

New Poetry by Abena Ntoso: “Dear Melissa”

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New Poetry from Lisa Stice: “Water Cycle”

No matter where we are, the oceans
meet us in some form.
I am small
and my daughter (who is only eight) –
is even smaller
and still, our dog is smaller
yet, then there are those microscopic zoe-
and phytoplankton
and the not so micro
fish that eat them and so on

New Poetry by Doris Ferleger: “Praying at the Temple of Forgiveness,” “Internal

Wind," Driving Down Old Eros Highway," and "Summer Says"



TURNING EVERYTHING AROUND / *image*
by Amalie Flynn

Praying at the Temple of Forgiveness *for Zea Joy, in memoriam*

Last Monday you threw yourself,
your body, dressed in red chemise,
in front of a train.

It was your insatiable hunger
for a more tenderhearted world,
your husband said at Shiva.

Now no one will get to see
what you saw from inside
your snow globe where you lived,

shaking and shaking,
breaking into shards
of ungrieved grief, unanswered need.

I will remember
how tirelessly, with your son,
you worked to help him turn

sounds—coming through the implant
behind his ear—into speech,
speech into understanding.

Everyone will remember
how you skipped across the dance floor,
waving pastel and magenta scarves,

and prayed to angels.
O, dear Zea, your human bones
thin as the bones of a sparrow—

the way you could fold
your body to fit anywhere.
Rest now. You have succeeded.

INTERNAL WIND

When you died, our son
became *my son*; I watch
through your eyes

and mine how he lifts
his whole body into
a long accent à droite,

arms taut, wrists impossibly
rotated back, fingers and toes
also pointed back

to all the hours, years
of practice in turning
everything around.

~

Over the hollow
you left, our son stretches
his fingers across

frets and strings
in C minor,
Bach's Etudes

the way you taught,
the way you closed
your eyes, nodded, satisfied—

our son will remember.

~

Remember how
he watched you deep-
breathe into yoga postures?

Now his own focused flow
heals what Western doctors call
tics, quiets what Eastern doctors call

internal wind. Listen
how our son calls
to his yoga students

what he learned
at your knee: *Effort*

brings the rain—

of grace.

~

When our son and I argue,
I feel homeless, divided,
until I remember how you

and I took turns massaging
his neck that ached from its day's
staccato singing—

~

Sometimes I can see his tics
as flawless, meticulous,
a body expressing itself

with perfect diction.

DRIVING DOWN OLD EROS HIGHWAY

Me, in my Q50 with its hot flashes and warning beeps,
heading toward Sweet Desire, New Jersey, where my love,

soon 70, will woo me with mango, melt the mushy pulp
in my mouth—or perhaps he naps.

You, CeeCee, painting the walls pink in the tiny house in
Pullman,
recently moved in with your old college flame, coming so
easily

against his new ceramic hip, just the friction of it. You say
your pelvis never quite fit with anyone else, including your
soon-to-be-

ex-husband of 30 years. Me, with a G-spot suddenly. A rainbow of chaos tunneling through me when his fingers find it and flutter.

And long live the reckless tongue. The old-fashioned clit-kind of climax. Like a young planet rising. Oh, how old and greedy I am

for that whole-body wave and chill and quiver and release. You, purposely avoiding that whole-body wave of shiver,

as it reminds you of your ex's dogged insistences.

For your 60th, your daughter gifted you with a mini vibrator

on a rubber ring for your index finger. A *sex-thimble*, you joke.

Sex over 60 seems unseemly to talk about, CeeCee,

but it seems more ungrateful to say nothing at all.

You and I speak of what our mothers couldn't give us.

Daily I pray at the temple of Venus.

SUMMER SAYS

Pay attention to
your heat, your survival—
the tree rooted in your garden

is a sequined vernacular, a cashmere sweater.
Because nothing matters in the end
but comfort and the bending light.

Summer says, I will be the room you die in.
You will dream, neither of regret,
nor in the language you were born into.

A stranger will comb your existential threads.
You had thought, for instance, humans

were gerunds or harps bent

on playing in a diner that serves
black coffee and hard donuts.
You ask, *What is the past?*

What is it all for?

Summer says, The wound of being
untaught. Says, hungry.

Says, the cypress is a hospice,
says, falter, falter, falter,
bloom bloom bloom—too soon

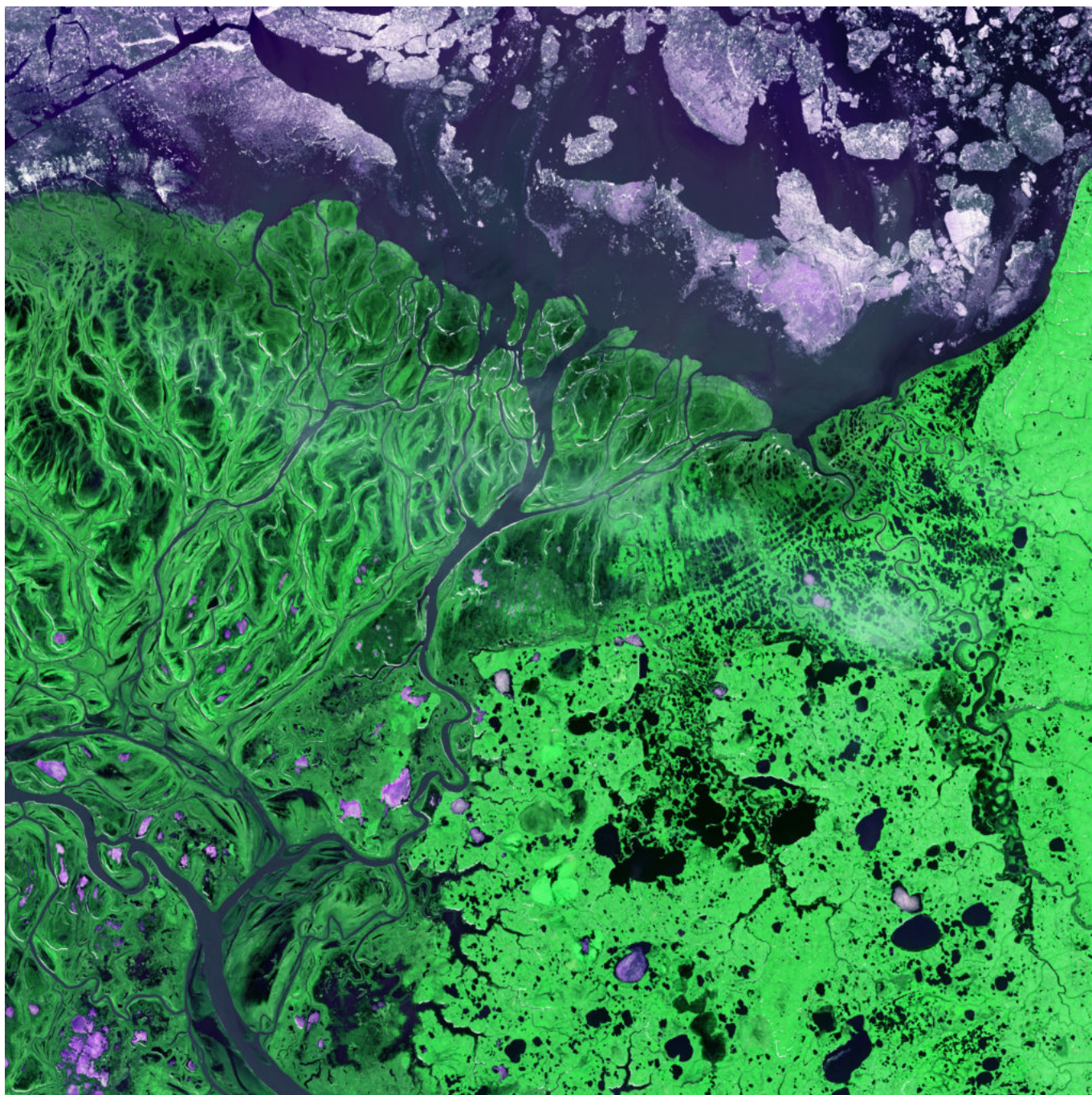
a pall will keep you company.

New Poetry from Shana Youngdahl

After the Maine Tin Min Company Prospectus, 1880

The earth has veins we can
open with our hammers.
Follow the cassiterite crystals
down where the iron dark
is picked by the swings
of men who name minerals
by the feel of them on damp
fingers, the bands of elvan
quartzite like the rough
footprints of mythical
man, or the smooth track

Of native silver, or gold
Ore floating in the salty
Rubbish of St. Just. Imagine
Fellow capitalists, what
Enterprise can find
Rose colored mica, purple
Fluor spar, tourmaline,
And a thin river of
Tin Ore imbedded among
calc spar crystals, follow
that river, I say, crack
the vein open.



To Find the Center of a Circle from a Part of the Circumference

Which is all I am really after, the path to the midpoint
and how to get there from this little arch

of my hand I'm told to *span the dividers any distance*

and with *one foot on the circumference*

describe the semi-circumferences: today pollen and blue sky,

book bound in navy cloth and draped with black
velvet. The ache in my wrist, throat and head dull
like the birdsong we stop hearing weeks ago.

I'm trying to find the center: the point I can cut from.
I pencil out two indefinite lines and lean
under this dome into the illuminated center.
Someone a very long time ago, told me to call *point P*.
There is comfort in such specifics, but still I feel
like all the unwound clocks that fill old buildings;
there is something I am supposed to do, but
in the fog I am unfocused, turn my head
to another arch and am led away.

—

1.

First or only?

My child is three—
wakes three times

a night
has no room

I would know. Wouldn't I?

Piling her piss-soaked
blankets on the wood floor
I leave them to fume,

wait for the calendar or the swelling.

8.

I know
and don't. I'm half-open
hungry, two days
from late.

I dreamt my name wrong.
I dreamt a boy laughing,
my girl pulling his

baby boots on, spelling
her own name that I
could read by water.

37.

Find
a stone to fit the palm,

our last iris, photographs of daughter's wet curls, half-
burned

and broken candles, recall when sister
believed the rainbow alive.

Collect your pebbles.

38.

I leak
dying larkspur and the strain
of mileage.

It's a glass night,
with clean towel,
and midwives in
the basement room
where spills won't
wet spines and this damp
brings the cool harness
of crying.

39.

We set out walking
the child grabs a stick
points at clicking marmots
shakes the trees and piñon
bleeds into her fingers
she twists it into her hair.
She is pitched
and dust rises like fire
billowing between sisters.