

Painted, spoken

edited by Richard Price

number 30

Painted, spoken is edited, typeset, and published by Richard Price. Please send an A5 stamped self-addressed envelope for a free copy (two first class stamps please) to 63 Artizan Court, Noel Park Road, London, N22 6ED

Painted, spoken's editorial policy is constituted in instalments by the contents of **Painted, spoken**

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V e l i m i r K h l e b n i k o v

translated from the Russian by Anne Gutt

I went out as a stripling alone
Into the dead of night,
Covered stiff to the ground
With tightly-grown hair.
Night stood around
And I was lonely
I wanted friends,
I wanted me.
I set fire to to the hair,
Threw away the shreds and ringlets
And set fire all around me.
I set fire to the fields, to the trees,
And all became gladness.
Klebnikov's field was alight.
And fiery I blazed in the darkness.
Now I am leaving
With flaming hair...
And in place of I
Became We!

1921

R o b i n F u l t o n M a c p h e r s o n

A New Day

Dawn was a cramped shadowy room.
I stumbled in with unwieldy baskets
full of the night's dream-detritus.

A voice that sounded like my own
mumbled to me from the inmost corner
"Don't bring your bedlam-baskets here."

A pigeon on someone's roof moaned
"Nowhere to put them, nowhere to put them,
you'd better go back to the dark."

The Shortest Day

Low cloud makes sure: there are no hills,
trees that once wanted to be tall
have had to stop growing half-way,
the dawn tried to happen but failed.

We are discouraged from thinking
that something like a universe
is making and breaking its rules
about time, somewhere, and shining.

A Thin Burn

The dead have a bad habit
of giving me wrong answers
to questions I haven't asked.

The questions I want to ask
swirl like crows that can't settle
for the night, not there, not yet.

A thin burn percolating
from wide heathery nowhere
gives an impression of speech.

"Never mind the dead," it says.
But next time I hear Murdo
make the world sound like Caithness

the burn has nothing to say
that doesn't sound like water,
water and only water.

Remote

It has stayed in the same place and followed me for sixty-five years, something remote lochs are good at.

Seen online, nowhere is remote. Here is the hour-by-hour forecast for Loch Arichlinie today:

breeze gentle, rain none. Nobody will notice the miniature waves noticing the gentleness of the breeze.

Family Gravestones

“Occasional mild spells but mostly below average temperatures, with rain.”

If only they were as familiar as old-fashioned mantelpieces, tiles keeping warmth alive, and not a touch of the loneliness of the universe.

D o r o t h y L e h a n e

two sonnets from Bettbehandlung

taking milk in my mouth & spitting it | to feel
alive and coherent | suffering the bath water |
& the malaria water | & the wowf water |
incompatible since marriage | how are you
quiet and agreeable | how do you enjoy your
free hours of movement | how can I know you
| “you” is contingent to “me” | & I am busy
thinking my way into the stability of my own
psyche | having watched your psyche break |
to be communal is to be in this | thinking is
not a private matter | but to be thinking &
gesturing is to be in a relationship with the
intelligibility of the world | say “in” the world
| say “in states of mind” | say “in
conversation” | say “indwelling” | say “big rift
in the fabric of the ego”

were you born | or crushed out | everyone
pretends to want her | but doesn't want her |
she is losing the sociality of thought | it is a
sudden leaving of her body | & language born
of pain & happy to end it | in the village | so
many bodies are unclassed | heavy with folio-
stasis | speech remnants addressed in the ear
of the confessor | the dismembered & isolated
parts of yourself | by "save yourself" | we
mean save yourself the discomfort of the visit |
effacing each other | never too soon & never
too late to be reconciled | if you don't wear a
monastic cloak then you don't have a
metropolitan spirit | placing fingers in the
holy water | & demanding the sick drink it

R a l p h H a w k i n s

Bats

the bats change direction
until the final bat

“the young girls wished for stars
instead of husbands” *

the bear has its honey

the bees off Rhodes of rose

the medlar and burst pomegranate

offered almond ground to a paste

the Greeks sprung up from here

as grass

performing the morning’s calisthenics

the brown bear and more bees

the stars’ foil

a door of cedar opens

sew to sea and seen, seeds steer

the bats return

*Bernadette Meyer

Poem 1 vi.xi.17

bright November
sun through the
library window
black mountain
born in Brooklyn

looking down
rip van winkle
from the Alhambra
into the city of
troglodytes

wood smoke
from an autumnal
fire long afternoon
shadow to the south
of Colchester

Corn from Delft is good for Elves
Bernadette Meyer

you can get a coach

transport yourself

Scarlett Johansson
an alien in Glasgow

the girl at the psalter

palmistry soap

all those overburdened
with the clothes they wore

the abandoned, the outcast, what future

they 'fished' them out of the sea

sunbathing naked

'It was like an ocean all the way round'
Georgia O'Keefe

her gaze into "empty" space
wind chiselled rock and strata
her chin on a clenched fist
a hunched, pensive figure
fatigue, grief, sorrow or just
meditating a posture of declining
health, old age, reflection
on the environment
tacitly eloquent
bones bone dry
calcined, bleached horse
steer, sheep white
the body the primordial place
the desert in her
and she in the desert
her enigmatic landscape
driven by light and heat

sunbathing naked

On the tale of a Donkey

I slept with a dromedary
once in the Gobi desert

lumpy sand
earplugs

Gary Cooper in the Foreign Legion

falling in love with the nit doctor

P e t e r M c C a r e y

f r o m T h e S y l l a b a r y

19.1.3 Rusty Saffron

At a skelfy table under a salty
Tree to group
With the pad of the thumb
And fingertips four
Little knolls of spice.

19.1.1

Goo
It's the mushroom's lunchtime
Flies are stuck in the grue-
Some sweat white spots on a red um-
Brella that just glue and grew.

19.2.1

Go. And don't tell me
I wouldn't let you
Grow. You'll see your fingers tingle
And glow as you stretch
Your palms towards me. No.

17.2.1

Row on row I reconstruct
This table out of memory,
The words that went from one row to the next,

The columns that, however strong,
Can't keep the roof from coming down

17.3.1

Raw
Set apart
For the salivant.

16.3.1

I'm going to buy a shaw
Clear some larch and pine in the middle
Build a house like the Quakers in New England
Wi nary a nail nor drop of glue
But joints that settle till they're more like grafts
And I'll stay there till it's four hundred year old
And me a sprightly ninety
Hearing the breakers braille the rocks at Cleadale.

15.3.1

Chaw at it
Till your gooms are raw
Till all that's there is one
Or two
Intelligences
Clacking bones in blood.

15.3.3

Chop
Chop
Chomp.

15.3.10 Also Ran

While engrossed in the crossword
(The job was that thrilling)
I chalked off a horse
That ran and won: Mandilinee.
How did you manage to do a stupid
Thing like that? said the regional manager.
(I think he'd on a grey raincoat). Oh,
I'd been practising all week.

15.2.10

Thunder choked
On the chain of the wind
And the park released
Its scents, as you did.

15.2.12

I chose the gauge
Made the net
And I let
The river
Happen on through it.

T a t y a n a M o s e e v a
translated from the Russian by Anne Gutt

* * *

such tracks in the snow
as if a bird had nestled to it
sheltering its chick from the bombing
spreading out its wings

or was it just bored
knocking on the ice with its strong beak
brooding on death
medea in hungry years

or was it just bored
I think birds get bored like people
lying in the snow
sheltering what isn't there

* * *

radio

we just ended up in cold water
that's what I hear
a man in an expensive suit floundering in an ice-hole
in the cold water, yeah

and he clings with his hands to the ice edge
and the fish tail of his tie bobs up first
what I need is a gentle silk wash and this
water is killing me

and he disappears under the water again and is no
longer breathing
we ended up in a cold *war*, the neighbours steal and
look askance
as a culture-sweet nerve trembles and on the roof a
black cat
looks across towards kosovo

* * *

throws

1.

so what else are they about apart from love and pain
even the most refined anaesthetized births
are sexier than the departure to the company bathhouse
of first year recruits who failed university entrance
for some reason the cold seasons were invented
the diaghilev muses in smoking paris
it's nothing, he's not mine, it's ok that he's ginger
you need to rest, they say, three and a bit...
checkered throws, fucking trecento
it smells of printing ink, move closer

2.

you had a sore throat and glands like grapes
Uncle Seryozha watched in the north wind
the stop was wet everyone caught cold
and he smoothed your brow with a thumb
in Macdonalds we asked for tea
I begged you to stop coughing
otherwise your voice would disappear as you tell me
you love me a little and they forgot the sugar

3.

A dog will suit us more than a cat
as it suits us to sleep apart more
for purely (seemingly) practical reasons
let's get a giant schnauzer, a girl, Gemma
I'm afraid I'll melt if you hug me
we can discuss different names
that night I lay and cried
hugging the unbought dog

* * *

Robin Fulton Macpherson's *Northern Habitat: Collected Poems 1960-2010* is published by Marick Press.

Anne Gutt is an artist and translator. She was awarded the Gabo Prize for Literary Translation Summer/Fall 2017 for her translations of poems by Ganna Shevchenko. She has also published translations of Nina Iskrenko's poetry.

Ralph Hawkins is the author of *Tell Me No More and Tell Me* (Grosseteste 1981), *At Last Away* (Gallop Dog Press, 1988), *Gone to Marzipan* (Oystercatcher, 2009) and *It Looks Like An Island But Sails Away* (Shearsman, 2015)

Dorothy Lehane is the author of three poetry publications: *Umwelt* (Leafe Press, 2016), *Ephemeris* (Nine Arches Press, 2014) and *Places of Articulation* (dancing girl press, 2014) and is the founding editor of Litmus Publishing.

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Richard Price's latest collection is *Moon for Sale* (Carcanet).

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