

# otata 27

## March 2018





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## Contents

TOKONOMA — H.D. Thoreau	
Ketti Martino	7
John Levy	11
Alegria Imperial	15
Madhuri Pillai	17
Geethanjali Rajan & Sonam Chhoki	18
Joseph Salvatore Aversano	20
Adrian Bouter	23
Dan Schwerin	24
Eufemia Griffo	25
Gabriel Bates	26
Elmedin Kadric	28
Debbie Strange	31
Anna Maria Domburg-Sancristoforo	32
Maria Teresa Sisti	33
Leonardo Lazzari	34
Christina Sng	35
Giovanna Restuccia	36
Margherita Petriccione	38
Angela Giordano	40
Antonio Sacco	42
Corrado Aiello	43
Lucia Cardillo	44
Maria Laura Valente	45
William Scott Galasso	46
Rosa Maria Di Salvatore	48
Clayton Beach, Hansha Teki, Johannes S.H. Berg	49
Francesco Palladino	51
Dave Read	52

## SPECIAL FEATURE:

Bob Arnold — poems selected from *Heaven Lake* 53

## Tokonoma

13                                    Sunday March 4th 1855  
14                    Pm to Bee tree Hill over F. H. Pond.  
15       For some time, or since the ground has  
16       been bare, I have noticed the spider holes  
17       in the ploughed land. We go over the  
18       Cliffs. Though a cold & strong wind  
19       it is very warm in the sun--& we can  
20       sit in the sun where sheltered on these  
21       rocks with impunity. It is a genial  
22       warmth-- The rustle of the dry leaves on  
23       the earth & in the crannies of the  
24       rocks--& gathered in deep windrows  
25       just under their edge--midleg deep--  
26       remind me of fires in the woods--they  
27       are almost ready to burn. I see a  
28       fly on the rock

— *H.D. Thoreau*

## *Ketti Martino*

*Procedo per implicite rinunce  
perché la gratuità dell'esistenza  
è nel rigore estremo, incanto  
che contiene solo il necessario.*

*I sogni, col fiato corto di una pianta  
acerba, vogliono maturare piano,  
senza pesi, per traboccare di bellezza.*

I proceed by implicit renunciations  
because the gratuity of existence  
lies in extreme rigor, charm  
that holds only the necessary.

Dreams, with the short breath of  
an unripe plant, want to mature gently,  
without weight, to overflow with beauty.

*Dimmi, di quel gomitolo di gioie,  
pensieri, quale rasserena ancora la tua corsa  
come quando mangiavi il seno  
con più d'un morso,  
e con l'esserci  
o il non esserci,  
e senza chiedere, spezzavi in due il pane  
dividendo il tempo tuo  
e le parole?*

*Se non ti ho mai cercato,  
e sei venuto a me,  
                ventre gracile, invernale amore  
è stato solo per parlarti qui, ora  
nel silenzio nostro.*

Tell me about that little ball of joys,  
thoughts, which still cheer you in the race  
as when you nursed at the breast  
for more than one bite,  
and being there  
or not being there  
and without asking, you broke bread  
dividing your time  
and words?

If I never looked for you  
and you came to me,  
                gentle belly, winter love  
it was only to talk to you here, now,  
in our silence.

*Procedo per implicite rinuncia e Dimmi furono originariamente pubblicate in [Atelier](#).  
Procedo per implicite rinuncia and Dimmi were originally published in [Atelier](#).  
Translations jmn*



Poesie da *Del distacco e altre impermanenze*

Poems from *Of detachment and other impermanences*

Milan: La Vita Felice, 2014

[www.lavita felice.it](http://www.lavita felice.it)

*Se tu guardassi dal buco  
che hai tracciato in cielo  
vedresti il labirinto che conosci  
e i punti stretti a ricucire albe.*

If you look at the hole  
you drew in the sky  
you'll see the labyrinth you know  
and pinholes for patching daybreaks

*Quale fosse la dea che mi portava  
al giorno, non mi è dato sapere  
ma ricordo il bianco dei tuoi occhi  
al cielo, contro i palazzi. E le pupille  
a fissare l'ultimo fermo-immagine.*

It isn't given to me to know  
which goddess brought me to daylight  
but I remember the whites of your eyes  
toward the sky, against the buildings. And pupils  
fixing the final freeze-frame.

*Partorisco fossili e parole  
resto incisa nella terra  
mai nelle persone*

I give birth to fossils and words  
I remain cut in earth  
never people.



(Translations jm)

*John Levy*

*The River*

you get wet twice  
when you step into the same river

the first time your clothes dry  
because it is a hot day

it is still a hot day  
when you enter again

"Heraclitus," says your daughter,  
in the beach chair she bought

with the money she earned,  
"was born in 544 B.C."

she bought the book with  
more money she earned herself

you put your same head  
under the water, eyes open

again, happy you're a father  
and seeing blurred stones in the light

## *Fiddler Crab*

About one hundred species of semi-terrestrial marine crabs make up what can be called a Fiddler Crab, which also is named a Calling Crab. Each of us have our own calling, living — as we do — as if called from some otherworldly blue-

print that sometimes seems designed with a sense of humor. Take the Fiddler Crab, the male with the major claw he uses to perform a waving display to a female who accepts or rejects him based on (1) the size of his blueprint-bestowed claw, and (2) his performed

wave with said claw. This could be amusing, tragic, fabulous, and/or as meaningless as death seems — sometimes — to render us after we've been called to perform our displays.

*It*

"It is piddling down with rain. A couple of sparrows landing on the telephone wires out the window." John Phillips, in an email, in January, in Cornwall.

Sparrows on telephone wires, wet  
wires under wet beaks, wet feet

gripping wet black wires, a couple of  
sparrows viewed with a couple

of eyes, wet rusty crowns and wet  
grey heads. Our own

white hairs, our minds  
letting the rain in and the

sparrows in, in our minds their  
rusty crowns.

## *Zoo*

In Polish it is also zoo. I was a little surprised. I was reading a Grzegorz Wróblewski poem with the Polish across from the English. The last word in a poem entitled "Penguin" ("Pingwin") is zoo on both pages. So to double-

check I Googled an English to Polish site and yes, zoo and zoo matched there too. Though then I noticed two other possibilities for zoo in Polish:

ogród zoologiczny

zwierzyniec

and it's as if I were at our zoo here in Tucson in the aviary enclosure and three birds land on my outstretched legs (I'd sit down on the path because I'd be alone so no one would realize I'm odd nor would I scare any children) and one is a sparrow

on my right knee and the other two appear fabulously more foreign and are big and complicated and weigh down my left leg and surely possess exotic names I could find, but

would forget within a minute. No penguin though. Our zoo doesn't have penguins. I'll have to revisit his poem, which ends (spoiler alert) with Wróblewski — no no, I shouldn't give away anything about his poem except the final word. I can't avoid that.

# *Alegria Imperial*

## *decryptions*

gushed off bottomed-out seas  
inundating shallow beds between mountain curvatures...  
could it be mom's leaking breasts?

(a fissured aurora)

*on eaves*

in the thicket the gloaming rimmed  
huddled among warring moons, nagged by anguished herds  
...gripe about the hollows, could she?

(a tumult in the silence)

*whose sniveled drumming*

grappling with wild winds, vexed clouds surging  
in dark wells—yet, a gleam in the evening's thickness,  
is it her soul disengaged?

(a plume leaping off)

*can't tell*

*random tasks*

dreadlocks midnight tangled to uncoil  
forceps to rid twitter-ed words of splinters  
split tongues said not only of hummingbirds need we mind?  
the cypress defying sunset throes why prune  
the Blue Prince holly's thorns how to clip  
petulant winds to fold and unfold



*Madhuri Pillai*

shadow dancing through parted curtains bleached day

gum barks layer by layer the façade peels

# Geethanjali Rajan & Sonam Chhoki

A yellow sun rises in the eastern sky painting the thatch in gold.

wood-fire  
to cook rice gruel –  
first meal of the year

*Blue pines on the hill smoking with mist.*

suddenly some drumbeats -  
elephant tracks lead  
to a cluster of bamboo

*In retreat the river etches itself on the bank.*

*spreading haze  
voices arc back and forth  
in the mustard fields*

The path uphill scented with flowers whose name I do not know.

*framing the peaks  
Wind-horse prayer flags  
rise and fall in the breeze*

## *Monsoon Rites*

a nuthatch  
full-throated in song  
on a rain-filled dawn  
while I, even in dreams  
cannot conjure a cobalt sky

*drops of water  
spatter from the ixora  
as I stir  
from the heaviness of sleep  
to make the first offering*

Nag Panchami -  
as if in obeisance  
how the mist flows  
from the kalash of ravine  
to the chant of the stream

*summer's pond  
pregnant with grey sky  
to the brim  
our unending quest  
to break this cycle of birth*

a rainbow  
spans the valley  
to the clouds  
the day, the old stone shrine  
is taken by the deluge

*fragrant herbs  
for our monsoon ailments  
in grandma's poultices  
what if all of life's complaints  
could be as easily assuaged*

Sonam Chhoki  
& Geethanjali Rajan

# *Joseph Salvatore Aversano*

## *Moon Blue*

as if the moon is so ordinary  
that we have to imagine

it is blue and extraordinary  
so that we as if we are

so ordinary too can  
be as extraordinary

for having seen it  
for having been there

in the light of it  
as blue

## Oasis Skoura

for Asu, Sarah, and Nick

wherever we may be  
there is still our oasis shade

and its twilit blue parakeet  
wishes and dreams

in the coolness  
of its stars arrived

at the mystery  
of its well dark deeps  
and leaves

*on a day of clairaudience  
(or of being struck  
by a rogue wave):*

i.

bear's ear bowls  
de-iced

a whirring

boreal  
blue

ii.

whatever the wind gauge

a djinn  
or wind sage  
you

*Adrian Bouter*

grey groceries day red apple

moody hooves the scent of wet grass

crude oil plastic smiles fill the room

*Dan Schwerin*

from the abdomen  
the spider's window  
onto God

the last word  
so hungry  
for another

nothing to do  
every flake goes  
let go let go let



## *Eufemia Griffio*

spring garden  
silkworms become  
butterflies again

dark sky  
a blue kite plays  
with the white clouds

## *Gabriel Bates*

light  
mist  
sometimes  
I  
do  
feel

news of her suicide a thick fog  
hangs beneath that same oak tree

news of her suicide a thick fog  
hangs beneath that same oak tree

kicking rocks  
I'm unable to feel  
or fear God

deep in thought  
a log shifts  
in the fire

dead end street  
I walk away  
from my mind

alone tonight  
I turn to tell you something

the  
dead  
leaves  
reminding  
me

*Elmedin Kadric*

light the  
end of  
a dot

still wanting to become November rain

"yet" (not quite rut)

scattering  
a  
page  
full of  
nothing  
but  
me

mean  
while  
horn  
bill

the distance assured I am not

O an Englishman in leather robes

in accordance with nature as

## *Debbie Strange*

damp underpass only the dark timpani of trains

stardrifts we slip into the depths of winter

setting sun blood red epaulettes on a blackbird's wings

sulphur springs we conjure the scent of petrichor

# *Anna Maria Domburg-Sancristoforo*

*ultima neve -  
i fiocchi si sciolgono  
al primo sguardo*

last snow -  
snowflakes melting  
at first sight

my private spring -  
the scent oh hyacinths  
in the living room

*chicchi di riso —  
nella ciotola tonda  
splende la luna*

rice grains —  
in the round bowl  
moonshine



*Maria Teresa Sisti*

red tulip —  
a stem without thorns  
who fears the wind

the first train —  
a noise of ice  
on the grass

full moon —  
the usual lack  
tonight too

*Leonardo Lazzari*

spring rain flows on my back her hand

*Christina Sng*

breakwater  
the kindness  
of strangers

soaring eagle  
she belongs to  
herself

crescent moon  
my toddler counts sheep  
before she sleeps

## *Giovanna Restuccia*

*operai sul binario —  
mio padre rimane  
dall'altra parte*

workers on the railway —  
my father remains  
on the other side

A chinese seamstress  
sews beside the showcase —  
falling leaves

shadows spread  
in the room —  
father's last words

foreign voices  
from a full boat —  
crescent moon

narcissus —  
in the depths of my eyes  
your image

violets —  
biting cold  
in our distance

# *Margherita Petriccione*

*dita congelate —  
sulla lattuga sopravvissuta  
due lumache*

frozen fingers —  
on the surviving lettuce  
two snails

*brina sulle labbra il vapore di una promessa*

frost on the lips the steam of a promise

*trama di foglie morte —  
una gemma di croco*

texture of dead leaves -  
a bud of crocus

*una mimosa nell'autostrada sosta forzata*

a mimosa in the highway wind forced stop

*camelia bianca  
la prima macchia scura  
sulle mani*

white camellia —  
the first dark blotch  
on the hands

*pianto di gufo —  
pesante di frasi vuote  
la luna di stasera*

owl cry —  
heavy with empty phrases  
tonight's moon

## *Angela Giordano*

*l'ultima stella —  
un vecchio sulla soglia  
avvolto nella nebbia*

the last star —  
an old man in the doorway  
shrouded in mist

*futano il vento  
due giovani puledri —  
aria di pioggia*

they smell the wind  
two young foals —  
rainy air



*declina il giorno —  
il vento ha cambiato  
la direzione*

the day declines —  
the wind has changed  
direction

*pioggia scrosciante —  
un suono di tamburi  
sui capannoni*

pouring rain —  
a sound of drums  
on the sheds

## *Antonio Sacco*

*Forte folata:  
sopra i campi di grano  
appare un'onda*

Strong gust:  
above the wheat fields  
a wave appears

*Ortensie in fiore -  
ora guardando a terra  
rivedo il cielo*

Hydrangeas in bloom -  
now looking at the ground  
I see the sky again

*Strati di petali:  
vedere in un carciofo  
un fior di loto*

Layers of petals  
in an artichoke  
see a lotus flower

## *Corrado Aiello*

*pioggia di città...  
mentre cerco di adempiere  
il mio dharma*

*pioggia di città...  
mentre provo a bruciare  
il mio karma*

city rain...  
as I try to fulfill  
my dharma

city rain...  
as I try to burn  
my karma

## *Lucia Cardillo*

*cambia il tempo...  
una pigna rotola giù  
nell'erba alta*

weather changes ...  
one pinecone rolls down  
in the tall grass

*scarpe infangate ...  
nel solito nascondiglio  
iris selvatici*

muddy shoes...  
in the usual hideaway  
wild irises

*nuvole pesanti ...  
il pesco si ricopre  
di fiori rosa*

heavy clouds...  
peach tree wears  
its pink flowers

## *Maria Laura Valente*

### *Syllables in B/W*

x-rays /  
something darker  
in the dark

long recovery...  
streams of consciousness  
in slow motion

wounded cocoon —  
I take some time  
to linger on

white dusk —  
behind closed windows  
no smell of snow

craft beers —  
the aftertaste of sorrow  
lingers

## *William Scott Galasso*

Basho's frog  
Walden's pond  
hand-in-glove

which one of us  
is the alien...  
praying mantis

marine fog  
swallows man and dog,  
shortest month

catcombs  
a sense that  
the time is near

mime's hands  
sweep high and low  
walls closing in

## *Rosa Maria Di Salvatore*

clear night —  
on the almond blossom  
the moon shines

night in the country —  
in the silence a cricket  
and his cri-cri



*Clayton Beach*

*Hansha Teki*

*Johannes S. H. Bjerg*

*An Unexpected Departure*

in memoriam Johnny Baranski

Folsom prison blues—  
every man guilty of some  
kind of innocence

a worm twists and turns  
at the heart of a rose

see? with the beads  
of glass I can show you  
your rainbow

revenants of yesteryear  
in her sleight of hand

now the mirror's empty  
but for the stupid smile  
of moonlight

a bolt-gun rings in the stockyard  
poppies Hafiz, oh the poppies...

day after day  
the quiet American  
soldiers on

a chalk window on the wall  
there's your escape

the goldfish stares through me  
two blue-bottle flies  
gather dust in the corner

a breath makes to softly leave  
through a split infinitive

hand-to-brow  
in one movement  
mensch

mother's approval proves  
the relationship's final blow

dead sea scroll  
a caterpillar  
of its end

OMG! there's a dog  
trying to get into her ear!

and yet no one pays any mind  
as the ground erodes  
underfoot

unheard of 'til now  
footfall on water

first snowdrops  
a certain whiteness in  
A Love Supreme

refracted through my third eye  
the moon scents whisper

images strewn  
across the underbelly  
of experience

quietly dusk leaves  
the fields wide open

## *Francesco Palladino*

sails swollen with white light —  
the flat sea

plowing —  
a white furrow in the sky

reeds in the wind —  
in a cold sunset shadows in shadow

*Dave Read*

slipped disc ...  
the old jalopy  
sold for parts

losing the moon  
to a U-turn ...  
summer's end

the space between  
stars starts to grow  
hyphens

*Bob Arnold*



Special Feature

A selection of poems from *Heaven Lake*

Longhouse Publishers

*from Heaven Lake*

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*Fair Is Fair*

After breaking in

The snowshoe trail

The deer use it

*Mirror*

rain

on

leaf

## *The Little Things*

Out in the dark woods  
when the power goes out  
with heavy snow

there is nothing quite  
like a small chocolate  
drop melting in the

dark of your mouth



## *Amen, Brother*

He wasn't happy  
about any part of his  
job and I'd wager  
even his life knee-  
deep in snow  
cranking away  
on two gas  
tanks when  
he said with  
scorn, "*Happiness  
isn't everything  
it's cracked up  
to be*" — amen  
brother, but if I  
took away your  
wrench and  
doubled the  
snow depth  
up to your neck  
I promise you  
you'll miss  
this little bit  
of happiness  
you have

## *Steps*

Life

is

but

an

ad

just

ment

## *The Muse*

I can't get anything done  
until she is out of my hair!

her eyes are that blue  
her hair goes with the sun

the flash of her flowered dress in the air  
and even when she is away

only momentarily, an errand to town  
I'm thinking now of what I'm missing

here where I work in a woods ditch with shovel  
laying in stone stairs which may as well be to the sea

since she'll visit on her return and I'm grubby and  
she steps lightly down each new step before anyone

saying how lovely it all is and all is fine

## *I Sent To My Mother*

my book of forty years of  
love poems and she never  
said if she received the book  
or not, so I asked —  
and she sighed  
“*Oh yes, I have that*

*I put it away”*

## *Bowling*

knew it was

a strike

watching her

skirt twirl

## *He's Nearby*

*for Franco*

I hear

leaf

caught

in bicycle

spoke

## *Book Lover*

If looks could kill  
then here it is —

the famous poet  
after his reading

meeting my wife  
who is asking him

to sign his books  
that mean next to

nothing to her and  
they both know it

## *I'll Never Be Poor*

How she does it  
I don't know

don't want  
to know

will never  
know as

she turns to me and  
it's new all over again



## *Stone Over Stone*

to bal  
ance  
the  
stone

takes  
eye  
↻  
hand

↻ for  
get  
ting  
thought

## *All You Need To Know*

All you need to know about  
America now is —

all my old tools are with me  
working daily

hammers, trowels, levels  
saws, plumb-bobs, rakes

while all my new tools  
are soon broken

*For Ian Hamilton Finlay*

**Hear**

oriole by

itself made

the yard

**Boy**

an airport —

on the kitchen table

**In**

the rain

the geese

**Simple**

the canoe

does no-

thing on

land

*from Heaven Lake* by Bob Arnold

## *Authority*

Some mouse has woven  
a paper nest in my stored  
away mud boots all winter

It's now sloppy spring  
and I'm needing  
my boots

who am  
I to wreck  
a warm home?

## *Mister*

Across the brawn of the river  
St. Lawrence from Old Montreal  
In a park tree topped by sunshine  
We walked and only stopped  
Once because we just had to  
Listen to a man off by himself  
With no hat down or instrument  
Case open who sat straight up  
On a bench with his both feet  
Dancing 'cause you see beside  
This water and flowing up into  
The trees and looking back to  
The city we all could hear  
His concertina

## *Still*

Snow in the  
Yard into the

Woods even in  
The trees but

Under simple  
Plank swing

A square  
Of grass

## *Turn Around*

You can live in fear  
that's all there seems to be  
newspaper to television screen  
even people's faces on the street

stop your car by the side of the road  
get out and walk into the field  
sit there, be there, your back to the road  
everyone will think you are crazy

you are crazy  
now that that is settled  
sit there until the field takes you  
then the trees

*Those*

every

mon-

ster

leaves

a

trail



## *How They Met*

He took what clothes he needed washing, including the ones he was wearing, and she put everything into their old washing machine and it was done. She then took the fresh wash spun dry and carried it outdoors and hung it on the clothesline for the afternoon. Then she went to town to do errands. He cut a lot of grass. When they met up again the clothes were dry. He cut up fruit for their supper and she went out and brought the clothes in sun kissed from the line. She folded everything neat as a pin and rested it on the back of the sofa near the hallway door to the upstairs. He went carefully through the clothes and decided he needed everything of his right there downstairs. He left the clothes alone. Hours later, on her way upstairs, she took all the clothes with her up the stairs. When she got upstairs something about it all told her his clothes were supposed to stay downstairs. She brought the clothes downstairs.

He was happy to see her.

## *Getting There*

half

way

doesn't

cross

a

bridge

## *Nothing But The Truth*

She is a little girl  
on a rocking-horse  
and she will only  
allow herself to be  
lifted on the horse  
if she can hold a  
flower, it's plastic  
but she is two years  
old so it is a flower  
and she is content  
with the horse her-  
self and the flower  
until I tell her her  
daddy has jumped  
into the pond and  
her daddy who is  
my son is hidden  
by me in the door-  
way and is quite  
used to madcap  
and fun but he  
knows to reassure  
his little girl that he  
is not in the pond  
but grandfathers  
must say there are  
such ponds

## *You Can*

toss an apple  
core to the  
river

but never get  
to float that  
free

## *Know What You Do*

What does it all mean?  
it means times have changed  
and we're supposed to change with it

take the quiet, the river, the old  
road, animal lore, secret pathways  
respect for stick, leaf and silence

and throw it all away

do as we please  
barge where we barge  
litter as we like

you don't know what sort of  
agreement and law and universe  
you are asking to destroy when

you do this

## *Our Life*

You

&

me

&

then

some