

Murmur Reading Series #3:

Holly Pester, Karen Sandhu, YOKAI / Edmund Hardy

"Nine Poems"

YOKAI / Edmund Hardy

WHAT FILLS ME

Inside my eye: ghost-dust for the fire,
its green & curling heat

which left a bird sketched on the ping-pong bat:
pain is the path of disappearing -

translated things now doubly
disappear. Strange indeed

is this rage... Spin the bat, the bird sings: "I don't wanna
get high, I wanna get low."

REALISTIC

Going to bed down and getting up
to count coins amid the crumbs while tasting

faint copper wire down. Key-cold as the name 'Edmund'
to reassure that - you pass - and this reverse

genesis no mythomaniac could foretell
is working still. Make it rain oh you did.

EVERY CRUEL THING

Live to live another life; looking to get to a
holiday island from the rooftop hang. Spring

crossing, hauling time made richer by place.
Close your hand:

it appears economic in character.
Frozen at the dining table, everyone's chopsticks

at differing angles: chopstick cuts in time. It takes
a world to keep you here, and it takes you away.

LESS THAN

Resurrection is less than beautiful

if some people prefer you dead or elsewhere,
standing close, for this

inscription, which I cant see, fully,

even when I want to inhabit it:

& after I died, you would bring me back to life
in order to kill me, over and over,
and over again.

INFALLIBLE REJECTION

Cross back over not for “accurate devotions”
but unspecific feeling, or,

no, that’s too
distinguishable: we killed the hen (which
laid the golden eggs), its insides red -

infallibly what thinking of you won’t empty
out, and that’s a far-reaching name.

MIRACULOUS SURVIVALS

Down from the 1970s to the stasis of this civil war:
the false, a false idea, & everything material

led to this horizon, not where we thought -
a reading group, a star map, wrong unity to come.

Red winter, & not a single cog turns without you;

the basketball goes up - & Nisha catches it -
or that's how I remember Saturday going.

*I never thought to see you again, I never thought
to seek you. All the dead, that is.*

CEASELESS CONTEXT

Sad stars more plausibly sing
in the sea, lucid

where rhetoric's will
runs moneyless, rice-bowls re-radiant

in the tide. The bones loved best
sing not, but sink,

away from love and you.

With Darkness

And this also has been one of the dark places of the earth.

You'd dare to stage it all upon the Gravesend mudflats -
paperwork in Calcutta, paperwork in Lagos, but
not the ocean flowing backwards, undoing
immunisation shots of sure self is undone. Back here in the
also has been: lodged in Europe's past: the gift of memory –
blood as a purified
writing. Not the dark of dust-storm or holy night,
but a sludge of death hunting death in the fosse
of the Thames.

To see with darkness, with rage,
where every star tapers down below the threshold
and a gentler, more absolute disturbance – accomplice
at our elbows – may never come to light: to say that
this, now, wrong struggle for a dark transformed, will
never know but darkness, is rowing backwards
to the long shore's deltas.

DIGS

Holly Pester

For water for tea go to the well

winch the chain
look at where the bucket dropped
it fled my heart for water

We still live in an old school.

There were forewarnings of other worlds coming and colossal
alterations

The children are gone
but there are jars of pickle
herbs drying on the beds
little urinals, a poster that demonstrates a shepherd
pots of sacred basil in the cabinet

The building stands
we stand in a queue for tampons
and have eaten generous food like knödel
speak slowly in a range of accents about our projects
Everyone exchanges products some techniques
we should worry and cloak
I zone out
the apothecary is German the prison diary on the shelf
is in German

The well is next to the public library
the library is a small house with lace curtains
Society desires itself doesn't it, bucket?
Civic spaces find each other, don't they?
Like timely comrades gone pretty for a public that can never find
them

The bucket fills the bottles
I've been drinking well-water since the 90s to make my chest and
books fuller to make my organs tougher for examination or the kind
of contact where
one body offsets another
to be replenished
We want to be on track, remembered
The winched arm said, Hello friend, hello no one

The student says there's a weed that grows everywhere and it's edible,
I say OK
I'll just eat that then, I'll go and pull up a handful whenever I'm
hungry

the singer shifts
but for the sake of medievalism make an appointment with the bread
woman
she'll leave it on the stone in case you bring bad news
Let the man in the shop stand alone

We are living to imagine.

It feels casual and anxious, I can't pretend to know where the car is or
what it's for but Gabby drives and Armine drives and the actor drives

There are wish structures to train along,
plant things, invent songs

practise saying, this house and this way
this is what we do

Know your job
take the compost to the stinky shed
in sync with utopia and not just tasks
but suck off

the salt soil, stave off the rot in our root
We might rescue the plot with miniature work
expressions of eco-gothic in the hand soap
or call the old bucket a love

shell me
Everyone is preserving
fermenting radish leaves, reducing it, doing a brew
something from dill
I am downloading boxing movies it is similar
it's about turning up and cutting your eyelid, praying
now you can see

Winding our ideas to the community
because a bag of cherries
gets less and less satisfying
Today feels like a territory stupidly reclaimed
also romantic
in my grey fast running suit

I can see enough through the bled-out swelling to put
down the bucket
it goes next to where a child has scratched
'Hanging Out! 1986' and a large dead wasp
the student thinks it's a new hornet
your tincture must be the 80s returning
I hope it won't work

At the well I should've sang
everything echoes, I can see a factory
and I pray in the shower
we are getting close to something

We still live in an old brothel.

we are here to brace the building's shared space
but the dressmaker sat in a cloth chair describing bluebells
puked up then gave them a deadline
adding something to her skin, hustled details of publics
Spring with bliss it came in bluebells
I bring a sweet to her bath
she has shell lacquer placemats to eat off
and the light is so pink in her kitchen

the beer can spits
I am under a blanket but can see the subtitles through a hole
so we talk
follow the story then lose it

Someone arrives with a packet, I don't eat
just listen to their mouths and can see
Maggie's through the hole

everyone is gasping for air

We still live in an old coach house.

through the window horned sheep turn around very slowly
to suggest death
I lie back down, always tired, and saying it
we are lifted, trolled, spread on one patch of mattress
then on another

Like a pen I roll over to face a strange torso
it asks me to think of lungs
I imagine two boots full of water that leak
That's the liquid of the imminent, says the bucket

The future tense is dumb
a dormant sparrow confused

This apartment to live in lives on
which is where you found the mop
a comedian and a living

You have to like it here enough to give the fire a brick of turf, our
hands smell of it
our throats are pinched, it is sweet like modernity's bile

The house is a gang of untalented men
a ruff in charge of its head with pipes
ginning fibres greening aloneness
buff in a furnace, all bondage
I leave the house, my leg
to bed go in it and go out
It's time to tend to something bigger than us
progress in a suite of habits
stink the pig
A century in the marsh and a lizard shit
Something nested there, can you see it?
On imaginary cotton
you can make things with it

cling on
to each other
in a hall

We still live in an old hotel.

no body wants to leave unless it gets lighter
the owner has a nineteenth-century ambition that is madness
she has made marmalade
bowed hope

a young mum orgasms through the ceiling
Don't be happy with nearness, urge on in steps to something else
in very convincing stages followed by a miraculous twist ending
like the Industrial Revolution and since
or the death of punk and since

we are communally apologetic
it's just a bucket
bohemians sleep in digs they
are the works' fancy pragmatism
I'm listening

the bucket said, dig
this is where you live

make plans
or drop
optimistic quenelles, a loaf

From The Irritating Archive Karen Sandhu

Welcome to the Irritating Archive. In the event of an emergency leave by the nearest exit.

Founded in 2016 by an archivist responsible for uncovering a fragmented collection of irritating artefacts and documents dating back to 2006. The Irritating Archive houses all items from this collection, some of which have been painstakingly restored and photographically documented. The archive is open to visitors by appointment only, and particularly welcomes researchers with an avid interest in irritating words and objects.

Upon entering, you will find the cloakroom and changing room to your immediate right. Your designated Visitor Pod awaits you on the Mezzanine Level. The Archivist is not visible to you, or I, but she is always here to assist. Located inside her office, to the east of the archive where the processing of materials takes place.

For health and safety, the archive requests that all visitors wear the gloves provided, and closed-toe shoes, long sleeve shirts. Long hair is to be confined and loose jewellery secured. It is vital that all visitors wash their hands thoroughly before entering and exiting.

Please wear this apron

NO coats and bags. Permanent ink NO Post-it Notes NO
electronNOic device NO NO entry with foNOod gum drink
NO runNOning NO nNOoise NO smNOoke or E-lec NO
conNOversation NO film or photo handNOling NO NO
touch

NO touch but shoes closed YES YES hair back rubber band snYESap
tightly YES tiYESght. Shoes closed toe YES long trousers only YES
full-length skirts toYESoo if only all legs are covYESered and arms
hand coverYESed with gloves providYESed. Apron on and secYESure

tie tightly **YES** tight across back and all that is loose is sec**YES**ured.
NO touch

This is the Archivist's hat.

And this is what the Archivist has to say about it:

Since deleting is not archiving as expunging and cancelling out in blue-pencil is to remove; since eradication is to strike out a blot since it is a type of wipe out not an act of archiving. Archive is something to keep and easier than Tippex gloop which is a white out; a strike out of here and into there where the unpublished obliterate box cut offs. Since the scoring out and erasure of the ink line crosses the archival threshold it remains intact and avoids the rub of erasure which takes and preserves the edit before it is effaced and scratched out:

The Collection.

Item 17. Cluster of Words. [35 x 42 cm] *disturb*

To visit is to know that it's a thorn in the side celebrating the crumbs of an incomplete history, a history unknown. The knowing is important here; to know that some parts have been forgotten whilst others preserved. The archive today preserves vexed scraps of displeasure grazing the curious hands of the naïve: naïve about self-preservation. It raises the hackles of discontent in the having this and having that but never knowing when. Leaning in, it ruffles the feathers and stirs the skin burying itself far flung underneath –

Item 11. Tying the Knot [100 x 5 cm] *gall*

The year is 1603, and
'archive' is a noun. It is 'a
place in which public records
or other important historic
documents are kept.' It is a
place of preservation

–

Item 15. Found and Forgotten [19 x 10 cm] *stir*

The year is now 1934, and
'archive' is a verb. To
archive is to 'place or store
in an archive'. A refuge of
boxes; a sanctuary of
shelves. Join-in in the
archiving of this event –

Item 4. Paper Curl [8.2 x 4.1 cm] *pique*

The year is now 2016, and the Irritating
Archive is open. Bodies will encounter
fragments: manuscripts, wordy clusters
and translucent wings. All doors point
outwards: