

Accumulus

ETHAN PAQUIN is the author of *The Makeshift*, which was published in England in 2002 and appears in this book for the first time outside the UK. He created and has been editor of the international poetry journal *Slope* (www.slope.org) since 1999, and in 2001 founded the small press, Slope Editions. His poetry has been published throughout the US, Europe and Australia, and his criticism appears in journals including *The Boston Review*, *Verse*, *Canadian Review of Books* and *Contemporary Poetry Review*, for which he is contributing editor. A native of New Hampshire, he is Assistant Professor of Humanities at Medaille College in Buffalo, NY.

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PUBLISHED BY SALT PUBLISHING
PO Box 937, Great Wilbraham, Cambridge PDO CB1 5JX United Kingdom
PO Box 202, Applecross, Western Australia 6153

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First published 2003

Printed and bound in the United Kingdom by Lightning Source

Typeset in Swift 9.5 / 13

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ISBN 1 84471 015 7 paperback

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1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

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Acknowledgments

The author gratefully acknowledges the editors of the following publications in which some of these poems first appeared, occasionally in different form:

The Makeshift

American Letters & Commentary (“Box,” “Episodic”); *Arena Magazine* (“Textures of Domesticity”); *The Boston Review* (“More Like Montpelier”); *Boulevard* (“Awake, First Light”); *Canadian Review of Books* (“Rooms, Steadily Darkening”); *Conduit* (“Melancholia,” “One Field”); *Forklift, Ohio* (“Diary”); *Leviathan Quarterly* (“Apogee Brevita”); *Lit* (“Bolus,” “Just Before Diversion,” “Not This, Mirror” from “The Mandarin,” “To a Child Not Afraid of the Dark”); *Maisonneuve* (“Having Learned to Sing, I Find it Difficult”); *Meanjin* (“Wanderer”); *New American Writing* (“Sad,” “Sonata”); *Overland* (“Apostasy”); *Painted Bride Quarterly* (“Laughter is X, Laughter is Y”); *Plastic* (“Two Hypotheses” from “The Mandarin”); *Quarterly West* (“Lingerings Near Southern April,” “The Makeshift,” “The Near-Miss Slides”); *Tooth* (“Flight Pattern,” “The Use of Reinhardt”); *Untitled: A Magazine of Prose Poetry* (“Study of Three Men With Faces Painted by Francis Bacon”) and *Verse* (“Terrarium, a Quincunx”).

Poems also appeared online in *Bathroom* (“Entries Fitted for Freezing Rain”), *CrossConnect* (“Interpreter,” from “The Mandarin”), *Jacket* (“A Vision, Winter,” “Ghazal,” “Like the Song Goes, ‘There’s a Man With,’ “Terrarium, a Quincunx”) and *La Petite Zine* (“Canned Cloudscape”). *Nerve* accepted “Rural Notebook” in 2001. “Reverie” appeared in the CD-rom journal *Papertiger*.

Dead July

Both (“Anteros”); *Boulevard* (“Like an Empty”); *Crowd* (“Portrait With the Entrance of Dusk . . . ,” “Thunder Over Louisville”); *Ecopoetics* (“High Horizon”); *Jack Mackerel* (“Ars Cryotica”), *Leviathan Quarterly* (“Girl, Night”); *Lit* (“The Good”); *Maisonneuve* (“Having No One Else to Turn to, I Consult the Night Hour,” “End/Again”); *New American Writing* (“Dark Sky and Bulb From Miles Away”); *NowCulture* (“Procession,” “Wistful”); *Pequod* (“Scythe and Dory”); *Pleiades* (“When I Don’t Think of This World”); *Pool* (“Mountains Falling”); *The Prague Review* (“Errata,” “The Rest”); *Skein* (“Poem I’ve Written, It – ,” “Troubled by Time”); *Volt* (“Woe [I],” “Woe [II]”) and *Verse* (“Revenant”).

Poems also appeared online in *Bathroom* (“Jottings”), *Can We Have Our Ball Back* (“Capstone,” “Fissure,” “Ur-Dissonance”), *GutCult* University of Michigan (“Still Water”); *Jacket* (“Revenant”) and *VeRT* (“In the Wake of Fallen Mountains”); in the CD-rom journal *Papertiger* (“It Makes No Difference”); and in the web journal/print annual *Ducky* (“The Director,” “Woe [III]”).

The Makeshift was released in 2002 in the UK by Stride Books. My gratitude to Rupert Loydell for its publication, and for his unflinching faith in it. Thanks to John Kinsella and Chris Hamilton-Emery for accepting *Accumululus* for publication.

Many thanks to my entire family for their support, and to those who helped these books take shape over the past six years, including but not limited to Brian Henry, Dara Wier, James Tate, Franz Wright, Tomaz Salamun, Forrest Gander, Matthew Zapruder, Peter Richards, Derek Webster, Daniel Nester, Kevin Goodan and Andy Morgan.

The Makeshift

Part I

Having Learned to Sing, I Find it Difficult

The rain is angry today.
I've done her wrong, she hisses.

No matter.

It's enough to hear her hiss,
enough to hide in the shattered mirror

of black, black that is this,
a particularly cold evening,

one in which I'm not allowed to dream –
no, allowed to regret and to rue . . .

What is there to regret?

Rain – I've become fluent in it.
Rain's an easy difficulty.

Having learned to sing
I find it difficult

to watch her, so much beauty,
trillions of little bulbs of beauty

in fact, come down to me,
bestow herself to me.

She says she misses her brother –
her lover – oh yes but what about me

Do you miss me

Having learned to sing
I find it difficult

to come back to earth –
I'm a black cloud of notes –

discordant symphony,

breath of rain lingering

which much like everything
have no reason or rhyme

but in a little black sack

where they may be viewed
for all time

Awake, First Light

This moment's been met.

That one,
and that one too:

The fire.
The bleak forest.

But I'm not a victim of the fire!

I've never had a moment
in and of
or as
myself

to have been charred
as the skin
of a present soul,

somehow lackluster
in its smoulder.

Episodic

Midnight glow: could it be the gas station? piecemeal serials of holding her / holding her / holding her. Clicktrack. Her lukewhett-ed smile almost at iron's boiling point. Gallons click away. There are even night-crows in suburbia, honey, see them ply the daggering octane glow? Here – entrails of midnight, – wind fisting my eyes. O was she unaware, my petal backseat, of fragrance dappling down & atwards, –

Man staggered from bath, ate pears, fed hummingbirds / skip a bit // filled tank, danced backalleyway with waitress from Tunisian cargo plane – or Hardee's, more likely. *They all lie about two things*, he grumbled. *Their daddies and their from-whereabouts.*

Apple chest “on” solar-room floor. Apples “within” chest, “apple” within “apples,” and all was contained neatly (in mahogany) inside a tiny logjam we might as well call Birthday. For it's heard, said a neighbor who is prone to shaping Bosc pears with jack-knives “into” West Shore Fluttering Hummingbirds, there's a tiny mechanical heart churning beneath these somewheres –

The Root of Everything

I.

The second before the mold,
the green before the green in the grass,
the vanished silence becoming words.

Describe those seconds, those colors,
those transitions, and how slow? how much?
In the scatter of brown and weed,

in the slow strain of yeast,
in the curve of torpid clay,
in each upward reasonlessness

the many mingling shelves of categories.
For instance: Light, and givers of light,
the takers and swallowers of it;

Mechanics of sight and silence,
bright and vanish, gust and breathless,
still lawns, open palms.

II.

Sun, know what I know
from this balcony:
not everything is a painting,

funded and fused,
layered and spackled.
If only everything had such spirit.

Spirit is subdued all around you:
Stars fall silent, bandaged by night,
thinkers go speechless in low candlelight,

and no tree is a bursting tree:
Autumn's a kind of deliberate simmer,
the giving of color mingling with the taking,

like the moment we learned music –
that stirring of several instants

known even by the trees, ever pushing out

toward you.