

Padraig Regan *Three Glass Objects*

Written in response to **Fanny Gicquel**, *breathing with heels, walking with eyes*

1. A Model of *Botrytis cinera* by William A.R. Dillon Weston

Among wax apples, wooden limbs, orreries, engines capable of long division, globes of the earth & all its neighbours & the sparkling hollows they roll about in,

a model of a pair of eyes (crucified & fitted with a subtle plum-weight pulley system that can imitate the smallest of expressive movements such organs might perform),

a cabinet of horses's teeth, pulped paper moulded into ears & painted with an arabesque of nerves, a massive plastic frog skinned & showing off its bones, the latticework

that atoms make in space depicted as net of ping-pong balls & wire, chads extracted from butterfly wings mounted into tiny reliquaries, a beetle magnified & bisected

& as full of acute machinery as a clock, some best guesses at the shapes of early skulls, the pink slip of a foetus turning human, mammal, avian, amphibian, reptile –

I find this: a clutch of glass rods half-melted in the flame of a bunsen burner, coiled & looped & fused together into the lightning-frozen-in-its-progress figure

of the microscopic architecture of a fungus, whose name the label tells me is Latin for 'grapes like ashes,' or something like it, whose life's purpose is the insinuation

of its grey-furred self beneath the skins of soft fruits. It is a kind of pornography: this bringing to the visible scale, this refusal to refusal to respect the privacy

of matter just because it hovers on the cusp of animation. Which is also, I suppose, the horizon where empathy does its blue dissolve into the will to know.

Padraig Regan's debut collection *Some Integrity* was published by Carcanet in 2022 and was awarded the Clarissa Luard Award and shortlisted for the Forward Prize for Best First Collection. They are the author of two poetry pamphlets: *Delicious* (Lifeboat, 2016) and *Who Seemed Alive & Altogether Real* (Emma Press, 2017). In 2015, they were a recipient of an Eric Gregory Award, and in 2020 they were awarded the Ireland Chair of Poetry Bursary.

They hold a PhD on creative-critical and hybridised writing practices in medieval texts and the work of Anne Carson from the Seamus Heaney Centre, Queen's University Belfast, where they were a Ciaran Carson Writing and the City Fellow in 2021. They are currently Fellow Commoner in Creative Arts at Trinity College Cambridge.

The **Temple Bar Gallery + Studios Writing Commission** aims to expand ideas around writing about art by inviting Irish authors to create a series of pieces inspired by the exhibitions at Temple Bar Gallery + Studios. In 2023, TBG+S has commissioned Padraig Regan to make a piece of writing inspired by each of the exhibitions in the gallery programme.

Previous TBG+S Writers include Sara Baume (2015), Claire-Louise Bennett (2016), Gavin Corbett (2017), Doireann Ní Ghríofa (2018), Annemarie Ní Churreáin (2019), and Ian Maleney (2020), Nicole Flattery (2021), Thomas Morris (2022).

The texts are available to download from www.templebargallery.com and printed copies are available in the gallery.

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2. A Jellyfish by Leopold and/or Rudolf Blaschka

It's not so much the breath that shapes the glass
but the glass that gives shape
to the breath it cools around,
& holds it there. Breath,

in this case, mimicking
the billow of water; glass
the elastic folds it blows open.

Which it performs, almost, perfectly:

its gleam like a well-warmed pearl speaking
not of water, but the idea
of wetness; those threads
insouciantly holding

their contortions, as if
my breath now misting up
the outside of its tank would be
enough to coax them into new topologies,

& wouldn't shatter them. Leopold, Rudolph,
whichever pair of lungs
& hands teased this glass
into its current posture,

I want to let you know
I too understand the urge
to still the happenstance
of things into a manageable form,

I too have had my share of breakages.
& while I'm here, I might
as well tell you that
there was a time some years ago

when sleep was somewhere else
I only entered after hours
of watching videos of your art
on a glass screen, for the glow of it, the slow

bloating stretch: the glass as passive, as
slackened of self
as I aspire to be
despite my seeming need

to make shapes out of breath
as proof it happened.

O Rudolf,
the only future-proofed art is elegy.

You knew this, didn't you, when the bellows
of your father's lungs gave up
& you resumed
their blowing as if

nothing much had happened.
& why not start here,
where living matter quivers
as close as it ever comes to pure abstraction:

boneless, eyeless, limbless, not even
differentiating
between mouth & anus,
a bagged-out, milky dome

of something more gelatinous
than skin, a curving
trumpet core for it
to radiate around, a bit of fringe

suggestive of a lampshade in a stage set
of a brothel. Of which
you copy everything
but essence, then

because the air brings with it
the whims of gravity
you fix it to a metal rod
that almost makes it look as if its floating.

3. A Bowl by Fanny Gicquel

I love glass because of all materials, it seems to wear its memories most nakedly. Take, for example, this bowl, lying on a concrete floor in Dublin. It is irregularly curved; its walls have ripples, like a curtain, stilled. Its rim makes me want to use the words *Sierra* and *serrated*, which find their common ancestor in a Latin saw. If it were filled with water, you would be hard pressed to tell where the water ended and the glass began: so many angles of incidence, so much light, and all of it bending. I love how ardently it holds its own pouring, its erstwhile liquidity. I want to look inside it and see what refracted collage it would make of my face; I want to set one word echoing in its belly and tell no-one what it means.