

# Pigeon Eater

By Tony Burfield



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Jitters

In the apartment. Rucksacks against the wall. Unfurnished room. My piles: books, arts, strings. How many pilgrimages to old Europa between the two of us, how many thumb-out treks? And this time we'll cross to Africa.

She putters  
through all the different  
smiles,  
my pile of gear  
bigger, smaller,  
too big.

*Boulder, CO 9/2011*

Now Ocean Far

Making our way, made our way, endless airports, wobbling turbulence spatial, gut, mindwise.  
Metro shakes enough and nausea creeps, but tenemos una reserva and we're in and out for a  
baguette y tomate, heirlooms of memory for nieces and nephews now ocean far. Tight Spanish  
alleyways out of french doors, we do see.

just after siesta  
romp, root love before  
new autumn evening

*Madrid 9/2011*

Road Scents

Thick, thick scent, thick sound, the city opens before us, opens us, we open to it. We trek to the train station to find the inner botanical forest, a vibe shield for travel stress, and find it green and find the air cool and find an old couple with rucksacks too. Where will we be.

café sax  
café accordion  
we keep our change

but your thickness  
human by human  
wholes-in-the-walls

*La Atocha 9/2011*

Spraying the Heat Down

Labyrinthine barrios with the ladies of the afternoon, nones. Where is the water? Where the pears? We walk long today, her hat for the sun, her toe-to-hip walk. I remember dimly our surprise loving in the deep morning and now all vibrant. Chips so early and more sleep too. Walking, walking lost as we like it, so thick the European, so misty the misters, mist-ers.

a short hair-do  
well, cow-licks  
and calico-nights  
we've walked this calle  
before

*El Barrio de Las Letras 9/2011*

Socialist Grey in the Evening

Always screaming dusty old guernica and one dead baby. But really the best of Reina Sofia is the oppressed woman out of costume and screaming. This is a true scream. Bald white men screaming may be painful symphony, but Laura knows the sticky ones first. And egomania finishes mostly pathetic even in gold-flake.

our Spanish words  
dropping leaves in autumn  
dead to the ground

as hard as you may  
the grimaced face  
behind the counter

blue and cloudless

*Museo Reina Sofia 9/2011*

Who Knows How Ringless the Married May Be

Train waiting in the botanical station all palm trees and German tourists, Japanese, and many birds. Flittle, pigeon speak, the trains all quiet. We're heading to Algeciras, maybe to sleep, a cut through south central Spain and the Spanish don't understand my tiny Spanish. Someone's heaven from TV, the radio dribbles out. My wife and I bought wooden wedding rings four years after our wedding, just as uncomfortable as gold, turns out.

headboard  
to drywall all night long  
neighbors be damned

*Atocha Station 9/2011*



English Accent

Wild day, times of newness. Each day, for three days, all new, all new vision, sound, taste, scent, air, touch too. Tony touch, Tony toca. New languages. Algeciras to Gibraltar. We climbed the rock of Gibraltar and stood at the Pillars of Hercules, she so tender on the steep cliff-side rock, goat steps from the falling Mediterranean. Gulls circling below. The Barbary Ape didn't exactly attack me, but he did, sure-as-shit, lay hands on me, then with our fish and chips at an Irish pub.

silent ships  
still in distances  
autumnal afternoon

*Gibraltar, UK 9/2011*

Entering the Blue City

Algeiras to Ceuta to Tetouen to Chefchaouen to Guernika to blue bone, blue stone. The hustlers persist after blue backpacks and white faces. Money spelt big American, European, across all pores, my sweat as poor as anybody's. "Me no hassle! Me no pushy! Me no guide!" as he rushes by, high-stepping by, just to check for a handout through the tight medina. We're both scared shitless, only I'm trying hard to hide it for safety's sake and for her smile to persist through the blue.

rusty-caged border-  
walk 300m long

on the other side  
boys begging water

our sweat  
each mingling  
each

*Chefchaouen, Morocco 9/2011*

call to prayer over  
many mosque speakers–  
my own quiet

*Chaouen Medina 9/2011*

Everywhere These Same Breaths

Medina maze amazes us in our flats and smelly week old road socks. The boys have thin faces, girls all spunk and blue-jeaned, as the walls too. Two Germans at breakfast, sick or something, eating eggs, boiled, pierced too, lips, cheeks. Their English as clear as the blue city, blue sky. I try to breathe by the river and leave the lizards be. I'm afraid of the boys, the ones with no school time, the ones who will kill all sunsets, all the medina glow. I'm afeared when they throw the rocks.

tagine infamy  
a gurgle in the gut—  
dry evening grass

*Chaouen 9/2011*

A Pebble in the Boulder Field

Searching for the trail-head, we found the marijuana squats and hill men, their vibrancy a smile and underneath, they, who we thought were lingering thugs, were just driving school students, auto-école. Start the press, we are naïve and do want snake-knowledge and savage cat tongue. The summit? Maybe gain it and Laura is brave too.

long cedar valley  
the heat wafting  
the now scent

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Spanish olive orchards, a thick monoculture where the bees get bored and die off from plant mutations. Never before in the history of... a feast for the eyes... Back behind our naïveté, I've hidden all our wealth. Finding it may take us out to the hills and back, but Africa herself? She has bad wind too.

tight souq  
and no money—  
disappointed pick-pocket

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*Talassemtane National Park 9/2011*

We Saw Him Crawl From a Hole

*“The air of hell will tolerate no hymns.”- ---Arthur Rimbaud, LV trans.*

And I tolerate no vacuum. The medina boys kick cardboard boxes and yogurt cups. Beneath my feet the stones slip. The rocks of the Rif are railroad thick and have the look of man. We’ve realized our own fearful fearlessness. That is implicit. We are implicit with fright.

weed harvester  
tall stick, ripped pants–  
dry sand afternoon

*Chaouen 9/2011*

I had the Apple, You the Pear

sun on the black  
notebook–  
burning afternoon

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Sore today, yesterday we climbed Jebel Al Kalaa and to Sfit Tjil pass. A pain hike, painful liberation. The peaks sat and the clouds spilled over their heights and tall cedars into the canyons and valleys through which we approached. Majesty, regality, beatificity? What words could say anything about it.

peak upon peak  
volcanic crags and limestone  
mustard mosses and blood  
black seed pods

sun burn sun  
here there are no trails  
and here the dusty boulders  
roll

*Below Jebel Al Kalaa 10/2011*

Your Job? Roll the Boulders!

These peaks I see! The boulders rumbled down behind us. I didn't say anything. She didn't see it. It would have killed us. So we went on, tendering the cedar needles. We traded them for stiff scents and used their buoyancy for height. Who will borrow a boulder roll, who will know the steps we take? Our skin alone and our feet alone have felt those summits, two by two, tired and sweaty and full alone.

medina goats

click clack over stone-

Watch the droppings toes!

*Chaouen 10/2011*



Desert Cats of Africa

Spanish Mosque. Rock-n-roll is alive but subdued in the igneous. The mighty long-legged cat, Egyptian and pale grey, big balls, he struts his medina stuff, elegant, fierce-eyed. Touch the top, I'm building my own damn Grande Taxi. No one has left me, all my friends are near, but I can hear other tongues lapping at my windowpane, this cat or that mosque a-fire.

smile sun  
set–  
hot still

*Uta el-Hammam 10/2011*

Morning Medina

Early Morning Medina, it is true, I am desperately in love with you. Your cool walls calm my night sweats and your blue aura livens each of my stiff steps. Your tender mint scent! Your just-touched-with-light terracotta! And your sister, Early Evening Medina too, only less lovely with your fiery brother's heat. Tender Morning Medina give me your hand!  
To live in your maze and spunk!

sleepy kittens  
curl and pile–  
sun just up

*Chefchaouen 10/2012*

These Village Trails

Not sure of poetry today. We've had sicknesses and decided to wander anyhow up into the countryside and through the cannabis fields, the stocks bare and dry, harvested. Poetry seems secondary and language? Somehow I'm language-less, hearing only the wind's syllables and man's groan. The sickness repeats only until the shovel splits the sod, but the breath continues into the fields.

limestone boulders  
tall as houses  
in suburbia  
silent, grey

*Circuit Tassemente 10/2011*

Five Calls a Day

My apologies combine for a prayer. My tenderest thoughts come out in rough boulders of tongue and air. The foot and my self-shitting? They announce my presence, forecast enough. But what are my passions? Sound and breath, writ and wailed, foot to dirt across all that is fair, all that is feared, and all forgotten. We leave our traces in threes, but learn language only in pairs. To start or begin or just to begin is all a passion wants.

sitting on rock  
man and woman  
wait

*The Spanish Mosque 10/2011*

Mysticism Comes Later

We leave Chaouen in the morning, sun-up ruck walk out to a grande-taxi uh-oh who-knows plot. Today was with chess and mint tea and an out-and-back Spanish Mosque sun-set. We took nothing and got a huge handful. The broadness for a dime, the gorgeous for free.

trail pebbles  
for sliding steps  
drunken-sailors sober

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We had a long multi-layered talk about finding our truths. She quests simply, a garden, a dog. I'm the extravagant one with plans for long treks through deserts and mountains in foreign lands. Now where is the simplicity I preach and the true tough I pretend at?

“Are you A  
B or C ok?”

the Alphabet  
of caring

*Chaouen 10/2102*

True Occupations

Made it back to “Spain” through a mad taxi, janxi ride, swerving donkeys, Berbers, goats, and dogs. Kids too, with wheelbarrows piled high, working construction at ten years old and mud clothes. We wrinkled our noses at the great rural garbage dump where plastic bags in the wind blotted out the sun, but now they were ours. The same back home, it is, just better organized. And at the border, the Fronterra, bum-rushed again, this time for true Dirham. Then the case of occupied Morocco, Sebta to Ceuta and her ability to assert her un-ornamentness back to true instrumentality.

beach gulls  
on grey sand  
pecking plastic  
sea glass

*Sebta, Occupied North Africa 10/2011*

I Love Port Towns

Art and love are within stone and air. The morning announces this! Rising early is now imperative because I have already known the night. Those debauches have brought my teeth low and scraped them across the concrete. And now they are all loose. The morning air and the café scene resurrect me, give me the balm for my gums. And my love? She rambles, step by step, with me across all harrowing borders and up all gravelly, steep mountain slopes. Whoa-la! and Oh-my-god-oh, and the thank you's of all these treks.

lingering Arabic  
in Andalusian hills,  
painted tile for slim dreams  
and beyond the sea  
the high rocks and  
touchy-feelly apes

*Algeciras, Spain 10/2011*

Adoration of Cobbled Streets

Can you be in love with two communities at once? España give me your caffeine. I'm sleepy-eyed and hung-over. The wine is smooth and the chocolate long. There's a touch of urine in the air, a dogwood romp. My wife, so nectarous and lovely, always has the right hands. Her dogs all loved and far off. Misplaced mornings sometimes abate but abide in middays. Tomorrow we report to customs with empty bags, tomorrow we go back to Boulder.

two dogs  
sniffing  
the piss-pole  
some other dog's  
leg up

*El Barrio de las Letras 10/2011*



In-flight Movies

May I call you pigeon-eater? The teeth marks on the thin bones. The men reaching for an after bite hand-out and the cats all spread-out. We walk in blue, fades, walls, the stench of goat hoof.

Place the ring on the medina floor and watch it for ten days.

The boys will find and melt it, but it is wooden and will burn.

boat, train,

plane–

home at sunset

*Boulder, CO 10/2011*