

Brian Henry

Elegy, Premature

for Tomaz

It's said you were the bird
at your own funeral.
At least you didn't miss it,
like my other father, lost
luggage, late for his own burial.
Departure, arrival.
At least you didn't swell
like him, three days bloat
in his 1BR apartment.

Now I read the you you left behind,
the words, and carry some across.
There's no way to unsee
the world without you.
No way to unhear your voice,
to recognize this changed air.
I may have forgotten
what an elegy is
but I do know this:
you have not left. Not yet.
Not every winged creature
needs a nest.

Grand Design

We know
there is no grand design,
no figure
from which we emerged
already buried,
or unburied
as if born,
no field
where every one
is welcomed
(to play) (to bring
his ball of words,
his bag of myths).
There is no order, no
form
holding it all
together,
no one
to hold any
thing together.
But there is this
(there is this):
you, me,
this collage
of particulars
larger, somehow,
than the known universe,
which, we've heard,
is expanding.

Which Infinity

As one who

As one does

Scattered seeds

Aerated frown

As one who

As one does

Impossible figure

Aleph null

Good morning, asymptote

Good morning, wreck

Brian Henry is the author of ten books of poetry, most recently *Static & Snow* (Black Ocean, 2015). He co-edited the international magazine *Verse* from 1995 to 2017 and established the Tomaž Šalamun Prize in 2015. His translation of Aleš Šteger's *The Book of Things* appeared from BOA Editions in 2010 and won the Best Translated Book Award. He also has translated Tomaž Šalamun's *Woods and Chalices* (Harcourt, 2008) and Aleš Debeljak's *Smugglers* (BOA, 2015). His poetry and translations have received numerous honors, including an NEA fellowship, a Howard Foundation grant, the Alice Fay di Castagnola Award, the Carole Weinstein Poetry Prize, the Cecil B. Hemley Memorial Award, the George Bogin Memorial Award, and a Slovenian Academy of Arts and Sciences grant.