into you

Breathe
breathe in the fragrance of fragile flowers
blossoming into softness

The Angel of Intelligence
unfurls its fractal arborescence
over us
and, poet, you listen to him
you listen to him
you feel the magnitude of his subtle presence

Hear the wind of this violet night
its timbre
the precision of its signature vibration

Listen, poet, listen to
this steady undertow, it is the flood of Time
if you pay attention
there is deep within
a rustling
like silk being ripped

If you cross and you do cross over
oh yes, poet, you cross over
and step into the irreversibility of space

There are four walls here
one, two, three, four
it is small, very small indeed
yet it is alive
it breathes
it feeds you
it cradles you

Claude Beausoleil

Translation by Antonio D'Alfonso

from Night Blues

Jackie & Billie in the Blues of Night (*excerpt*)

Jack,

what you say to Billie
on this American night

is your special way
of jazzing up energy

Black Billie, you listen
you listen to his complaints

in French you listen
you know the origins

of this black continent
you, Billie, the singer

the embodiment of suffering
in your flesh of voice

you sing it he writes it
you sing, you write it for her

on the road on the road
in the blues of silence

your black voice, Billie, your voice your despair
all your power too

Jack is listening to you tonight
on the road on the road for life

Billie Blues in the night
listening to your words

lost and inconsolable
with ecstasy and anger

you repeat you repeat Billie murmuring
when night opens when Jack recalls

the journey of his lifetime
without language in the night *on the road on the road*

you listen to Billie her blues
of cadences and wanderings

Strange fruit in the night

injury blues, Billie, in your voice origins
her pain and helplessness

helpless
lit with innocence

with Jack sharing this night of America
in this nowhere bar

haunted by slivers of voice
expressing desire

in everything the love of blues
poetry dashing headfirst

as you listen to Billie, Jack
on her hurting tongue

you relive the rhythms
of cotton fields

of humiliation
insults inexcusable

and in Jack's words
still resound the sounds

of when *the snow has snowed*
in the depth of delirium

memories spilled over
in the bar where the blues

lift you to instinct
the soul of America

to sing and to write
to say without compromise

in the heart of this white night
the black embrace of time

repeating repeating
what words stir up

the troubled soil
of whispers within

on the road on the road
blues branching out

you are talking in this bar
not fearing censorship

Billie and Jack and the blues
in shadows merging

like an old sweet song, Billie
dharma bums on night's tightrope

nomads of the interior
running for rising suns

wild wounds
mould your breath

as you follow the rustling
of the road and wind

Jack and his visions
Billie and her passions

with smoking blues
in the heart of much ecstasy

thirst for life
perseverance of creativity

Kerouac, you tell Billie
so as to jazz up your trip

first to Lowell then on the road
the French-sounding names

digressions on the road
and other dimensions

improvised passions
secret and regret

a song for the road
psalm for enigmas

you repeat you repeat
you repeat and you speak

as one in the know
about walking in a giant's footsteps

about lovers and poets
about friends from the past

Louise Cotnoir

Translation by Antonio D'Alfonso

from Daring Touch

Woman, keep the darkness in mind (*excerpt*)

Woman, keep the darkness in mind. Entrenchment on your forehead smashed. I say darkness, the perspective of what is blows out, of what none can no longer hurt. Bewildered, crazy. Each strolling with their lives on the glossy covers of magazines, the world has the stench of a urinal. Sight has no bearing anymore, breaking against the pink-tinted glasses. There are days when Death knocks against it.

There is a woman in a storm, gathering the bits and pieces. Undaunted as she unveils the horror. Water seeps into the bending ferns. Sunday. Passion at hand. The woman bends and models the roundness of her cheek on the mist-covered windowpane where every person of the city appears. Marine landscape. She touches without touching, uncertain the distance between herself and the wolves. The sway of slumber. It's almost autumn.

Not to recognize anything anymore. Dirty wet bed sheets. So strange that she does not remember where she comes from. She steps out, camera in hand, looking for footsteps on which she can put her feet. She is walking through every garden, every café all the way to the beach. She pauses there, feet throbbing, numb in the waves. The taste of water pulls her underwater. On the photograph, that is all we see. Water, in which she recognizes herself.

Like the **Welwitschia Mirabilis** I dive into the heat,
the fire of sand. Are there phreatic waters in this desert
hell? With wetness and the softness of the beach, I
fashion the body of women. On my hands the
incurable, unsteady, and fleeting flavors of obsession. I
stand up against Death and spread out like an omen.
Muddy, black, desire deep in my mouth, the purvey
the future so that it will not fall in ruins. Mesmerized
by nature as an apparition, I stagger forward, turn my
head back to heed the steps taken.

Impossible for me to act differently. I transform and distort. I invent names and stories for the faces I see on the bus. I lie to myself so as to not miss a thing. Good times, bad times, I stare at the passengers with intensity. I memorize a handful of sentences overheard so that they can serve me in dialogues and echoes. The bus ticket in between my teeth, I often wreck the dark. Nothing surprises me anymore.

On the most travelled zone of the road, I've no sense of disaster. Which boosts the undecipherable. Take new steps forward, double my bet. Systemically I trip over accidents. No kidding. Between my thighs with white striation stockings, and behind my eyes I see the deafening froth of fear.

Awesome effects, seduction. Real sensations. Listen: fingers cracking. Women are weeping, but leave no trace of it. A kind of varnish on the scene. Shells in membranes, quadraphonic explosions. The allgrounded machinery. Listen: the screaming when fingernails are torn off. The caustic features of images. The pause that hampers and stuns your heart. Without the energy to frame the light coming through the blinds. Just being there during the summer, lost under the yellowed plaster molding. There, notice the nuclear warheads.

At the theatre, perhaps, the appearance of a female body. Its perfect probity between tooth and mouth gaping over the excitement of amplifiers. On the face luminosity. A marvel. Defiantly, the stage is set for a time of unbelievable music: Fauré's *Requiem*. Maybe we will get it, but that's not sure. Thus Death looks so much like Death.

I've got no opinion on temporary fascination. Only on
existence. In fact, I deal with the fate given me.
Change of angle, silhouette, degrees for the invention
of other stories. Violently crushing death's skull
against the subway train. I lure hot charms necessary
to finger paint bodies in detail, that is, identical to me,
fixed.

Evening gobbles up light. First, it's the dusty gray, the soot; then, the black that sticks to the windshield. The stridency of car horns, the gas vapor rising in the midst of nowhere, stepping on it as if to accelerate. There are hours when our thoughts are unreal, with the unbearable feeling of being a mass produced thing. Torpor wins over the feeble anger. Your eyes scare you. Soft, flexible, the brain reveals its utmost weakness. It is there that the clear impression of being an intruder settles in.

Jack Kequenne

Translation by Antonio D'Alfonso

from On Love (excerpt)

1

Love tags a spiral horizon.

2

In love, the small change of darkness loses all value.

3

When in love, there are no deadlines.

No solutions. Just achievements.

4

In love, a look given, a look shared provokes
transformation. Bringing everything down to the
silence of an eyelid.

And there, the birth of a tear or a light.

5

We define love as thunder, which gets inscribed on a
wrinkle.

(The present is impatient.)

6

I don't need plan to work on love. All that matters is I
look, listen, and perhaps touch. I follow its dictation. I
effortlessly recognize its spelling and syntax.

7

In love, I don't need to remember my landmarks. All I need is to consult an uncharted map.

No matter the landscape, there's always this attribute: bracing he who walks through and contemplates it.

8

You are forever a stranger.

I'm forever a traveler.

Our task is to deal with issues of welcome and hospitality.

9

To which alder is the depth of a look measured?

Love prolongs night and shortens daytime. Or is it the opposite? As one wishes. Love knows the precise weight of a word and skin. Love must not be cluttered with promises.

10

My beard keeps growing when I sleep, when I think of you.

Waking to you is a kind of stripping. I wreck the destiny you imagined for yourself without me. Then, of course, my bristles prick your lips and cheeks.

11

Reduce gentleness to seriousness.

I will not run away from tenderness. Whether I'm standing or asleep, I know I can study your face – imitate your gestures.

12

What I'm speaking about might not be of interest to you.

No matter the outcome, I'm the master of my hands. You are free to receive them. And where you wish. I will always be alone when I weep, even from excess of the beautiful.

13

I will not say I'm sorry for loving. Nor will justify myself.

14

When you come to me, it is always like the first time. (I wonder how can we stay apart, be it for a second.)

15

Being able to face you enables me to meet you. Yet it is never you whom I greet. It is my sense of time I often forget about.

There is this struggle against keeping my eyes open, avoiding tumbling over.

16

Speaking is often talking too much. Looking is often seeing too little.

Love never repeats itself: it adds same to same.

17

What I do with my life is as risky as rock-climbing. But when I am with you, the cliff is smooth, diaphanous.

18

Love is the salt of the earth.

You contribute the booty of the sky.

19

It is not a home you build for me; you offer the world to me to live in.

20

Nothing forces you to love me. If love guides me to you, I must negotiate my impatience.

Who you are is more important to me than what you feel, what you experience stirs me more than what you say.

21

In love, there is no violence. Nothing to check. All is acknowledged in principle.

What seems like a clarification is agreement arrived at by constant challenge.

22

Exercising love is empowerment. There are no barriers, not even extra-territorial ones.

23

What enhances existence should be the result of the moment, never some need for continuity.

Your appearance, no matter what happens, has the flavor of the energy uplifting me.

24

I no longer wait for you. I adapt myself to the bad weather of your omens.

25

I will always be the one who alone sleeps.
Alone to redefine what it means to be 'beside you'.
Alone to choose to be excited or not.

26

In the thickness of a shadow, you blink and pacify my
fear of dragons.

27

What kindles a flame does not burn out.
Love gradually consumes what it finds.

28

What happens to a wound relates only to the wound.

29

In love, there is nothing to gain.
Proof is immediate. Nothing is more absolute than
proof.

30

There is no difference between love and the memory
of love.
Just the uncertainty of dates and, maybe, places.

31

Love's only constraint is consent.

32

I gain no advantage in seeing you naked.

I have known you this way from the start.

I never wanted you in any other way.

33

Do not seduce me. You would set free my vertigo.

34

In love exists the beginning only.

35

Specifically, in spite of my intentions, I'm clumsy
whenever I give. You, on the other hand, take all of
course.

I accept everything, your ransacking as well.

36

What fascinates me, in love, is your way of taking. You
have a way of pleasing me as push me off guard.

37

Not only do you surprise me all the time, I'm surprised myself every second.

In me, intensely, the thought of my flaws. Effortlessly, you teach me how to travel: tightrope artist walking over my shortcomings.

38

Flesh is at times peaceful, at times turbulent. Between you and me, flesh insists.

39

I'm writing on love in silence, in the calm of your lowered eyelids.

He who keeps watch protects. He who stands has to grow.

40

There is no time for loving. There is only the duration of love. Pity for what snaps.

What is given remains available, must always be taken again. Each dawn is an undertaking.

41

Love endures no contradiction.

Lise Gauvin

Translation by Jonathan Kaplanksy

from Parentheses

Mirabel Blues

Final call for Flight 21 to London. Please proceed to Gate 33.

M. Boudreau est prié de se rendre au comptoir de renseignements.

Mr. Boudreau is requested to go to the information counter.

Lufthansa Flight 671 will leave from Gate 53.

Departure of Alitalia Flight 1271 for Milan has been delayed until 10:45 p.m.

Announcing the arrival of Sabena Flight 562 from Atlanta and Boston.

The voice on the loudspeaker is slightly nasal. Abruptly the litany comes to an end. The reprieve will be short-lived. Amélie sets down her bags on one of the chairs overlooking the departure and arrival area, the one people have become accustomed to call the waiting area. Yet nothing resembles waiting less than the feverish comings and goings of travellers awaiting the agreed-upon signal.

The Smith Family. The four passengers in the Smith Family are asked to go to Gate 32 for the departure of Flight 123 to Cuba.

Where has the Smith family gone?

The goodbyes have been said. She did not want Philippe to go with her to check in. Perhaps he is secretly angry with her for not talking this trip over with him. Perhaps he understood that this distancing was necessary to have a clear understanding of their relationship. She also feels that her friends' time is a precious asset that shouldn't be wasted. An expression comes back to her, uttered several times in front of her in recent days: "You must give these things time." This is usually uttered in a serious, solemn

voice, while the speaker stares into a nebulous beyond. Time . . . Travel brought Amélie the sensation of switching from one time to another, from a short period to a longer time. She understood more and more the meaning of what a painter had said to her one day: "You must work in time." That sentence seemed less enigmatic than the previous one and she liked to think the things that really counted would happen without rushing them in any way. But what is time outside the singular relationship each person has with it? One of the benefits of going away like this was to give Amélie a intimate sense of the passage of time.

Attention please. This is the final boarding call for Air Cubana Flight 123. All passengers should now be on board.

Attention s'il vous plaît. Air Cubana vol n. 123. Ceci est l'appel final. Tous les passagers doivent maintenant être à bord.

Atención. Cubana . . .

For some of her compatriots, the beaches of Varadero are more acceptable than those of Miami, considered vulgar and filled with the wrong kind of people. Especially as Florida is becoming a dangerous destination, where the number of murders increases in inverse proportion to the number of tourists who still dare show up there. Amélie is not very familiar with these places where sun is guaranteed. She still retains enough of her puritan upbringing to see winter as a studious season, when the shortness of the days is offset by prolonged work.

Passengers arriving from Varadero will exit at Gate 2.

Air Canada informs its passengers that Flight No. 158 to Pointe-à-Pitre will be delayed. Dinner will be served at the airport restaurant at seven o'clock. The flight will board at nine o'clock.

Air Canada informe ses passagers que le vol n 158 à destination de Pointe-à-Pitre est retardé. Un repas est prévu à sept heures au restaurant de l'aéroport. L'embarquement se fera à neuf heures.

The temptation to head South, insidiously, appeals to her. Yet she knows that improvisation and the air transport industry are not compatible. Deciding to go to Pointe-à-Pitre at the last minute is as difficult as going to Paris on a raft. Only a slight exaggeration. In the end, it is only a question of money. With a few extra thousand dollars, anything can be arranged. She

would only have to do use her credit card, then disappear without leaving an address. A simple signature: so tempting!

John Amos is requested at the information counter.

John Amos est demandé au comptoir de renseignements.

Final call. Lufthansa Flight 638. The last passenger is asked to proceed to Gate 90.

It would be wrong to believe she was escaping, sitting here in one of the airport's rows of chairs, with her two bags full of various objects she deems indispensable: two small bottles of shampoo, a white plastic box containing a folding toothbrush, a tube of toothpaste, two packages of Kleenex, a transparent rain hat and a pouch with a red maple leaf on it. Ridiculous, that hat. She never remembers putting it on her head. When she meets someone decked out like that in the street, she can't help but smile. But the object is included in her traveller's paraphernalia. Its presence reassures her. Sheltered from bad weather, she believes herself protected from unforeseen annoyances.

In the other bag, in imitation leather, an indiscreet eye would notice a cosmetic bag, large envelopes stuffed with papers, three address books, a complete manuscript, and two novels published by rival publishing houses of the one she created a few years ago. The manuscript is entitled *Figures of the Amerindian in French-Canadian prose of the Nineteenth century*. Counting on French readers taste for primitivism, she hopes to interest a co-publisher in this work.

She will take advantage of the Paris Book Fair to make contacts with two or three French publishing houses. One way or another, she is determined to find an opening for "her" books on the European market. On a few occasions, already, she has attempted to do so. But on each of the previous trips, there came a point when she lost the impetus, when she almost quit. This time, she is firmly committed to not give up. To stay as long as it takes for projects to materialize. She bought an airline ticket with an open return, a luxury she rarely allows herself.

Passenger Albanie More is kindly requested to proceed to the Duty Free Shop immediately.

Le groupe attendant le passager Asher est au comptoir de renseignements.

The party waiting for passenger Asher is now waiting at the information

counter.

Air Canada Flight 870 to Paris has not yet been called. Amélie has a few moments before boarding. Time to look around in the bookstore on the first floor to see if she can find the books she publishes or, better still, plunge into some diverting reading outside her usual preoccupations.

On the table by the entrance facing the corridor, many large works, all in English, are displayed. Visitors first notice the practical guides: How to . . . gardening, recipes, do-it-yourself — books that are surely indispensable to people who have to make do for a few weeks with the contents of a suitcase. Next to a construction guide on building barns, a title captures her attention: *How to Succeed in Your Life. In Twenty Lessons*. She touches the book, hesitates to buy it. She notices that in her haste she misread the original title, which is *How to Succeed in Life*. It's a lot less interesting than she thought. More materialistic. Succeeding in life refers to a certain idea of success, one that measures and assesses. Is it really worth the trouble people take to achieve it?

The French books section features, for better or for worse, the latest releases of Parisian publishers and a few Quebec titles: *Félix Leclerc, le roi heureux* — a biography, two plays, an essay on former Prime Minister Trudeau, four novels, only one of which is a bestseller, and a dozen paperbacks. On what basis are these works chosen? Why doesn't this place feature "her" books? Is it simply the bookseller's choices? She will try to straighten that out when she returns. For the moment, she lets herself be tempted by a short narrative by Annie Ernaux entitled *A Woman's Story*, which she has wanted to read for a long time. The book is only about a hundred pages long, so she could finish it during the flight. Its title suggests that the reader will go imperceptibly from the indefinite to the demonstrative, from the general to the specific, from one woman to that woman and not another. How to reveal an entire life so economically? Is it a condensed biography, a capsule removed from a greater whole?

*In a few moments, boarding will begin for Flight 122 to Freeport.
Passengers who require assistance please proceed immediately.*

The concourse is almost empty. A few passengers linger at the bar. Others contemplate the great figures displayed on the mezzanine by the windows and sitting on top of all types of vehicles. Still others rush into the

Duty Free shop, which occupies a proportional space to the concourse. Geese sit imposingly there upon fake china trays. A few seals carved in grey stone, not shiny but striated with whitish lines, gaze peacefully at the travellers. Prices are high: no baby seal is under forty dollars. T-shirts proclaim *I love Montréal*. The fur section is overrun by Davy Crockett-type fox hats, gifts that are rather difficult to give to city dwellers. Only the maple syrup made in Quebec retains some dignity in this bazaar: a safe gift.

Amélie has just enough time to call Philippe. She hesitates. Sometimes when she calls the voice at the end of the receiver feigns surprise. The voice does not understand the necessity of this call, as the goodbyes have just been said. The slightest hint of impatience, a word that is spoken even slightly sharply can echo like a wave, amplifying in such a way that it can be perceived as aggressive. Then another phone call would be needed, from Europe this time, to get rid of the knot of anxiety lodged in her chest.

As far back as she can remember, she has had that need to move. To change scenery. To go elsewhere. Things then would appear to be more defined, clearer. In Montreal, in the hustle and bustle of daily life, she can no longer see anything clearly. Between deadlines, the list of bills to pay — the printers, proofreaders, graphic artists, mortgages, insurance, taxes, heat, electricity — keeps growing. Half her time is spent paying bills. The other half is spent organizing herself so she can have enough money to pay the said bills. Hard to maintain a friendship when you have so little time. As for love . . .

Madame Roseline Hébert est attendue au comptoir de renseignements.

Eva Suez is requested at the information counter.

M. Jean Lafortune arriving from Paris on Air Transat is requested to proceed to the information counter.

Yielding to a sudden impulse, Amélie heads toward the pay phones and dials Philippe's number. A recorded message greets her: "*I'm not here right now. Please leave your name and number after the beep.*"

The usual end of the message is already erased, the one that, still yesterday, ended with these words: *You can also reach me at 681-0000*. Amélie's number. They live in the same building, a triplex that they use both as a residence and a place of work. Since Philippe was at her place more often than in his own apartment, located just above hers, he often directed his calls to her number.

Why this eagerness to erase her trace?

Amélie notices a flight attendant in a white suit accompanying a group of elderly travellers. The women are wearing hats that match the colour of their outfits exactly. A seven-colour dress requires a sweater with a seven-colour pattern, the same exact ones as those on the dress and the ribbon adorning the hat. A man carries a bag with a shoulder strap. The strap is about to give way. Someone takes a photo. They head to Gate 95, where the flight for Paris is called.

A man in a wheelchair goes by, pushed by a hunchback.

M. Dennis Hoppey is requested at Gate 89.

Passager M. Martin est prié de se présenter au comptoir d'Air Canada.

People shove one another, tired of the wait or perhaps more of the uncertainty of the last minutes of the departure. As if the slightest change in schedule forced them to reconsider the very decision to leave. Amélie feels as if she knows everyone. Recognizes everyone. The boy with his four bags, one on his stomach, the other on his back, the third on his shoulder and the fourth around his wrist, looks familiar. The man with the dark complexion and hair down to his neck reminds her of a writer of Mediterranean descent. The woman accompanied by her daughter, a feminist novelist. The other one with the short hair and tortoise shell glasses, a colleague from a Montreal publishing house. That one with her very curly, dirty blond hair, an author of bestsellers. Another woman, huge, a civil servant in the Department of Cultural Affairs. A man with a carefully styled hair and greying temples, a well-known filmmaker. There is her insurance agent. Or almost. The press agent from a Quebec publishing house. Very thin. A female novelist with long blond hair like a nymph or water sprite, with the eyes of a spaniel. Another author, her abundant black hair, flat, and her broad smile revealing dazzling white teeth. Amélie almost feels as if she is hallucinating. The writer of Mediterranean descent, or his double, embraces a girl wearing a white blouse and a gathered skirt. The female novelist with the curly hair waves her arms in the direction of someone who remains on the concourse on the first floor, behind the glass: it looks as if she is shooting a video. Scene four: goodbyes to a semi-bald fiancé with a dark complexion. Unless it is chapter two of her next book. The well-known filmmaker is talking to two friends. Someone is writing notebooks. A samba tune reaches them from a nearby group.

Passager M. Martin est prié de se présenter au comptoir d'Air Canada.

Same message as before. She will leave Montreal with these strange litanies in mangled French.

The passenger transporter is a little cage, a kind of bus with side-facing seats, the height of which can be adjusted. Amélie chooses the first available place, near the exit. A man and a woman enter with the solemnity of a couple entering a church on their wedding day. Then follows a woman of a certain age dressed entirely in blue, including her stockings. She is wearing a two-piece suit consisting of a long jacket and a narrow miniskirt, very short. A gold chain encircles one of her ankles. Then comes a nun, formally attired, carrying a large cross on a white blouse, then another dressed entirely in black and wearing the veil. And finally a third one, in a white dress and black veil. Next to her someone sits down who could be a decadent poet, late nineteenth century, longish, straight, bobbed hair. A tanned rocker enters, smiling. His foot catches one of the suitcases and he stumbles. The smile is replaced by a grunt. A man walks with difficulty, leaning on his cane, followed by two people weighed down by heavy bags.

The airport employee shouts very loudly, *Move to the back*, then informs the conductor he can leave. As the door is closing, the loudspeaker sends a last message: *For public health reasons, Air Canada's regulations forbid smoking in airports outside designated areas.*

A little old lady smiles nervously at those around her. A girl appears in the doorway. She has a hooked nose and large circles around her eyes. Her mother, very pretty, accompanies her. The daughter has probably survived a serious accident. That would explain her ravaged face, marked by horrible scars. She is reading a magazine entitled *Beauty*.

Amélie has scarcely set foot in the airplane, when she consents, for a few hours, to distance herself from her fate.

Contributors

Poet, novelist, literary critic born in Montreal in 1948, Claude Beausoleil published more than sixty books. Director of *Lèvres urbaines*, a poetry review he founded in 1983, President of Honor of the Maison de la Poésie de Montréal, member of the Oscar Wilde Society, Claude Beausoleil has been decorated by l'Ordre des francophones d'Amérique. Since 1997, he has been a member of the prestigious Académie Mallarmé in Paris. He was the first poet laureate of Montreal, his hometown.

Poet, fiction and non-fiction writer Hugues Corriveau was poetry reviewer for Montreal's daily *Le Devoir* between 2006 and 2017. He also was a literary critic for *Lettres québécoises* between 1990 and 2011. A five-time finalist for the Governor General Award, he has written over thirty books since 1978. His writings have been recognized for their excellence; he has won the Alfred-Desrochers Award twice and the Grand Prix du livre de Sherbrooke. In 1999 he was offered the Alain-Grandbois Award for *Le livre du frère* (*Book for a Brother*). His latest novel, *La fêlure de Thomas*, was published in 2018. Hugues Corriveau lives in Montreal.

Louise Cotoir is the author of more than twenty books. In 1996, *Tell Me I'm Imagining This* was a finalist for the Governor General's Award. In 2016, she published a collection of poems entitled *Vanessa Bell soeur de Virginia Woolf*, and, in 2017, *Le frère d'Antigone*, her first novel.

Antonio D'Alfonso is a writer and filmmaker who has lived in Toronto and Montreal.

Born in La Sarre in Abitibi in 1943, Célyne Fortin co-founded and co-directed the Éditions du Noroit from 1971 to 1991, along with René Bonenfant. There she published collections of poetry and art books: from *Femme Fragmentée*, 1982, and *Lenvers de la marche*, 1982, limited editions with pastel drawings, to *Les Intrusions de l'oeil*, 1993, and *Un ciel laiteux*, 2008. In 2012 there appeared the collection *Ovale, Femme infrangible*, poems (1982-2008), an anthology prepared and presented by Jean Chapdelaine Gagnon. She also published the tales and narratives *Jours d'été*, 1998, with Editions de la Pleine Lune, published in English by Ekstasis Editions as *Summer Days, Chanterelles*, 2000, with Lanctôt éditeur, *Commandements, litanies, et autres imprecations*, with Heures bleues, 2003, other art books with Bonfort,

and *Ile est un mot magique*, 2000, with Éditions du Silence. Since 2003, she has been responsible for the collection “Le Dire,” at Heures bleues.

Lise Gauvin has published approximately twenty works (non-fiction, fictional essays, interviews, poetry, narratives, and short stories). *Parentheses* is her third short story collection, following *Fugitives* (translated by Jonathan Kaplansky) and *Arrêts sur image* (translated by Nigel Spencer as *Freeze-frame*).

Jonathan Kaplansky studied at Tufts University and Université de Paris III, receiving an MA in French Language and Literature from McGill University and an MA in Translation from the University of Ottawa. He has translated works by Annie Ernaux, Hélène Rioux and Simon Brault, among others. Originally from Saint John, New Brunswick, he currently lives in Montreal.

Jack Keguenne is a poet, novelist, essayist and visual artist. A literary and art critic, and the author of more than thirty books, he also worked as a librarian and was an art gallery owner. His artworks have been presented across the world in solo and group exhibits. He lives and works in Bruxelles.

Born in Three-Rivers, Quebec, Corinne Larochelle has published six books of poetry and a first novel, *Le parfum de Janis* (2015). She works and lives in Montreal.

Joanne Morency lives on the Gaspé Peninsula in eastern Quebec. She has published four poetry collections with Montréal’s Éditions Triptyque and two books of haibun (poetic prose and haiku) with Ottawa’s Éditions David. She has received several awards including the 2015 CBC poetry prize and the 2010 award for a first collection in Paris.

Jill Varley’s studies in literature and languages have taken her to the University of Regina, Université Laval, and Montréal’s McGill and Concordia Universities. She holds a Masters in English Literature and is currently completing her Masters in Translation Studies. She is pleased to be publishing her first literary translation.

Yolande Villemaire is one of Quebec’s most prolific writers, proficient in both poetry and prose. She has given poetry readings and performances around the world. She has published more than twenty-five books, five of which are available in English translation from Ekstasis Editions: *Midnight Tides of Amsterdam*, *Poets & Centaurs*, *India, India*, *Little Red Berries* and *The Cygnus Constellation*. She has also published a book of poems written in

English: *Silence Is a Healing Cave*. Yolande Villemaire lives in Montreal and is the director of TOTEMPOÉSIE.

Donald Winkler is a Montreal-based literary translator and documentary filmmaker. In the realm of poetry, he has made films on Irving Layton, P.K. Page, F.R. Scott, among others. And, among others, he has translated Roland Giguère and Pierre Nepveu. He is a three-time winner of the Governor General's Award for French to English translation.

\$10.95

Claude Beausoleil

Hugues Corriveau

Louise Cotnoir

Antonio D'Alfonso

Célyne Fortin

Lise Gauvin

Jonathan Kaplansky

Jack Keguenne

Corinne Larochelle

Joanne Morency

Jill Varley

Yolande Villemaire

Donald Winkler