

TOWER LIGHT 2010

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FL *Autumn*

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Tower Light FALL TOWER
A LITERARY PUBLICATION LIGHT

2010 Tower Light
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“We shall not cease from exploration,
and the end of all our exploring will be
to arrive where we started and know
the place for the first time.”

T.S. ELIOT

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CONTENTS

Seasonable by Serena Howe 6

GOLDENROD by Luca D'Anselmi 8

**THE BALLAD OF
CAPTAIN CLODE** by Mark Keller 10

Magi by Jessica McCaleb 18

Resignation by Thomas Roe 20

Runaway by Alexi Noble 24

This Modern Love by Joshua Koczman 28

Spaghetti by Stephan Godleski 32

UNTITLED by Luca D'Anselmi 34

Nattusa by Emily Wagner 35

PRINCESS by Joshua Rice 38

Seasonable

by Serena Howe

As Autumn, so these leaves
Flutter and flame;
Fine summer's ash filigrees
Fruitful memory
Which, seasoned, shriveled, and grown sweet,
Makes gravid time to bear.



La Sabana de Guanacaste
CHRISTENE DIEHR

GOLDENROD

BY LUCA D'ANSEMI

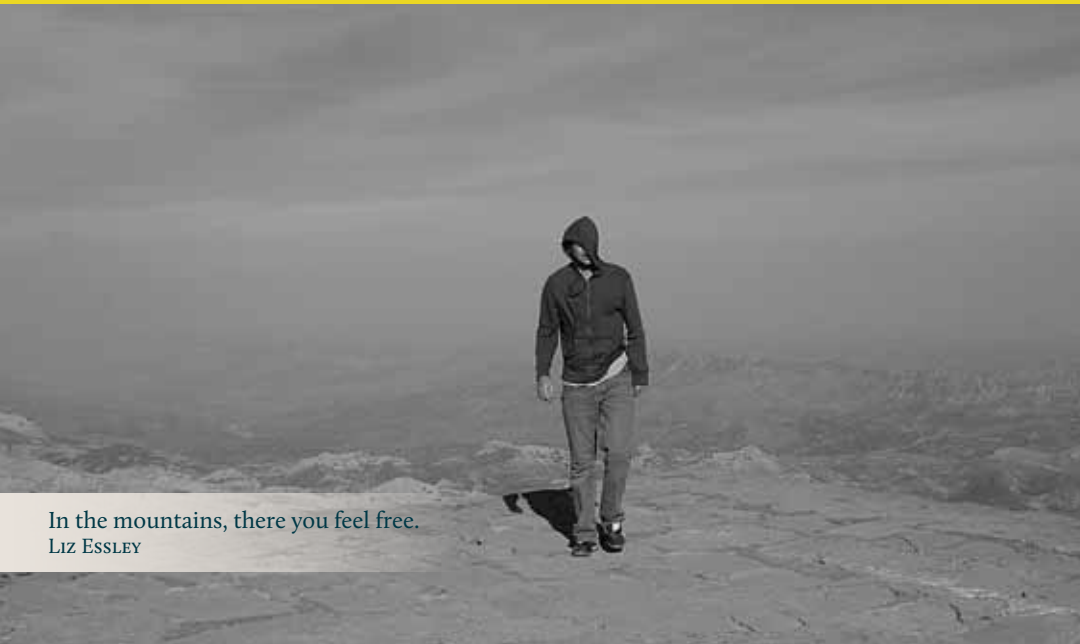
Your face, O Goldenrod, has passed.
I saw, and it was fair.
O Goldenrod, in cold embrace
Lies still your golden hair.

Soon roots and whispers, grave and deep
Will mint in gold anew,
That measured grace, in younger face
Be seen again in you.

And under dark and frowning skies
With brow aflame in gold,
I wish to light reflecting eyes
Before my limbs grow cold.

But endless summers, endless springs
Seize fast with phrases fine;
And every line already cast
In purer gold than mine.

And every line the sweetest line
That ever you did see,
And nothing new above the ground,
No Goldenrod to be.



In the mountains, there you feel free.
LIZ ESLEY

THE BALLAD OF CAPTAIN CLODE

BY MARK KELLER

The eight-limbed sleeps within the deep
The sea-lanes o'er him roll
And though mankind may war and weep
Peace lies within his soul.

The deep-beast sleeps, while o'er him far
The cannoneers do load
A barrel for each shining star
On the breast of Captain Clode.

Clode likewise sleeps; he too at peace
Though soul from breast has fled,
His smile as soft as lambkin's fleece
His pockets full of lead.

He smiles as one whose war is won—
To duty stand his men,
For though their captain's watch is done
Comes peace they know not when.

In rigid lines marines who warred
Alongside Clode do stand
In reverence to their captain-lord
With weapons clasped in hand.

He bears a noble family's crest,
Name proven midst blood and din,
His medals lie upon his breast
A bullet lies within.

“Now to it, lads!” the marshal cries,
“Prime guns, ramrod and load!
Ever the best man's he who dies:
Salute our captain, Clode!”

And now their muskets shoulder all,
Touchholes are fired beneath:
Twenty muskets fire each a ball,
Five bombards smoke-enwreath.

Their thunder calls across the sea:
“Hail man who lacked all vice!”
The crew in adulation free
Salutes him twice and thrice.

The volleys echo to the deep
Where he of limbs twice-four
Lies like an infant, fast asleep
Cradled by the ocean floor.



The plank is tipped, and Clode bestirred
Up-set though not made wroth
As plummet he, a dark sea-bird,
Into the briny froth.

The man bestirred uncordially
Esteemed, yet roughly tipped—
The many-legged son of sea
From sleep is rudely ripped.

Lo: thus by cannon-shock bestirred
His strong arms each uncoil,
Awoken by the echoes heard
He makes the waters boil.

Strong strokes from limbs of fearsome size
Propel his giant mass,
One sinking and one on the rise
Captain and creature pass.

Abyss-born he, like sky-bound gale,
Swims upward at a leap
To see what overweening whale
Dares wake the monstrous deep.

Not whale, not fish, but wooden craft
He notes with odd surprise—
A tiny figure rushes aft
And opes its mouth and cries.

“The Kraken, lads!” the marshal calls
“Load guns, ramrod and fire!”
A score of death-forged leaden balls
Inflame the sea-son’s ire.

Now four strong arms wrap round the bow
And four strong arms the stern:
They clench the ship to splinters now
And crush men in their turn.

A dark, dread sight it is to see
His pain-wracked, anguished wrath
A weeping, warring blood-beast he
Who treads the fierce sea-path.

Beneath the sea where burns no fire
Clode sleeps, his smile is glad;
In sea-dark sleeps his crew entire,
In sea-weeds Clode is clad.





Lilies on Nymph Lake
CHUCK GRIMMETT



Heavenwards
RACHAEL SJOERDSMA



Magi

by Jessica McCaleb

-18-

“Home is where one starts from”
— T.S. Eliot, “East Coker”

We scanned the stars, but found them
Scarce for such a hunger. In pools
We cradled their shadows, figured
The far unreachable dance—brilliance
That broke at a breath, ripples unwinding
The brief, unbearable dream.

They, pure,

Soothed (for a while) our thirst
For the bright Eternal, but by day
Our visions mocked us—not having
The gentle tangibility of goblets,
Or roses, or of our roofs at evening
When the patterned infinite
Untouchable troubled our souls.

-19-

This star was different. When our eyes
And the unquiet water gleaned
Fire from the skies that fabled
An old unworded desire,
We followed—not daring to hope,
Or knowing if the restless dream
Was more than our own inescapable
Interstices.

Long journeying, and doubt
Doubling back on fear when sunrise
Surprised us, obscured our star,
Derided the thought (unthinkable) that
The Perfect could be adored
Here. And we only knew the end
Of our journey, when we felt
We had reached its beginning.
The common forms that at home
Had cut and questioned our souls
With the riddle of their edges
(Fierce as runes, and unrevealed)
Now pierced us with joy, as we read
The stars in his impossible eyes
And worshipped the bodily God.

Lines from

Resignation

by Thomas Roe



Old English Original

105

Wudu mot him weaxan,
tanumlædan;
ænignemoncynnes
eorl on eþle.
meahtigmundbora!
wyrdebidan,
ic for tæle ne mæg
mode gelufian
Ealadryhten min,
þæticeom mode seoc,

110

bittreabolgen,
gelongæfterlife.
butanearfoþum
feasceafthæle
þonneic me to fremþum
is seo bot ætþe
Ic on leohte ne mæg
ængeþinga
foldangewunian;
freodehæfde,

115

cyðþugecwe...
lufena to leane
Gietbiþþætselest
wyrdonwendan,
me wæs a cearusmle
swaicalifde nu.
þonnemon him sylf ne mæg
þæt he þonnewelþolige.

English Translation

105

The tree is allowed
to grow,
To lift leaf and limb;
In my heart I cannot love
No man at all.
Mighty protector!
to await God's will,
But I am disgraced;
any man of my homeland,
Oh Lord my God,
I am stricken to the heart,

110

Bitterly wounded,
It will come after this life.
A lordless man;
I am unable to dwell
in any place
Because I sought a home
yet you await with healing;
I cannot stay here,
I cannot live anywhere,
without affliction.
among strangers,

115

Sorrow was always
The reward for loving,
Yet it is mete,
Overrule God's will,
ordained for my friendship—
as I have now confessed.
since man himself may not
that he should suffer it well.



Abandon
NATHAN McCLALLEN

Runaway

by Alexi Noble

A can slides across the counter. “I’d like to get this, please.”

The voice is polite, if wary, and I pull myself from my paper to survey its owner. Freckles, a smattering of them. A tall, athletic build. And the hair. It’s wavy, in desperate need of a trim, and positively blazing red.

I stand up, and my chair scrapes against the floor. Loudly. “Sure, kid. Is that all?”

Blue eyes, a little shadowed, stare back at me. “Yes, sir.”

I weigh the can in my hand and turn it over. Baked beans. An odd purchase, but not half so odd as the fact that he’s here in my small store, alone, and I’ve never seen him before in my life. I know—I’d remember hair like that, a face like that, with its mixture of frankness and reserve. I look at him again, and this time I catch the details that I had missed: the shirt, wrinkled even for a teenage boy, with a rip that travels the length of his sleeve, and the way he tenses when, a second later, the bell hanging on the door *chings*.

But it’s only the cat. “Mom and dad let you out for a camping trip?” I ask, not because I really believe it but because I wish I do.

The pause is too long. “Yeah,” the young man says slowly, and his face becomes beet red in the instant it takes to speak the word. All of the sudden he seems to find the countertop, with its battered, timeworn surface, to be fascinating.

He’s about as good a liar as my wife is a carpenter. “That’s fun. I loved camping when I was a kid.”

The redhead frowns, and I can see he’s angry. At me, maybe, or the question. Or the world. I catch the glimmer in his eyes, and it’s my turn to frown, because he’s upset too.

I don’t know what to say.

“The beans, sir?” The firm request draws me out of my indecision, and I hand the food over, hesitating as I do. It’s the only thing keeping him here; the only thing, perhaps, keeping him anywhere.

The lad reaches for the can in silence and pulls a tattered bill out of his jeans. I open my mouth, intending to tell him it’s free. The set of his jaw warns me not to.

I take the bill, and its faded ink stains my fingers in more ways than one. But how can I do otherwise when his eyes are filled with misery and I have an inkling that the only thing keeping him standing up the way he does, so ramrod straight, is his pride?

So I let it go, and stuff the money into my pocket instead, where I hope it crumbles.

“Good afternoon.” It comes out as a mumble, and he blushes still darker, but doesn’t slow his retreat. No doubt

he is hoping, as the door *chings* shut behind him, that I will go home tonight and never think of him again. Certainly he hopes that I will stay put, here in the soundlessness behind my wooden counter, until he has gone. For about three seconds, I hope so too.

The sun is low on the horizon, and I blink for no other reason than because it obscures my vision. I blink again, and it is not because this young man is about to board his bike and ride away and he's all alone, in a way that I pray to God my sons will never be. It is because the wind out here is strong, and something got caught in my eye. Nothing more.

It will kill me not to help him. So I say the only thing I can think of, and it probably won't make a difference, but it might. "Son?"

His young face twists, and I could bite my tongue for having hurt him. Grief, and shadow it leaves behind, is unmistakable.

"That's a nice bike you've got there." It is. Used, but solid. The redhead pauses, his foot on the peddle, as the intensity of the sun darkens him into a silhouette. In contrast, my face must for him be in sharp relief. "If I had a bike like that, I know I wouldn't want to stop riding for a long time. I'd want to keep going. But you've got to be heading somewhere. That's important. Not just away from something else. Alright?"

A gust of wind whistles, and then the silence is absolute. Flawless. Only the two of us exist in this moment—just a runaway youth and a man who wants to touch a soul.

The quiet stretches on. My fumbling speech has failed,

I am certain—it has conveyed too little, or else far too much.

Finally he speaks, and his voice is strangely husky. "Goodbye, sir." One long, jean-clad leg swings over the bike. In an instant, I think, he will be gone. He will not look back.

I am mistaken.

At the furthest edge of the clearing the redhead halts. When he turns toward me, the sunlight has softened his features; the words, when they come, are softer too. "Thank you for the beans."

Perhaps that is all he means. But it hits me harder than it ought to, for such a simple phrase. I raise my hand in farewell, and watch until the silent figure vanishes from sight.



This Modern Love

by Joshua Koczman



See the singing songbirds soar and swoon
As sunshine, sinking, swings the moon –
 Subtle? Subtle sometimes, sometimes not so much.
 Subtle moans called laughter, naming love as touch.
Leaving here for there: seeing crow, thus thinking dove,
Leaving there for here: thinking beauty, but saying love.
 Myst'ry? Myst'ry - merry, merry, more than all.
 Birdsong fleeing oft to fleshy home and flashy hall.

-28-

See the weeping willows slowing, stopping time
As sunlight, sleeping, weaves the moon in silver rhyme
 Subtle? Subtle – oh! Indeed, perhaps it is:
 Subtle when he is hers and she is his.
Binding? Oh, too true – bound by bolt of Cupid's brilliant aim,
Bound to reddish rose and skies all bluish, lacking rain.
 Myst'ry? Myst'ry - morbid, morbid, more than most,
 When dove most loved is naught but fleshy ghost.

-29-



Bokeh
RYAN MICHAEL BLACK



Waiting
LIZ ESLEY

Spaghetti

by Stephan Godleski

-32-

My foot loudly tapped on the faded linoleum
To the sounds of the turntable.
With every screeching spin of the record the hits
Of Frank Sinatra
Would serenade the woman dancing in the kitchen,
Who was spinning a wooden
spoon like a twirler's baton
Still dripping with tomato sauce.
I was crooning along:
"a lady doesn't leave her escort, it isn't fair,
and it's not nice,"
Every so often pulling my pen from the blue-lined pages to
Conduct the big band hiding in the box
on the kitchen counter
The woman, my mother, would dip her spoon
in the pan to stir,
Then sweep it out with a flourish,
Spattering red across the walls and cupboards.
She'd do a spin led by the invisible man
dancing with her.

She'd sit down with an *umph*,
Wipe her brow
And breathe, "What a workout – Antonio,
you wear me out!"
The invisible man,
Still dancing away,
Would reply in that Spanish accent
I'd been working on,
"My senorita! You dance like a goddess!
Stand and let us swing some more."
And she'd stand
Twirl some spaghetti boiling in the pot,
While snapping the fingers of her other hand,
And shaking her hips to the tune.
And my homework would lie unfinished
On the table
Speckled in little drops of sauce.

-33-



UNTITLED

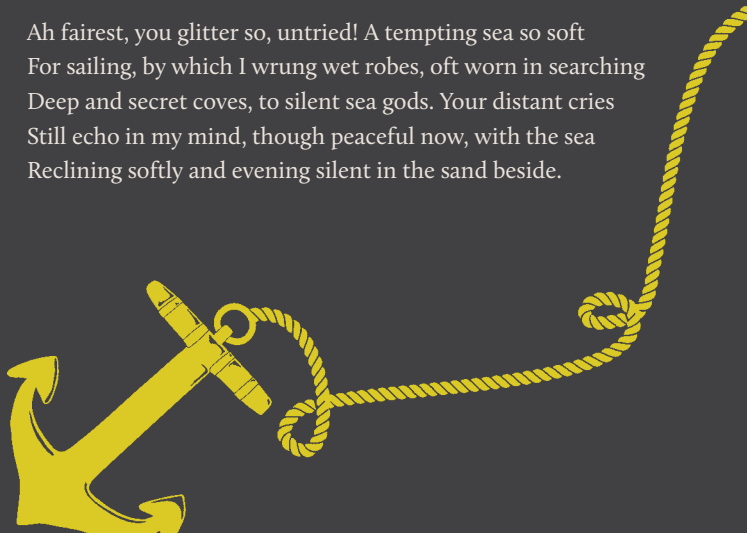
{inspired by Horace's Odes 1.5}

BY LUCA D'ANSEMI

What boy on some far shore drips shining sweat,
With lips awry in longing, and thinly pleads thee lie
On dew-bleed blooms, or fumes about thee, cries,
“Let slip thy hair!” in gold runs brightly pleated,
Neat, beguiling his child-sweet stare so smiling?

Defeated, he'll hurl his hurt to heavenly shores
As sea whorls swirl and black winds ragged
Beat his haggard eyes that now enjoy thee more
Unknowing. You drag him deeper under dark'ning skies
Even with the first rain slipping from his fallen neck
In golden specks reflecting splintered light.

Ah fairest, you glitter so, untried! A tempting sea so soft
For sailing, by which I wrung wet robes, oft worn in searching
Deep and secret coves, to silent sea gods. Your distant cries
Still echo in my mind, though peaceful now, with the sea
Reclining softly and evening silent in the sand beside.



-34-

Hattuša

by Emily Wagner



The sky in Hattuša gives light like winter sun
like winter sun the color of the eaves,
o'er long-dead stones my fancy likes to run
and contemplate the falling of the leaves.
The falling of the leaves is like the years
which run between me and the Hittite kings
that listened to their subjects with gold ears
and gold the river to their kingdom brings.
If I could but a fleck of gold observe
The Hittite kings see with my very eyes
what grandeur godlike would my eyes unnerve!
What titans towering in human guise!
The titan in this latter day has fall'n,
my thoughts have fallen out of reverie,
my fanciful idea has an end—
a stranger vision beckons now to me:
The Hittite kings may once have worn bright gold
more marvelous than filled old Priam's house;
but Hittite kings with human voices told
the years which saw their dwelling in this place.
I stand in this place where they often stood
To them it looked just as it does to me,
and for you standing here, is it not good,
That they a human life lived as do we?



-35-





Alone at Low Tide
CHUCK GRIMMETT

Your daughter
found your glass slipper
in your hope chest.

She's out in the garden
using it in the sun
to fry beetles.

PRINCESS

BY JOSHUA RICE