



Thirty-Two Short Poems for Bill Bronk, plus One

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Argotist Ebooks

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Some of these poems appeared on Jerome Rothenberg's *Poems and Poetics* blog

<https://jacket2.org/commentary/jerome-rothenberg>

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ONE HOPES

Based on the known,
imagining the confluence,
one hopes for a florid excitement, a spastic
flailing, some kind of
satisfaction.

NOTED

We note
the unfamiliar sky.

END OF TIME

The season arrives with a clamor of geese.
And at the end of it.

A QUESTION TO THE STARS

Are there any here
but us chickens?
Have there ever been?

PERMANENCE

Always and always.
There is this always, that always, there is
always.

HISTORY

A sense of something forgotten or lost

TOURISM

Sometimes the poor
can sell their poverty
as if they had chosen it.

THE MENU

Gestures affect instinct accent.

FAIRYTALE

She wore a glass
athletic shoe and left it
at the door, danced off
barefoot.

In a perfect world
all shoes would fit.

STRAY DOG

The stray dog
wonders about its failings as a dog.
Something about a compact broken.

SPAKE

“Here,” he said,
“we live among the dead,”
and left us
to our own devices.

SWEET DREAM

I have dreamed
an epicure's dream. In the secret life of sleep
it seems I have cancer and will surely die, but
that the doctor says
death will be a wasting away, so eat
while you can, as much
as you can, and I sing, Oh Death where is,
where is thy sting.

SNAPSHOT

See how I loved your mother,
he will say.

I was here,
he was here,
she was here.

ROMANCE

We call the ocean Day
and the lover Night.
So Night swims the Day
in search of his love, who floats
before him on a raft of spray.

ROMÁNTICO

Llamamos al mar Día
y al amante Noche.
Nada entonces la Noche en el Día
en busca de su amor, quien flota
frente a él, en una balsa de espuma.

SACRAMENT

Christ crowns the Virgin
and virgins marry him.

They content themselves with the possible.

I begin the day with a shriek she said.

CELEBRITY

A signal gesture
and the crowd roars.

COMMUNION SUNDAY

Lunchtime,
and a flock of virgins
to be fed to the godhead. He likes 'em
trussed in white.
He likes 'em young.

But it beats me how they stay unspotted with all that gravy.

SLOPPY

Sloppy girl in sloppy white
slops a sloppy cone of white
ice cream on a hot
sloppy day. It's good
it's cool
it drips.

NATURE

30 million buffalo 120 million
hooves raising the dust, at times
stampeding in a deafening clatter, at others
a rumble audible for miles.

3 billion pigeons, the noise
of 3 billion pigeons,

the shaking earth disturbing the slumbers of millions in their burrows.

If not strings, then ribbons,
the solar system a pattern of movements.

And who may be King or Queen of the May?

DANGER

Let down her hair and her eyes
became pools in the forest.

At the end of the hall are three dark doors.

Smite,
smitten.
Of love
the danger.

FUGITIVE

Grew up
changed her name
and cut her hair.

Escaped.
But another
rides her body.

EN DESHABILLE

It's given to her to dangle a shoe, but for a toe
barefoot in this most formal place.

NAMED

Named for shape.
Named for function.
Named
in any case. As clouds
hold clues
to sky
or water.

POLITICS

It's an ill wind
that waves the flag.

BLACK DOG

In my childhood was a large
black dog named "Nigger." "Hey Nigger"
we'd scream
to summon it. "Good dog! Good dog!"

PARADE

The majorette
all buttons and ceremony.
What a sight to cheer the boys.
Huzzah! Huzzah!

CHILD IN THE GARDEN

On a toy harmonium
she plays the dies irae
to distract the child.

Like a stone across water.
My mind's like a stone
on water, to sink
one day, tee hee tee hee.

PAGEANT

Miss Angularity is very tall
but wears high heels
to make her feet look small.

ANNOINTED

Oil for food or light.
Hence, marinate the king and bring the fire
for the people's feast.
So much did he love them.

MY NAME

Moishe Yitzik Moshe Yitzkhak Moses
Isaac leader
laughter
white.

FEATHERS

The bird of peace
nonetheless edible.
As one eats the god.

Hunger, says the cat,
brings down the bird.

IN THEORY

He tries to imagine her toes,
goes through a series of possibilities, as if
a clue to the invisible.
Surely, he thinks, there's a moral here,
a decision inherent in form.

And such
and such was the life of him.

SOMETIMES

Sometimes an insistent picture presents
itself, and sometimes one walks
into and through it like a tracking shot, but it's always
a picture. Even at a moment like this, when I summon it what's lost
is the swift melding of things unseen. And sometimes
it's the slow dance
of two and the heat
and cold and a hand
one remembers, does it all
come back does it all
come back to.

Doesn't it all come back to loss and language?

What can be done
in a few words,
what can be done in words.

Body
and words
in deep storage.

Think of the street filled
with extras in storied lives,
for each of whom...
for each of whom in storied lives,
in the moments between.

And the smells of these.

The skull's rictus.

These are the marble halls I dreamt I dwelt in.

Add another to the cacophony of voices.
Add another.

About the Author

Mark Weiss has published seven books of poetry, most recently *As Landscape* (Chax Press, 2010) and *Dark Season* (Least Weasel, 2011). *Different Birds* appeared as an ebook in 2004 published by Shearsman. He edited, with Harry Polkinhorn, *Across the Line / Al otro lado: The Poetry of Baja California* (Junction, 2002), and, with Marc Kaminsky, *Stories as Equipment for Living: Last Talks and Tales of Barbara Myerhoff* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007). Among his translations are *Stet: Selected Poems of José Kozer* (Junction, 2006), *Cuaderno de San Antonio / The San Antonio Notebook*, by Javier Manríquez (Editorial Praxis, 2004), *Notas del país de Z*, by Gaspar Orozco (Universidad Autónoma de Chihuahua, 2009), and the ebook *La isla en peso / The Whole Island*, by Virgilio Piñera (Shearsman, 2010). His bilingual anthology *The Whole Island: Six Decades of Cuban Poetry* was published in 2009 by the University of California Press. He lives at the edge of Manhattan's only forest.