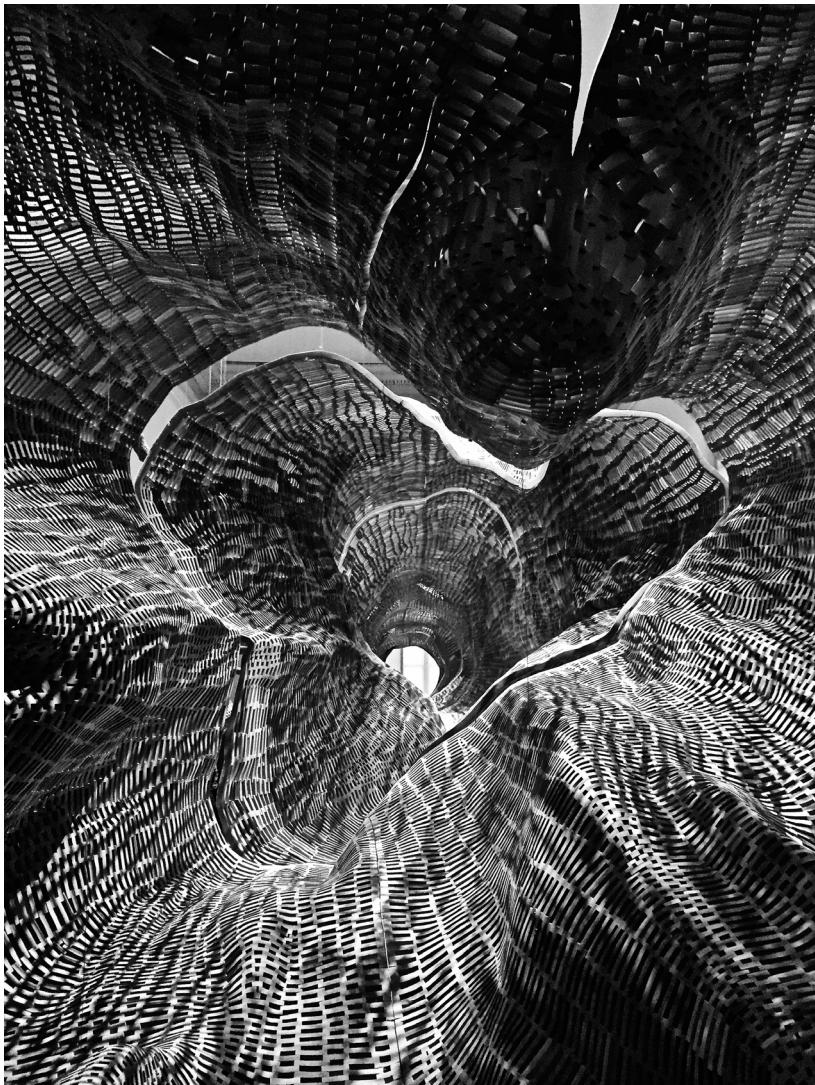


NOTED

—THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT JOURNAL—



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Grade, John. *Middle Fork*. Sculpture. WONDER. Renwick Gallery, Washington, D.C.
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DE GENÈVE**

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Letter from the Editor

BRYN SKIBO-BIRNEY

For those of you who haven't been counting, this is the sixth edition of *Noted* that I have had the pleasure, honor, and responsibility to edit (or, as it more often seems to me, to curate). There are a great number of perks that come with wearing the "editor" hat, but perhaps the biggest, in my opinion, is being so close to the "machinery" as the whole thing comes together. And I don't simply mean the course of weeks and months that see a stream of emails and conversations turn into printed and bound pages, but the years of growth and change that trail and mark the voices, aesthetics, styles, and tones of the contributions and the contributors themselves. Some of the contributors and I have been working together on *Noted* for years; while a familiarity is formed through countless emails about commas and prepositions, I think my favorite moment is sitting back and seeing the authors and/or artists assert control over their work, explaining why this comma, this preposition, or this simile needs to be there, *just so*. In these discussions, I am given the great privilege of peaking behind the curtain and seeing the wizard at work: pulling the meaning to its limits, pushing the line length to terse breathlessness, hammering and shaping the rhythm until it is as they see, hear, and feel it.

Such was my experience in editing the many creative works received for this edition. **Waqas Mirza** is one such contributor whose musicality was evident in his earliest contributions to *Noted*, but which has since blossomed into a dense exploration of any number of topics through sound and rhythm, pop culture and history, and much more. In this edition, his speakers take us to the inner depths of dusty, ancient tombs and boiling, roiling volcanos, both home to known and unknown dangers. **Marlon Ariyasinghe**'s poetic contributions have always demonstrated a searing undertone of political and social criticism, complimented by a delicate overlay of empathy for the human figures explicitly or implicitly referred to in his work. His most recent poem, "White Buses," builds upon this characteristic voice as it simultaneously condemns and embraces those figures within the piece. I thank Marlon for his past and present contributions and wish him luck on his adventures abroad. Speaking of travels, **Cristina Simoni**'s regular contributions to *Noted* explore the depths of interpersonal relationships in Geneva and abroad; she returns here with a valuable consideration of pre-exam stress which I think will ring uncomfortably true to many readers. Fortunately, her characteristically light and humorous style helps to alleviate any reader-response induced anxiety. Like students, staff members are equally the victim of work-related anxiety, but **Sam MacDuff** offers an artistic and

unique approach to thinking through his PhD on Joyce's epiphanies; his piece, "Abstract," is equally at home in the fiction and nonfiction sections, and marks an engaging and daring development of his authorial voice. Similarly, while **Emmet** marks the end of another successful dramatic production, **Nicholas Weeks** introduces his newest production, *Dream Duplex*, which promises to be one of his most innovative and experimental yet, an impressive accomplishment considering Emmet's earlier works.

Noted has also been fortunate to welcome the nonfiction work of its now regular reviewer, **Olivia Lindem**. Her timely, nuanced, and gregarious reactions to, and reviews of, novels, TV shows, and movies not only keep us all up-to-date on the so-called "lighter" side of literature and screen drama, but, more importantly, she does so with a keen eye on social values, movements, and cultural changes. Her review of *The Eyre Affair* is all the richer for being embedded within her travelogue to Haworth this past semester. Fellow regular contributor, reviewer, and astute reader of society and literature, **Roberta Marangi** often takes a more historical approach, considering figures as disparate as Anne Boleyn (see *Noted* Autumn 2015) and, here, Homer's cast of deities, kings, and warriors in *The Iliad*. Her review of this impressive (and intimidating?) text is a pleasure to read, both for its self-conscious consideration of its own "place" among the dense field of *Iliad* scholarship, and for the lively, informal, yet informed consideration of the epic itself.

In addition to these "regulars," I am thrilled to present the latest band of new contributors, some of who are publishing their work for the first time. **Diana Moyo** debuts in *Noted* with an appropriately complex and paradoxical investigation into the bittersweet nature of "Dreams"; I hope to see more of her work in the ensuing editions. **Téo Verhoeven** presents a too-scary-to-be-real "fictional" representation of a student's interpretation of the strikes in December. Sadly, the shock and anger felt by Téo's protagonist may be closer to nonfiction than we would prefer. **Caroline Martin** set the standard impossibly high with her own débüt into *Noted*, offering: "Books We Live By," complemented by her own illustrations, "Restlessness," a poetic investigation into "reality," and, the winning caption for the latest contest (see back cover for details). I am awed by her creative dexterity. Finally, previous contributors can inspire the work of *new* contributors: such is the case with **Azamat Rakhimov**'s translation of "Sonnet," which inspired the glowing paintings by **Arinda Craciun**, a German illustrator. The blending of Azamat's previous publication into Arinda's new one is a fitting symbol for the overall evolution of style, tone, and voice that makes this edition of *Noted* so rich and enjoyable.

Happy reading,
Bryn

FEATURES

Books We Live By

CAROLINE MARTIN

As students of literature, we are constantly surrounded by books, whether we like them or not. We've all said, at some point in the middle of an intense study session: 'I can't wait for the break; I swear I'll do everything *but* read!' And what do we end up doing? (That's a rhetorical question). Yes, books fill up our shelves, our bags, our heads, our lives, so to speak. They shape us, each in a different way and some more than others. So, as a tribute to these life-changers, here is a list of the six books all of us have probably encountered (or will, one day or another).

First, there's 'the Comforter'. This book is the 'living' proof that human beings can be in a relationship with a material object. No matter where, when or how often you read it, it will always affect you in the same, inexpressible way. Somehow, it will always address your innermost concerns at the right moment; it will feel like it's your own thoughts on the page, and you'll end up intimately relating to its characters. I guess literary symbiosis is possible.



'The Comforter'



'The Rollercoaster'

Then, there's 'the Rollercoaster'. Whether you like it or not, this book will take you into uncharted territory. You thought that in the process of reading, *you* were the agent? Little did you know... At some point in the reading, you will have to stop, and think. Yes, because it is that good. But if it ever comes to writing a paper about it, best of luck to you!

n.b. All illustrations are courtesy of the author.

Next is 'the Teacher'. The kind of book that turns you into a proselytiser. It has changed your life so profoundly that you can't just explain how great this book is. No, people HAVE to read it! You might lose your social skills in the process; it doesn't matter. This book has permanently affected the way you see the world, and you will never be the same again.

Then, there's 'the All-nighter'. The book that makes you question your reading ability and all of your life choices. I mean, why did you choose to study literature in the first place? Between a tantrum and a suicide attempt, you will discover that 'absquatulate' is indeed an English verb and that an 'amphibology' has actually nothing to do with amphibians or biology. You should have seen it coming; who even reads a book called *Becoming James: Proto-feminism and Transgender Subplots in Jane Austen?*



'The Teacher'



'The All-nighter'

Let's not forget 'the Traveller'! The book you bought in a station, or in an airport, after realising your phone battery wouldn't last the three-hour journey awaiting you. It's not good, it's just... fitting. It may be traveling that opens your mind (or lowers your standards) but let's be honest, isn't it nice to leave your academic mind-set behind and enjoy random, and often surprising, light literature?

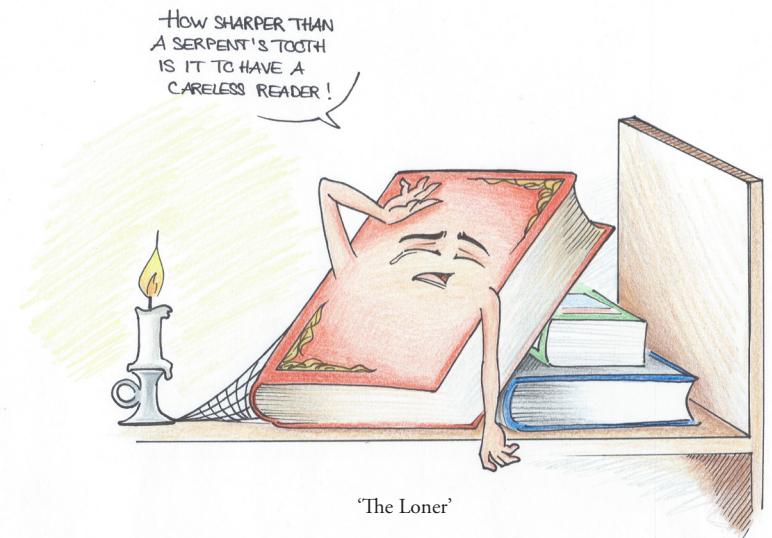
Last, but not least, there's 'the Loner'. It might be the literary classic every teacher assumes you have read and that you bought out of guilt but never found the courage to read; or the experimental book your alternative friend offered you on your birthday in which no single sentence makes sense; or the book you started, but ended up watching the movie instead – anyway, somewhere in your room there will always be *that* book, lingering on a shelf, gathering dust and pity like a wallflower.

Needless to say, there are lots of books that do not belong to any of these types, but that's the very reason why we keep reading, isn't it? To be surprised, to be contradicted even.

And what's perhaps the best aspect of all is that books change according to our reading (which is itself determined by a multitude of factors which I will not bother to list here). This is to say, we may try to categorize them, analyse them and thereby feel as if we master them (which is – ironically – precisely the academic title many of us strive for), but the truth is, they affect *us* – no matter our critical skills – and shape *us*. To acknowledge this was the best tribute I could think of.



'The Traveller'



'The Loner'

The Brontë Affair

OLIVIA LINDEM

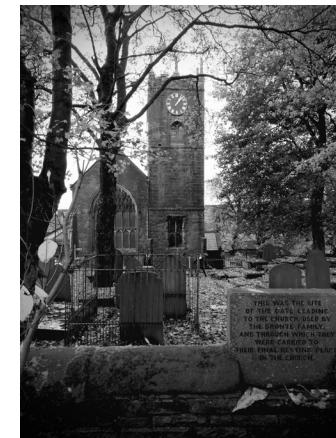
It is a common belief in my family that I am a hardcore Brontë fan. This is all based on a few, mystifying facts. Most notably, I frequently watched a 1997 A&E adaptation of *Jane Eyre* when I was eight or nine years old, and then really subtly named three of my dolls Charlotte, Emily, and Anne after carrying a copy of *Jane Eyre* around for most of a summer. I also happen to be rather skilled at being silent and melancholic... which obviously means that I'm temperamentally suited to a life of reading the Brontës.

Yet, I don't really consider myself to be a *fan*. I love a few of the Brontës' works. My favorite is probably *Villette* – I will giggle to myself every time I go by the little town on the lakeshore between Lausanne and Vevey – and I'll go on at length about how important *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is to women's literature. I watch every adaptation that comes my way, flock to Dario Marianelli's *Jane Eyre* score for writing, and endlessly romanticize the settings in the novels. Cliché though it may be, the moors of Northern England have long been near the top of my list of literary pilgrimages – to the point where, when my medievalist boyfriend announced that he was going to spend a semester of his MA in York, my main reaction was to rejoice that I'd finally have a reason to visit Brontë Country. (And no, I still don't consider myself to be a *fan*.)

Visit them, I did. During the second half of reading week, I packed up my books and a stack of critical texts and took off to Yorkshire. On my third day there, we took a steam train into the countryside to visit Haworth, the village where the Brontës spent most of their lives. The village itself consists of a bunch of shops and cafés with names referencing Brontë characters and works, but its main attraction consists of a cluster of buildings important to the Brontës themselves: the church where Patrick Brontë was curate, the school where Charlotte Brontë once taught, and the parsonage house where the family lived and wrote. The Brontë Parsonage Museum is in this last building. Still having many of the Brontës' furnishings in possession, the museum displays attempts to recreate the layout of their home. The dining room where the three sisters gathered and wrote, Charlotte's bedroom, the small room they shared as children... The house is obviously closely curated, cordoned off in parts with informational signs everywhere, but is fun to explore, nonetheless.

What I most enjoyed about the house, however, was learning how the Brontë sisters,

along with their brother Branwell, had been haunted by other literary and historical figures in their youths. The writers were known for having composed large amounts of juvenilia, but I did not know how much of this juvenilia was inspired by others and was very amused to discover that the Brontë children had been engaged in writing what was essentially fan fiction about the Duke of Wellington and Lord Byron's poetry. You see, I'm fascinated by the theory behind fan fiction and seeing how different works of literature are not only inspired by, but respond to others. You can thus imagine how finding out that the Brontës participated in this phenomenon for their own, private amusement awoke my interest, not necessarily in immediately rereading their books, but in seeing how their books have impacted popular culture and inspired, in turn, new works of literature.



Photos of Haworth church and graveyard and of the Brontë Parsonage Museum sign; courtesy of Olivia Lindem and Antoine Willemin

Enter *The Eyre Affair*. Now, obviously, my pilgrimage to Haworth re-awoke the whole "Olivia Loves the Brontës" deal. I sent out postcards, bought an Anne Brontë mug, and *of course* received *Jane Eyre*-themed presents for Christmas from a certain someone. Thankfully, this person was in the know and the presents were books on the impact of classic literature on popular culture – one being *The Eyre Affair* and the other Mallory Ortberg's brilliantly humorous *Texts from Jane Eyre* (which is exactly what it sounds like). I'd had *The Eyre Affair* recommended to me once before by a friend, after I notably went on about how cool it would be for *Doctor Who* to go on a literary binge and make the Doctor travel into a world where he could interact with fictional universes to right literary wrongs. It turns out that said friend had made this recommendation because that's almost exactly what the novel does.

Written by Jasper Fforde in 2001, *The Eyre Affair* takes the infamous breaking of the fourth wall in the final chapter of *Jane Eyre* ("Reader, I married him.") and goes all out to create a fictional world where everything is similar but different to the one we live in. Imagine a world where the likes of Shakespeare-themed jukeboxes are placed on street-corners and recite lines from plays upon the insertion of coins. Imagine having machines that allow you to travel into works of literature, to walk straight into Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" and walk amongst the daffodils. Imagine a world where time travel is possible and an entire section of the government is dedicated to solving literary crimes (and warding off Baconians who try to claim that Shakespeare didn't actually write his plays). The novel is filled with literary puns and jokes, and it abolishes the borders between fiction and its own reality by allowing characters to cross in and out of works of literature. It features, for instance, a small but thriving tourist industry that allows travelers to journey into *Jane Eyre* and go on a tour of Thornfield Hall, led by Mr. Rochester.

The main plot of Fforde's novel begins when the murderous leader of a crime ring takes advantage of the new technologies that allow for crossing over into fictional realms, and begins stealing manuscripts and kidnapping characters from classic novels. Eventually, he goes to Haworth to steal the *Jane Eyre* manuscript (which, in real life, is actually kept at the British Library, *not* at Haworth) and to kidnap its eponymous character. Thursday Next, the heroine of the series, then travels into the novel herself to collaborate with Mr. Rochester and to try to set things right.

It isn't a wildly sophisticated novel, but it's a fresh take on the impact of literature that isn't really fan fiction in itself but is a fun, fantasy interpretation of what the world might be like if popular culture were to give more weight to classic literature. So often, people are concerned with preserving the sanctity of the classics that they fail to see how interacting with already loved and written works of literature can add to, rather than detract from, their heritage. *The Eyre Affair* shows how refreshing it is to keep Shakespeare and Wordsworth and Charlotte Brontë at the forefront not only of academic consciousness, but of the popular sphere. It shows us, in a way, an amusing and – dare I say? – improved alternate world that's done away with the belief that literature isn't for everyone... and it does so with an abundance of puns. It's an extremely enjoyable read and exactly what I would recommend picking up if you're tired out after exams and looking for something that'll remind you that literature is, in fact, fun! And now you can pick it up knowing that Charlotte Brontë would doubtlessly approve, given what she got up to with Lord Byron and the Duke of Wellington.

Grève de la Fonction Publique 2015: What's It All For?

TÉO VERHOEVEN

Preface:

The challenge I face is simple. How do I make politics interesting?

My choices are: either I tackle the issue with cats (as they seem to catch everyone's attention nowadays) or I could write a short story. As my audience will be mainly Humanities students, and because I am allergic to cats, I'll go with the story.

Geneva, 2 December 2015, 8:30 a.m.

"RAISE OF UNIVERSITY TAXES"

"PRIVATIZATION OF UNI"

"26 TO 28 STUDENTS PER CLASS"

"NO MORE JOBS IN THE PUBLIC DOMAIN FOR THE NEXT 25 YEARS"

The young student, all wrapped up in his winter gear, frowns at the vision of these alarming headlines. What's going on? The newspaper that he has just taken informs him that the future is being clouded with the announcement of a stern 2016 budget – which aims to lower the city's debt by making a 5% cut in the public domain – but now it has been radically darkened by the "Personal Stop" law, voted in on 13 November. The newspaper goes on and explains this absurd legislation, which consists of not replacing a job left vacant by a state worker who retires. The only nuance is that the job could only be replaced if another one is suppressed somewhere else. The frowning gets bigger. Too much information. The student is lost. Then, a friend gives him an example:

Here, let's suppose a history teacher, who has a class of twenty students, retires at one point. With regard to the application of this "Personal Stop" law, the school won't hire another teacher and the students will all be dispatched into other classes. This process, multiplied by other retirements, will, in the end, increase the number of pupils per class.

Ah! It's getting clearer... But wait! It's stupid! Not only is the quality of teaching worsened, but, if this law concerns all domains of the state service, we're screwed.

The student is confused. Normally, problems happen to others. Now, it's different. And it doesn't stop there. With the money shortage, the newspaper warns that, in the first place, university taxes will be raised, and in the second place, universities might be privatized in the future. What? The student's fright grows alongside his understanding of what's going on. As a university student, you don't really care. You enjoy your studies; you go home; and that's it. Now, it's a bit blurry: what is the future made of in these conditions? Troubled and disoriented, the student seeks advice from his teachers. Most of them are resigned. Since they have started, the state has been making continual cuts in education. What do you want to do about it? Man, it just gets worse. But then a teacher, THE teacher, turns up. He sees that the student is puzzled. He says to the student:

Yes, the situation is critical. Yes, we have to do something. And no, we should not be too quick to judge. Why are we living in this situation? The majority of the city council is right-winged. "We" or, I should say, the 30 to 40% of the population who elected this government, "we" are the ones to blame. Switzerland has this wonderful direct democracy, but the people do not take advantage of it. In a way, it's normal. We are not professional politicians. We leave the power in the hands of the professionals. But the major problem is that we are in a society where fear governs reason. It's not about the content; it's about marketing nowadays. And what sells? Fear. What is harder to understand? Fact-based, complex, and constructed arguments. I don't have a solution to that, but I believe that society works by moving from one extreme to another. So hopefully, a crisis leads to a better outcome. I think we need to stay alert. Even though we have to remediate this money issue, these economic measures will harm much more than our short-term reality. It'll take countless hours of patience, of discussion, and of leaning towards the other, but I think the effort needs to come from everywhere, not just from the state funds. Then, and this is just me, we have to spread the idea that education is of the utmost importance to society. If we accept an elitist university, and if we accept a worsening in teaching on all levels, then we will destroy our education system. We need people to be educated, to think freely. And I think the most important thing is for everyone to understand that they matter. You want people to know they have an importance as an individual. Yes, there's a lot on our plate, but we have a worthwhile message to defend.

Afterword:

That's the end of my story. The whole point is to inform you, in as light a manner possible, of the recent events which took place in Geneva. I urge everyone to learn more about the topic. It's worth it. In general, I think it's important to pay attention to what is going on politically, especially in times of instability. In the next few days, there will be several initiatives, concerning either the strike or other critical topics, submitted for the people to vote upon. So get informed and vote! Why? Because you can. And because you matter.

In Praise of Folly: A Second Reading of The Iliad

ROBERTA MARANGI

Writing about *The Iliad* is a daunting task. Not simply because I am not a Classicist – even though I have studied both Greek and Latin – but because of the pressure one feels in approaching such a monumental epic poem. So much has been written about *The Iliad*, so many films produced, so many new interpretations given, by great names of the past and of the present, by famous literary and art critics, writers, artists, archaeologists and experts in ancient law. A ‘mere’ student might feel overpowered by the abundance and eminence of voices that have sung *The Iliad*. However, I believe this is Homer’s greatness: his poems reach humanity on a universal level; his poems are for *everyone*. I would say, especially because I am a literature student, I felt it was right to tackle *The Iliad*, to question why *The Iliad* in particular is thought to be as important as it is intimidating.

As many students before me, I have studied *The Iliad* in its original language, in ancient Greek: many a night has been spent pouring over tomes written in an alphabet that already looks forbidding (unless you are Greek, I would imagine), all the while analysing its structure and content as well as trying to remember that ‘man’ could be expressed by *anér, àntropos and brotós* – with the knowledge that if you do not remember, you could be asked to leave the classroom in disgrace for fifteen minutes.¹ As many students before me, you can very well imagine, I found it hard to appreciate *The Iliad*. Even Homer’s other epic poem, *The Odyssey*, just as daunting from a formal perspective, has enjoyed a much wider popularity throughout the centuries. Harold Bloom speaks of this phenomenon and agrees that ‘we are more at ease with [*The Odyssey*] than with the angry splendours of *The Iliad*’ (Bloom’s *Major Poets: Homer*, 11). He mentions the many adaptations that the hero Odysseus has inspired, among others, James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, of course.

Therefore, it was my ambition to approach this poem in particular, to read it once more, this time as a literature student, and to try and understand how and why Homer still matters today. Once I had discarded the fear that I could not possibly have anything to say, that every valuable contribution has already been made by someone better and more prepared than me, an argument took shape from the myriad of formulas, epithets and 1. *anér* is man as opposed to woman, *àntropos* is man in relation to his humanity and *brotós* is man as mortal in opposition to the immortal gods. Something I will not forget ever again.

metrical patterns. Far from trying to enclose *The Iliad* into one single interpretation, I still found a leitmotiv, as soon as in Book I, which has accompanied me to the end. *The Iliad*, with its unwise tyrants, its manipulable and manipulative gods, its battles and ‘hypnotic necrologues’ (Bloom, 17), is a song of human folly.

That the drive of the narrative is emotion is established from the first line of the poem, from the first word: ‘the *wrath* sing, o goddess, of Peliade Achilles’ (I.1; translation and emphasis my own). And, of all emotions, anger is recognised as one of the most impetuous and irrational. *The Iliad* is not the story of the Trojan War but rather the story of only four days in the tenth year of said war: it starts with Achilles’ wrath against his own commander and ends with Achilles’ compassion towards Priam by returning his son Hector’s corpse in order to celebrate his death with the customary nine days of funerary games. The counterpart of Achilles’ wrath is Agamemnon’s proud arrogance: a plague has arrived in the Achaean camp because of Agamemnon’s refusal to surrender his slave, Chryseis, back to her father, Chryses, a priest of the god Apollon, who had threatened him with just such sorrows if he failed to give him his daughter back. Agamemnon finally has to relent when Achilles himself calls him out on his stubbornness, but he then demands for himself Briseis, Achilles’ slave, in return for his sacrifice. I would say that rational thinking has no role at all in this episode: Agamemnon represents the almost-stereotypical tyrannical and foolish leader, blinded by his pride, while Achilles’ wrath is unleashed in the middle of only the latest confrontation between the two and stopped only by Athena’s intervention – who violently grabs him by the hair (a detail that is not exactly pertinent, but it is an incredible moment so I had to share it). In opposition to Achilles’ compassion, at the end, there is Priam’s humility and grief. The Trojan king has seen his eldest son slain and his dead body humiliated and desecrated by Achilles. Priam risked his life and renounced his pride to beg for Hector’s corpse in order to give him the proper rituals. The death of Hector was caused by a second raging spell, which in turn was caused by the death of Achilles’ beloved Patroclus, killed by the Trojan Prince himself during a fight. Achilles’ wrath – impetuous, impossible to contain, disproportionate – is the poem’s first word and the poem’s direct object in the accusative (*menin, μῆνιν*). Anger propels the narrative and is propelled itself by a chain of emotional responses – from foolish pride to grieving sorrow – in only four days of a war caused itself by jealousy, lust and hurt pride.

The Trojan War had been fought on the slopes of the great city of Ilion; the Greeks camped for nine whole years on its shores. However, war was fought on another trench with the gods of the Pantheon intervening from their golden palace on Mount Olympus, joining in their fight, battling and participating as much as the human allies of

the Trojans and the Greeks. Another one of the most astounding images of *The Iliad* is, in fact, Hera seducing Zeus with Aphrodite's girdle: the king of the gods had recently banned divine participation in war but, apparently, they did not agree and begged Hera to help them by distracting him. Now, this might be the twenty-first century woman in me talking but all I could think of while reading this passage was: your immortal wife, the one you had cheated on for the good part of eternity, is suddenly seducing you and you do not think something is off? This reinforced my idea that the *The Iliad* can be read as a poem of human foolishness, in the sense of a folly that is human in its candour and gullibility. More than anything else, the gods are anthropomorphic, immortal creatures 'with human [...] defects' (March, 52). There have been many, however, who believed that in *The Iliad* the gods of the Pantheon were mere representations of human emotions and not actual characters. The art critic John Ruskin did not believe this, especially when it came to their role in *The Iliad*: 'I do not believe that the idea [of the gods] ever weakens itself down to mere allegory. [They] then and there (assumed) human form, and human weapons' (qtd. in Bloom, 26). They participate in, and are endowed with, human folly because of their innate characteristics. As much as Achilles, they are players in this game of massacre that lasted ten years; and, as much as his wrath is a catalyst of the events narrated in *The Iliad*, they are also cause of this prolonged ferocious madness: take, for example, Eris, goddess of discord, who throws the golden apple which leads to the Judgement of Paris.

However, the final and most important element in the text that convinced me that *The Iliad* can indeed be read as a panegyric of human foolishness is the precise list at the end of each battle of all the fallen warriors, what Bloom calls the 'hypnotic necrologues' (17). Battles are expressed through formulaic expressions that keep repeating themselves; many of the fights seem very much alike, almost indistinguishable if taken out of their immediate context. After all, at the end, the result is always the same. It is not certain who first said 'insanity is doing the same thing over and over again while expecting different results', but it is this kind of insanity that accompanies war. Every fight carries expectations of honour and the hope for the destruction of the opposed parties; instead, at the end of every battle, there is only a list of the many dead. Infamous is the reappearance of Pylaemenes in Book XIII, after having been killed in Book IV, only to cry at his son's death and then to be slain once more. For Homeric scholars, this is an inconsistency derived from the poetic oral tradition. To me, however, it highlights even more this insanity. Throughout *The Iliad*, there is no different result after each battle, argument or deception. Death is the only outcome, until even the river Scamander is full from the uninterrupted flow of human madness (XXI. 218-19).

In the end, I could not stop thinking that not much has changed today. We still fight expecting to find some higher moral value in it, and we are still surprised when all we end up with is more death. Like in Homer's poem, it is not a matter of passing judgement, because we are all somehow either actors or narrators, all endowed with some madness or another. This is why, to me, *The Iliad* is forbidding and uncomfortable. At the same time, this is how and why Homer matters: *The Iliad* is the archetypal literary text; everyone can read it and find a voice that speaks to them, sometimes uncomfortable but always resonant.

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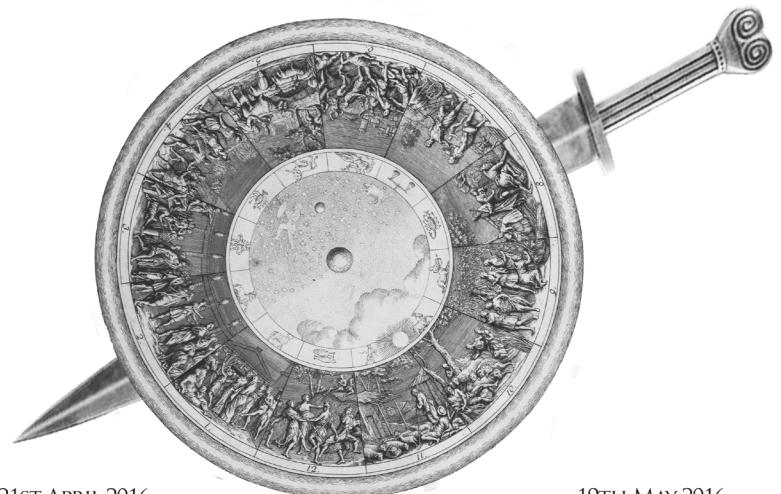
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FILM AND THEATRE

NARRATIVES OF HEROISM

<p>17TH MARCH 2016 WHALE RIDER PRESENTED BY AMY BROWN</p>	<p>7TH APRIL 2016 THE HUNGER GAMES PRESENTED BY LAURELINE VOEGELI</p>	<p>3RD MARCH 2016 TROY PRESENTED BY ROBERTA MARANGI</p>
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<p>21ST APRIL 2016 TV & CHIVALRY PRESENTED BY AMY BROWN AND OLIVIA LINDEM</p>	<p>19TH MAY 2016 STUDENT'S CHOICE</p>
<p>12TH MAY 2016 CAPTAIN AMERICA: THE FIRST AVENGER PRESENTED BY GHADA BEN SAID AND ROBERTA MARANGI</p>	

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Emmet's Latest Production: The Clean House

EMMET – THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT THEATRE GROUP

Last semester, Emmet worked on Sarah Ruhl's award winning play, *The Clean House* (2006). The workshop culminated in three productions in the third week of December. The duration of the workshop was extended to accommodate the extensive workload that was required to realize the production. As a prelude to the final production, Emmet took part in "Version Originale II," in La Fête du Théâtre 2015, on the 30th of October, where an excerpt from *The Clean House* was performed to a full crowd.



This hilarious dark comedy takes place in a "metaphysical Connecticut," in the home of a married couple, Charles and Lane, who are both doctors. Matilde, a young Brazilian woman, comes to work for them as a house-maid. Yet, according to Lane, Matilde is depressed. She doesn't like cleaning because "it makes her sad" (Ruhl, 34). Instead she aspires to be a comedian. She was born to the funniest people in Brazil. In her opening monologue, we learn the real reason for her depression: the death of her mother from a joke told by Matilde's father. After her father's subsequent suicide, she moves to the States to pursue her dream of being a comedian.

Trouble comes when Lane's husband, Charles, falls in love with his cancer patient, Ana, on whom he performs surgery. He believes Ana to be his soul mate, or his *bashert*, the Yiddish term for a "destiny." Understandably, when Charles and Ana visit Lane to ex-

plain the "objective" nature of their relationship, there ensues one of the most awkwardly hilarious scenes of the play.



This deceptively light comedy can be profoundly moving, even transformative at times. Beneath the whimsy and silliness, an underlying tragic tone is embedded in the play. The actors were challenged to find a balance in the tragicomedy spectrum. It was striking to see how the tone of the play changed drastically according to the way the audience responded. Overall, it was an exhilarating experience for the actors and the audience alike.



n.b. Photos courtesy of Marlon Ariyasinghe

Work Cited:

Ruhl, Sarah. *The Clean House and Other Plays*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2006.

Dream Duplex:

Emmet's 2016 Spring Semester Creative Project

NICHOLAS WEEKS

Why dreams?

The focus on dreams this semester stems from a personal interest in more experimental forms of theatre work. Over the years I have found that students participating in the English department theatre workshops have always had more to offer than it was ever possible for me to anticipate. I came to the conclusion that working with a completed script from the beginning of the rehearsals tends to limit the creative potential of the individual actors joining in the company, whether it be the passing Erasmus student mixing in with the group for a semester, or the more seasoned participant developing their skills and partaking in the enjoyment of play-acting over the whole course of their studies. To enhance that sense of pleasure in the creative process, in the coming-into-being of a collective work, the workshops have thus been conceived as an exploratory space. Within this (relatively) secure environment, actors should feel free to experiment with new modes of behaviours, postures, or forms of address without risking any of the potentially nefarious consequences to their public “face” or “front” as might occur outside the theatrical environment.

Though dreaming and acting are obviously different activities, to me, there is an intimate connection between our immersion in a dream world and the art of acting. Acting holds an ambivalent relation to our sense of interiority. Part of the art is technical and involves, for instance, committing words and sentences to memory or developing one’s diction. Acting, however, is also an exploratory activity, where actors may be asked to experiment with alternative vocal inflections to their natural phrasing of a text or to modulate slightly the pace of a given utterance. It is on this second, more intimate, dimension that Emmet’s new production of *Dream Duplex* will hinge.

Based on a series of excerpts derived from the literary tradition and evocative of dreams across the ages (Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, Keats, Emily Dickinson, Philip Larkin, Doris Lessing, or J. M. Coetzee), the actors will be paired with

a “double” during the workshops and asked to rehearse passages simultaneously, at the level of both gesture and speech. This extended actor’s experiment will not seek to turn the participants into robots by adopting the easy stability of a regular monotone utterance. Rather, by attuning the various participants’ sense of timing to their “double,” the workshops will attempt to allow for a sense of uncanny identification while leaving space for micro-fractures in the mirror performance. If it succeeds, the perceptual dissonances that the play will seek to elicit in the audience should thus create a sense of acoustic bewilderment, troubling assumed notions of a unitary self, while inviting the spectator’s imagination to engage fully in the space and temporality of these narratives drawn from fragmented dream worlds.

Ever performed on stage to a live audience?

If you wish to join the company and be part of our new project, or simply join us for one rehearsal and see how things go, a trial session is set for Friday, 26 February, between 2:00-4:00 p.m. in Uni Mail S180. Formal registrations will be taken on the Activités Culturelles webpage in order of arrival (<https://www.unige.ch/dife/culture/cours/theatre/theatreanglais>).

Dream Duplex will be performed on three consecutive evenings, 4-6 May 2016, in Uni Mail. The project has also been submitted to the second edition of the Geneva University theatre festival *Commedia*, 9-15 May 2016, hosted by the theatre *La Comédie*.

Interested in becoming a production assistant?

This semester, the company will open up a “production assistant” position. Though most of Emmet’s past productions have been collaborative projects involving all of the participants, we’d like to record in print the progression of a creative project as it unfolds. It will be the task of the production assistant to attend the rehearsals and contribute to the exchange of ideas while keeping a diary of the various trials and breakthroughs of the cast as they work their way towards the production.

Reviews and critics

Finally, the company also seeks reviews and critics. We can only learn and improve ourselves by getting critical feedback from our target audience. Students of the department who might be tempted by this different form of engagement with the stage and

who might wish to attend some of the final rehearsals are encouraged to get in touch with either the company or the editor of *Noted*. We would be delighted to provide these potential reviewers and critics with insights into the inner-workings of our production.

Students, alumni, and outside participants who would like to join Emmet can register for the workshop at <http://www.a-c.ch/>.

For more details, please go to <http://emmet.ch/> or contact Nicholas.Weeks@unige.ch

CREATIVE WRITING

A maze 'n' maze

WAQAS MIRZA

*Close up your eyelids, imagine the pyramids.
Imagine the pyramids, close up your eyelids.
Have you ever been to the sandy dunes of Egypt?
So here's a little trip you maybe won't forget.*

I've heard about him. Piercing eyes, sharpest teeth,
Coloured claws end his paws. He's a beast. No mercy,
Living underground, for ever never left, he
Cannot, he's bound to guard the palace's entry.

I'm here to put an end to this,
Right, left, sandy routes are endless,
Keep going till I get to the centre,
The big and bright, the burial chamber.

Dreaded dark galleries blind my eyesight,
Under my feet, appear sudden trenches,
Mechanically, by hidden latches
Activated. Trapped for ever, I might

Never ever reach the famous temple,
Never set foot in the famous chapel.
Yet something tells me this tunnel brings news:
Another corridor, this time: statues!

Colonnades in a row, seem to greet me.
Across the lost courtyard, make way, and see!

Welcome to my home. My home is a tomb.
Trapped in the pit, forever I'm doomed.
I take pleasure in scaring the hell out the visitors,

Still it can get lonely, naught but sand around me.

Just tripped on a sarcophagus, broke the nose of OSIRIS.
He says he's a great God. Nothing but a fake fraud.
All he does is scare people, a mummified stone cripple.
To be bluntly honest, I'm far worse: the darkest.

*Lurking like a vulture, a monstrous creature.
Maybe you should call him the creepy God monster.*

*Here comes the chorus, he's hotter than HORUS,
On a sunny day, a chill day, Crocos, they, rest by the bay,
Sipping on some Nile rain. Simply cause they thirst-ay.
Modern dinosaurus, chilling with fedoras.*

My nights are sleepless, it's never been a secret,
I don't need a TUTU, if a demon comes I tu-tu.
I watch myself, thanks. No MUT protects my mut.
I was trained by the one and only SESMU.
Who was taught by THOT, or should I rather say TETU.
Admit it or AMMIT'll spit the truth I asked you.

Or else, here's a little taste of what I might do:
Without further ado, I'll eat your brains,
Deep in your head, I'll sink my fangs,
Round and round, I'll brew and brew,
Twirling the gyri and sulci into spaghetti,
I'll gobble up your thoughts, whenever hunger strikes me.

*Lurking like a vulture, a monstrous creature.
Maybe you should call him the creepy God monster.*

*Here comes the chorus, he's hotter than HORUS,
On a sunny day, a chill day, Crocos, they, rest by the bay,
Sipping on some Nile rain. Simply cause they thirst-ay.
Modern dinosaurus, chilling with fedoras.*

It would be great to change my diet, honestly.
I'd love to catch and eat a bird sitting on a tree,
I've never written BENU on my menu.
Sick of crushing scarabs, all they do is resurrect.
Burn KEPHRI, and your family of insects.
All they do is multiply. All I want is a clean house,
And a clean blouse. Oh! how I'd love to crush you like ice.
I'd squash you, squeeze you, make you squeak like mice.

I'd bite like a beast, you'd just turn into my feast,
When I'd finish off my meal, I'd tip like IMHOTEP.
I'm sitting on some gold just lying all around me,
And it won't fly away, no it won't cause you see,
I'm sitting right here, and no one can take it.
I tell you, I'm on it, AMAUNET can run for it.

*Lurking like a vulture, a monstrous creature.
Maybe you should call him the creepy God monster.*

*Here comes the chorus, he's hotter than HORUS,
On a sunny day, a chill day, Crocos, they, rest by the bay
Sipping on some Nile rain. Simply cause they thirst-ay.
Modern dinosaurus, chilling with fedoras.*

I've got the gift of GEB, when I laugh the earth shatters,
It trembles like jungles when dinos smell hunger,
Or APOP, the serpent, pops out to play,
Darkness surrounds us like on the first day.

Darkness and loneliness, pretty much my routine,
Every day I share with rats my great sand poutine,
Wait awhile, are those steps in the distance I hear?
Set the table, statues! Treat the guest to sand tea!

Abstract

SAM MacDUFFE

Dreams

DIANA MOYO

I don't like my dreams, but I like to tell them and I like other peoples' dreams when they show them to me

Desirable as it may seem

I feel the urge to indulge them all
in my subconscious in a dark depth,
where my soul is trapped

Between fences of unsatisfied lust

It tries to manifest itself in some sort of bittersweet nightmare
But always leaves a soft touch of what I've learned to call "tenderness"

Something reliable, where I feel at ease

But it's too bad that moment only lasts 5 seconds

Before my tired eyes start to open

Still seeing the darkness of my bedroom caused by my shutters
Yet, the sun somewhere near tries to penetrate into my room

With strong layers of light.

My time to wake up

My eye refusing to open

Sensations deep down in my imprisoned soul
Reminding me of that tender moment which left a mark in memory
I recall that tender moment for awhile

But then I remember that this is all a dream, or that maybe I'm still just dreaming?

Dreams...

Dreams always draw me to a place of heavenly thoughts but then bring me back to reality with a different perspective on life and how I see things

Dreams

May last only overnight, but they last for an eternity in those small hours for me.

An Unpleasant Surprise

CRISTINA SIMONI

Melanie's visage is pale and her eyes are full of anxiety. "I will never make it, *never...*," she says to herself. Gradually, a thin layer of water covers the surface of her eyes, making them shine. "I am screwed! I should have started earlier; why didn't I? Why??" Her emotions are too strong to be kept inside her fragile body. Tears begin to flow over her cheeks, leaving two vertical, humid strips as evidence of her present state of distress. It is 2 a.m. In a few hours, she will be sitting in an auditorium and writing her first university exam. Never before has she experienced such a great fear of failing.

"Sweetheart, are you alright?" asks a male voice from behind her bedroom door. Then, taking on a slightly ironic tone, he adds: "You should be in the arms of Morpheus by now..."

There is no answer.

"Mel?"

"I'm okay, Dad," she replies, trying to hide her sobbing. "I just need to revise a bit longer, *please.*"

A few minutes later, Mr. Lambert is sitting on the bed beside his daughter. He is holding Melanie so tightly that her left cheek is buried into his woolen sweater.

"I know it's hard, darling," he says, gently freeing Melanie from his grasp, but keeping his right arm on her shoulder. "Facing something new is never easy, especially if it's your future that's at stake. But listen, I am sure you will be *just fine.*"

Melanie sighs and lowers her eyes. She does not agree with her father.

"You know what, I'll tell you something. Believe me, your first university exam experience cannot be worse than mine. To be honest, I haven't told anyone about it. I felt too guilty and embarrassed to do so. But this seems to be the right moment to let it out, so I'll tell you."

Mr. Lambert removes his arm from Melanie's shoulder and turns to face her. He takes a deep breath, and begins his story.

"I will always remember the day of my first exam at university. An awful and..." he smiles, "... funny memory. During the days that led up to it, I had been doing exactly what you've been doing: revising, *non-stop.* I wanted to know absolutely everything, from A to Z. And the night before the fateful day I kept checking the clock, in an almost mechanical way, as if a part of me was attempting to gain control over the passing of time. Obviously, this only increased my level of despair."

Mr. Lambert speaks this last sentence in a *crescendo*, making Melanie reveal a faint smile. She feels like she is witnessing a tragicomedy.

"The fatigue became so strong that I surrendered and went to bed. When I arrived at the university the next morning, I was exhausted but nevertheless pleased with what I had managed to study. This relief, however, vanished as soon as one of my fellow students saw me: "*Salut Mark! Pourrais-tu m'expliquer les notions de 'signifiant' et de 'signifié'?*" I can still feel my mouth drop open at the unbelievable realization that I had studied for the wrong exam. It had been swapped with another one, but I was too busy studying to bother to check the exam timetable on a regular basis. Less than half an hour later, there I was, outside the auditorium, sitting on a black plastic chair, all alone, and feeling like a perfect idiot... Mel? What are you doing?"

Melanie has violently grabbed her laptop and thrown it on top of her thighs. Her fingers are moving wildly across the keyboard, and she keeps repeating to herself: "No no, please don't tell me that..." She is on the verge of crying again, but her previous powerlessness has been replaced with hyperactivity.

"Darling, you're making me nervous too. What's the matter?"

All of a sudden, her energy fades away. Her head falls forward and is embraced by the palms of her hands. Unbelievable, but true.

Like father, like daughter.

White Buses

MARLON ARIYASINGHE

It was easy to spot them
 Among the stick people.
 The glorified surrendered,
 The optimates among the plebs,
 Adorned with red triangles.
 While they perished.
 Squashed like ants.
 Choked with gas.
 They watched, and waited,
 For parcels with red cross labels.

The white buses came,
 Steering over the land of the dead,
 From Neuengamme to Buchenwald,
 Sheltered by the cross of the saviour.

The white buses went, one by one,
 In a thin white line, leaving a trail of blood.
 Wheeling over Golgotha hill,
 To Stockholm and Copenhagen.

They watched and waited,
 The stick people with no faces.
 No red cross of salvation.
 They waited and waited,
 The stick people with no faces.

Copenhagen, November, 2015.



n.b. Photo courtesy of Marlon Ariyasinghe

Restlessness

CAROLINE MARTIN

It's not in the *world* that we live
 But in the one that we build,
 From our lives and encounters,
 From our joys and disasters.

Small portion of infinity
 In which we roam lonely,
 Measured after our ambition
 Built to meet our expectations.

When in a voracious attempt
 We try our world to expand
 The unknown is conquered
 Boundaries pushed further
 Our world grows larger
 But so does our hunger -

Thus, as distant we remain
 From these fugitive borders,
 And though it is our aim -
 Forever to go further -
 Still there will always be
 Just as much left unseen.

Will there ever come a time
 When we'll choose to draw the line,
 Looking back with satisfaction
 Instead of forth with expectations?

Maybe then we'll start discovering
 All that had always been at hand
 That we despised, not noticing
 The beauty of our own land.

Sonnet

JOSEPH BRODSKY

Translation by AZAMAT RAKHIMOV

Illustrations by ARINDA CRACIUN

Translator's note: This translation of a sonnet written by young Joseph Brodsky – who went on to live as an exile in the USA and who was later awarded the fifth Nobel prize laureate representing Russian literature – was published in the Autumn 2015 edition of *Noted*. I had the audacity to translate the poem as I was driven by my admiration for Brodsky's poetry and an interest in reproducing in English the vivid imagery of his syntactically intricate stanzas. In order to compare the original to its imperfect, English version, a working knowledge of Russian would be desirable. However, my original translation has since been complemented by its incorporation into the stunning illustrations by Arinda Craciun, an artist and illustrator from Berlin (see arindacraciun.com). Purely by accident, she came across the *Noted* edition with my translation of "Sonnet" and used the text as an inspiration for her own work. She "translated" the poem into visual images, suggesting a new reading and opening alternative paths for interpretation. I am profoundly happy that my translation, which was originally not meant to leave my notebook, made it into print and resulted in such an unexpected and undeniably masterful artistic response.

Сонет

Иосиф Бродский

Мы снова проживаем у залива,
 и проплывают облака над нами,
 и современный тарахтит Везувий,
 и оседает пыль по переулкам,
 и стекла переулков дребезжат.
 Когда-нибудь и нас засыпет пепел.

Так я хотел бы в этот бедный час
 приехать на окраину в трамвае,
 войти в твой дом,
 и если через сотни лет
 придет отряд раскапывать наш город,
 то я хотел бы, чтоб меня нашли
 оставшимся навек в твоих объятьях,
 засыпанного новою золой.

1962.

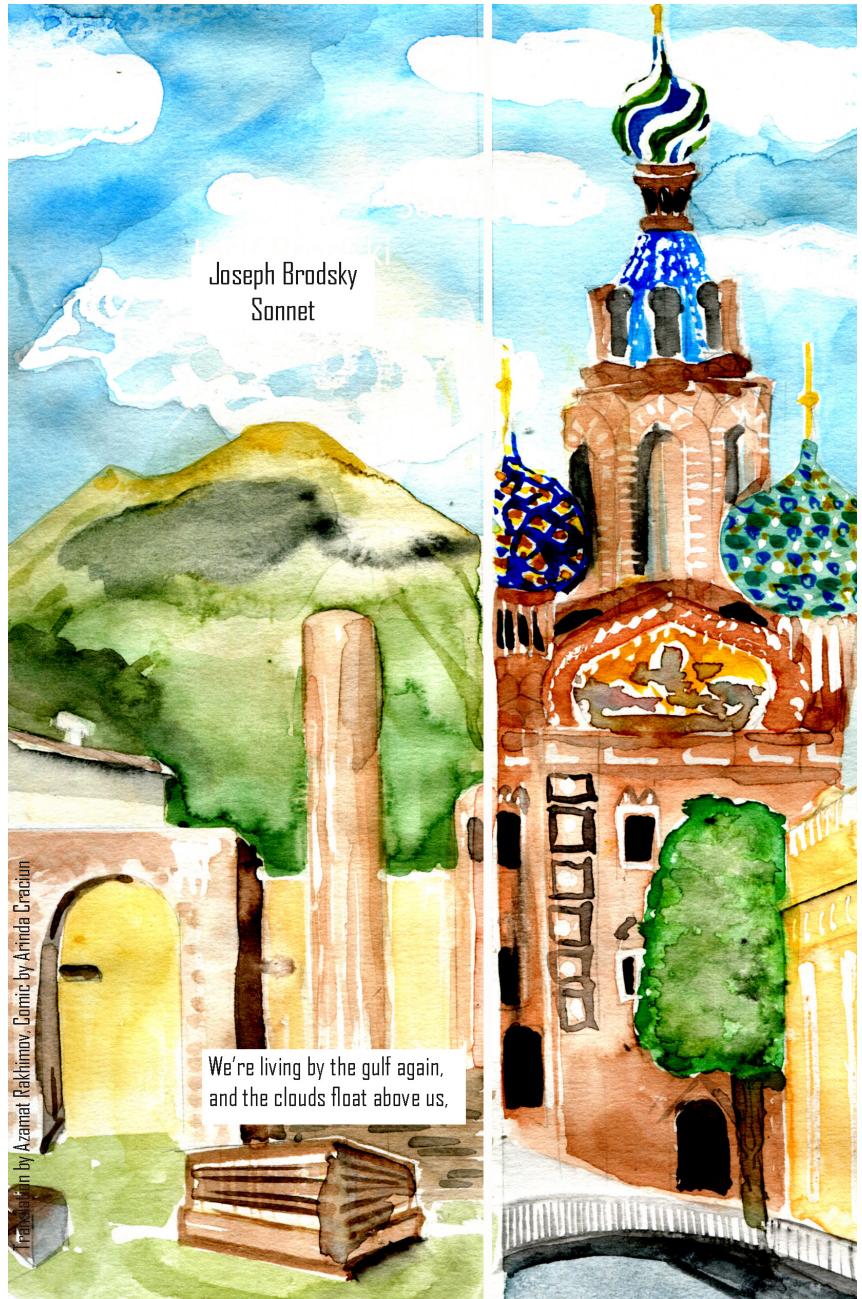
Reprinted from: Иосиф Бродский. Стихотворения и поэмы. Санкт-Петербург: Вита Нова, 2011.

Sonnet

Trans. Azamat Rakhimov

We're living by the gulf again,
 and the clouds float above us,
 and the contemporary Vesuvius rumbles,
 and dust clothes the streets,
 and the windows of the streets rattle.
 One day we'll be covered with ashes as well.

So I would like at this bad hour
 to take a tram to the suburbs,
 enter your house,
 and if in a hundred years
 they come to unearth our town,
 I'd want to be found
 eternally in your arms
 covered with new cinders.





Un-int-eruptible

WAQAS MIRZA



Blob blob,
Burning bubbles
Slowly pop at the top
Of a sleepy heap of rubble.

The molten, moldy, the melting magma
Heats up the core like hell, charges the chamber pot.
A.S.A.P. as sap, caldera suffers attacks from lava.

Beneath the ground, pressure rises. Neighbours are in for surprises.
Grrr! the grumbling, rumbling ground'll shake; thunders'll clap with tectonic plates.
The ring of fire'll spit ash and stir erwhere blazing blows of hot sauce up in the air.
Acid rains and hot springs. Choke over smoke. Muddy rivers reach peak. The bloke awoke.
Plumes and fumes remain, while deadly steam threatens throats and those who near the dome.

Reflections on the Saturn Rocket

BRYN SKIBO-BIRNEY

Bolts
in the
metal sheet:

rivet.

rivet.

rivet.

A metallic being
Shuddering
Leaping Leaving

Gravity below.
Taking us up,
As we look down:
Past floating droplets
Past blinking instruments
Past the drifting and deadly trash
of our satellite cache,
Past headlines, landmines, and
The endless, blaring modern confines
Of our overwhelmed, oversaturated minds.

Our home
this blue bolt
empty

the Earth
in the sheet of
space

THE SUMMER CONTEST

In the spirit of creative freedom and exuberant expression, we leave the guidelines for the next contest up to you, dear reader. We were so enthused over the great range of contributions to this edition – including illustrations, paintings, photography, short stories, political semi-fiction, poems of various types, book and theatre reviews, and travel writing – that we can't bear the idea of clamping arbitrary categories over who gets to win the next contest. So, in order to enter into the next competition, all you need to do is contribute something to the Autumn edition of *Noted*. The winner(s) will be decided by *Noted*'s growing panel of proofers, advisors, and general staff.

The small print: Please email your contributions to noted-lettres@unige.ch by **15 August 2015**.
As always, prizes and exaltation to be awarded.

CONTEST NEWS

The Caption Contest:

Last semester, Andréas-Benjamin Seyfert provided the illustration below as the basis for our latest contest iteration. Caroline Martin, an artist and author herself (see "Books" and "Restlessness"), was unanimously voted the winning caption author, due to the acerbic wit of her contribution, which was as "fresh" as the cartoon's produce.



"Ain't no age for a good carnage."

Ms Martin has won her choice of prizes – a leather iPad cover in her choice of color or a calligraphy set complete with pen and scented ink – courtesy of Campo Marzio, a recent edition to the Geneva river-front, specializing in Italian-made, luxury writing and office materials. In addition to Ben Seyfert, Caroline Martin, and the staff at Campo Marzio, we thank all those who participated in this latest contest.