

# **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

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# **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.

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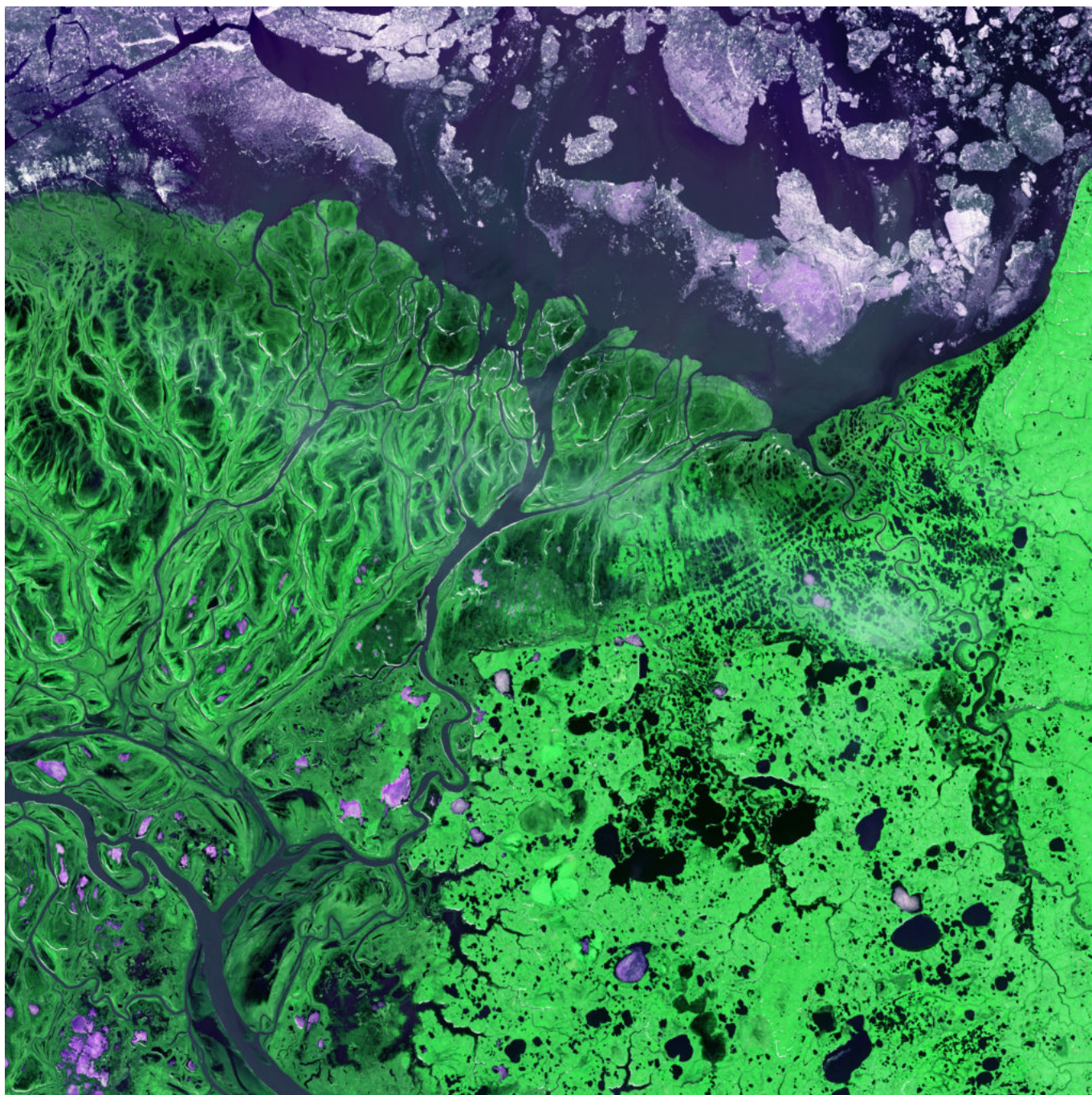
## **New Poetry from Shana Youngdahl**

**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.