

Rivista di poesia comparata

Direttore responsabile: Francesco Stella

Iniziative

8 dicembre 2019
Semicerchio a "Più libri più liberi"

6 dicembre 2019
Laura Pugno alla Scuola di Semicerchio

5 dicembre 2019
Convegno Compalit a Siena

4 dicembre 2019
Addio a Giuseppe Bevilacqua

29 novembre 2019
Maurizio Maggiani alla Scuola di Semicerchio

8 novembre 2019
Laboratorio di poesia: Valerio Magrelli

12 ottobre 2019
Semicerchio e LinguaFranca a Salon de la Revue di Parigi

27 settembre 2019
Reading della Scuola di Scrittura

25 settembre 2019
Ultimi giorni iscrizioni al Corso di scrittura creativa

20 settembre 2019
Incontro con Jorie Graham per l'uscita di "fast" (Garzanti)

19 giugno 2019
Addio ad Armando Gnisci

31 maggio 2019
I'M SO TIRED OF FLORENCE: READING MINA LOY

12 aprile 2019
Incontro con Marco Di Pasquale

28 marzo 2019
Sconti sul doppio Semicerchio-Ecopoetica 2018

27 marzo 2019
Semicerchio al Convegno di Narrazioni Ecologiche-Firenze

24 marzo 2019
Premio Ceppo: Semicerchio e Guccini a Pistoia

15 marzo 2019
Rosaria Lo Russo legge Sexto

6 febbraio 2019
Incontro sulla traduzione poetica -Siena

25 gennaio 2019
Assemblea sociale e nuovi laboratori

14 dicembre 2018
Incontro con Giorgio Falco

8 dicembre 2018
Semicerchio a "Più Libri Più Liberi" Roma

6 dicembre 2018
Semicerchio issue on MIGRATION AND IDENTITY. Call for papers

16 novembre 2018
"Folla delle vene" di Iacuzzi a Semicerchio

« indietro

The Golden Chalice

Without those lustful diadems of diamond
to crown, majestic, our sinful heads,
the pestilential hunger dies; our carnality is sheathed,
and the gem diggers sleep quietly in the peaceful rivers of the gods.
Still the cup of life tastes sour in the orphans' mouths:

Children of your creation, all, God, their last hope
was your golden chalice. Now it is bitter and inchoate,
even as they pray for your great presence.
Fervent believers all, they were singing those meandrous songs
that did not reach *your* ears: it was a ritual; ah, the *Wretched of The Earth*- those not so very innocent children of Sierra Leone!

Waking up from those persistent nightmares in their souls,
they went seeking your hands, but all they saw, sculptured
in skeletal form, was this new frieze that stinks!
Proud profiles: the earth shook from the beating of their chests,
and becoming children once again, they adorned their foreheads
to look innocent; but a rogue leader sold their laurels to a thirsty Sahara,
where a djinn swallowed them when no saints were watching.

Going without those laurels to a distant land
a furnace was blazing in their souls, a cold breeze kissed their foreheads;
but all that awaited their mouths were the empty cups of dreams.
On a cloudy horizon, Christ sat watching their profuse deliriums.

Stubborn souls: their sacred thirst was our blazing desert;
Staggered by the sun, their epiphany was a slow walk to an oasis,
because that cursed *palm tree* in Sierra Leone has no milk!
Nonetheless, the gem river that was poisoned
is singing once again about fresh, clear water;
and I, lustful like a crab, throw my arms around those children.

My soul was that river on whose fiery banks
the orphans sang relentlessly for their lost mother.
Now I am waiting for a songbird to come
in the morning with a trill from its golden voice to ease their pain,
as they return, gasping, to that cup of Christ that is the river!

Out of the Abyss

'Out-worn heart, in a time out-worn'
W. B. Yeats

We emerged, worn-out, from this abyss, a broken country:
the women less tender, the men wounded, children gone crazy,
and the innocents raving naked on the night's brutal highways.
Unlike Ireland, Sierra Leone is still a young mother:
a blight of history swims in her head; her churches smolder,
and a blasphemous hand profanes the prophet's beard.

Worn-out, new ceremonies await us: ancestral, enigmatic,
so that we can be reborn, or simply turn our inhuman clock back.
And out of this darkness gone relentlessly into slander,
I need Yeats' guiding light to show us a new path.

Women will talk once again with tenderness on their lips;
and love, especially in those tragic innocents, will grow new tendrils.
Children will be back at play after their fathers, a little healed
of their wounds, have put their minds once more to parenting.
For a child's skipping rope is always a thing of joy to me;
before the sweet rain falls, slowly, on our burnt-out dreams,
when its music, always refreshing, will usher in a new dawn,
and awaken that which should never die in us: the laughter in our hearts.

Olodumare's Clay*[Home-page - Numeri](#)[Presentazione](#)[Sezioni bibliografiche](#)[Comitato scientifico](#)[Contatti e indirizzi](#)[Dépliant e cedola acquisti](#)[Links](#)[20 anni di Semicerchio. Indice 1-34](#)[Norme redazionali e Codice Etico](#)[The Journal](#)[Bibliographical Sections](#)[Advisory Board](#)[Contacts & Address](#)

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Visits since 10 July '98

1937527

In the generous summer, the Gods
created a colourful world, rich in enigmas,
from which you emerged, molded in Olodumare's clay,
to sing of market places teeming with laughter.

Whether in Ibadan, Shanghai or Bogota,
or where only the Gods assemble in splendid raiment,
you were their esteemed wordsmith. Plucked from an eagle's plumage,
a pen was always at your fingers, before Microsoft became a leader.

The famished Gods spoke: your house went under Katrina;
but your poems, bold and incandescent like a comet,
calmed the victims' anxiety, and stabilized the levees.
You came to honour me on the Pacific: a profound aura about you.
Out of the storm's labyrinth, you looked into a future not fully formed,
but, already, like the wisdom of the women in a Lagos market place,
you had a vision to stagger that world into harmony

And, not surprisingly, given that Olodumare's children
had created the blues in New Orleans, so many tearful moons ago,
you have returned, with a poet's lyre, always generous,
even though you have lost everything, to sing for that shocked city
a wonderful song to enchant *Satchmo*; and also
to show the professors how to teach under the ancient trees,
and help the mayor understand the enigmas of sea-gods.

* Olodumare : The Supreme Deity of Ifa: the World View of the Yoruba people of Nigeria
and the Diaspora.

The Orators

**'When found, the missing grey parrot's
vocabulary was so vulgar the police
begged the owner to come and get it.'**
- South African news item

I marvel at some famously grey birds

□ that do not light the forest with flamboyance,
but confound the scientists with oratory.
Uncensored by priests, their tongues
are prodigiously lewd with speech:
these birds more renowned than Jane Goodall's apes

Always patient, the vultures are
the kind undertakers of our foetid disasters.
They clean our gilded narratives with speed,
but leave us guessing about their wisdom,
unlike those notoriously talkative parrots.

Profanely spirited wordsmiths,
poets of the unsavory verbs, delicious mimics,
I learn from you, struggling with perception,
to paint a filigreed world, aware of my imperfections,
while your nine hundred and five word vocabulary
triumphs over Churchill's disputed macaw:
a mere ridicule of Hitler it remembers.

I celebrate you, African orators!
For whereas my words sit imprisoned
in an irresolution of profits and markets,
you have a whole forest of words
to shock the world with primordial eloquence.

Sept 11, 1973 & 2001

Tupac Amaru, * the jaguar no longer roams
all over your America, the oilrigs smear its path;
In halting Spanish, the tourists came looking
for its footprints in the snow; ah, golden legend of the Incas
but not for Augusto Pinochet wearing Cortez's
epaulettes on September 11, 1973, to silence
Allende's defiant voice and burn Neruda's books,
the handcuffed *Commies* laterdropped into the cold Pacific.

In English, the horror would repeat itself:
September 11, 2001, the murderous birds
of *Al Qaeda* swooping down on the twin towers
of Whitman's America to tear at Lady Liberty's heart,

12 ottobre 2018
Inaugurazione XXX Corso di
Poesia con Franco Buffoni

7 ottobre 2018
Festa della poesia a
Montebeni

30 settembre 2018
Laboratorio pubblico di
Alessandro Raveggi a Firenze
Libro Aperto

23 settembre 2018
Mina Loy-Una rivoluzionaria
nella Firenze dei futuristi -
Villa Arrivabene

22 settembre 2018
Le Poete al Caffé Letterario

6 settembre 2018
In scadenza le iscrizioni ai
corsi di scrittura creativa
2018-19

5 settembre 2018
Verusca Costenaro a L'Ora blu

9 giugno 2018
Semicerchio al Festival di
Poesia di Genova

5 giugno 2018
La liberté d'expression à
l'épreuve des langues - Paris

26 maggio 2018
Slam-Poetry al PIM-FEST,
Rignano

19 maggio 2018
Lingue e dialetti: PIM-FEST a
Rosano

17 maggio 2018
PIM-FEST: il programma

8 maggio 2018
Mia Lecomte a Pistoia

2 maggio 2018
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**Why do young women dominate
Finnish politics?**

Author: Janne Wass

Finnish politics today is
dominated by strong, politically
savvy women. many under the

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leaving the world flummoxed that life is this insanity:
your god, my god, they are not the same!

Doomed firemen and equally robotic policemen:
with so many lives inside, they did not identify
Jews, Moslems, Hindus, Christians, Taoists,
Buddhists, Shangoists, or even the pagan poets,
but rushed into the towers, headstrong with valor.
On that day, New York, you were an icon,
the world your widow; the old Russian woman,
her shoulders barely draped, tossed roses into the Volga,
while the poets in Dakar plucked their *Kora* for you;

Impetuous city of the twenty-four hour coffee,
in so much as we love them, let us mourn
the dead with eloquence, guard their memories,
but leave them undisturbed at ground zero.
In Arcadia, they have no use for fiery rhetoric,
misplaced glories and blunt platitudes!

Inspired by our songs, they will return

□ in the Hudson on a blissful, sunny day,
de Kooning's hand trembling to cover
the pavements and subway in bold, daring colors;
forever, New York: crazy phoenix in your vibrancy.
Duke Ellington and Lenny Bernstein reminding
us about what a wonderful vision you inspire!

* **Tupac Amaru:** the leader of a failed Inca rebellion against the Spanish in 1780. He was captured and pulled apart by four horses, in the plaza at Cuzco, Peru.

A Simple Lesson

A pair of cardinals flew into a tree, frightened,
but there was so much light, so much plumage!
I stand near a patch of grass, sad, watching those birds
bristle on that tree, my head full of incomprehension
about the silence of the world's conscience
over this carnage mid-wifed in the Middle East.

Seeing those frightened birds, I go on thinking
that each epoch has its poet; tender, angry, prophetic,
sometimes enigmatic: a narrative of all our disasters and triumphs
flowing from his pen, for the sons and daughters to read,
while the cities, ghost-like, burn like the tatters of their dreams.

Relentlessly, the glacials melt from our un-symmetry;
horrified, we watch Kilmanjaroo melting like a drunken giant.
Always patient, a faithful dog expects a fat bone. After a bold insistence,
a river widens its course through the narrow forest of time.
That is why, sick of their military grandiloquence,
I turn my back on the tin gods who, emboldened by an awkward trident,
forget that it is the mangy dog that sometimes kills the leopard!

Syl Cheney-Coker

(Sierra Leonean poet and novelist. Among his poetry collections, *Concerto for an Exile*, 1973; *The Graveyard Also Has Teeth*, 1980; *The Blood in the Desert's Eyes*, 1990. His novel *The Last Harmattan of Alusine Dunbar*, 1990, met with wide critical acclaim.)

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