

## Three Poems · *James Hawley-Meigs*

### THE YALD-SWEVYN GALIMAUFY OF HIS LIVES

Gloppen fowl fly south, the sky whimpers its  
gyron amaritudinous dirge: bise;  
watchet. An unseen errant compass haiks  
well away, the caduke mensis blithers.  
Tilt-a-whirl leaves whirlpool about, blizzard  
giddily against children's legs, opaque  
screendoors awash in Eurus' grim grippe.  
J. hunkers down for winter's gentle hyp  
pulls riparian cloaks to lackaday  
jaws, spelunks a good, lights spermaceti  
candles for luck. It's half-time now for half  
of nature's world—the weary rest carafe  
in sweaty bars, kitchens, cafes—petit  
pois on hold. Groundhogs wait to leap. Allay!

### MALAY MELEE

*Night!—What? . . . Night already . . .*

*Joseph Conrad, An Outcast of the Islands*

Dugongs breach, spout jets of silver water in the thick  
equatorial night. The Rajang River licks the pearly lips of the sea  
lifts proas lashed to ramshackle jetties—the empty

boats nod & dream. Frugivorous kukangs quick-  
ly flit about the highest reaches of the canopied forest  
foraging for grubs or birds' eggs. Once fed, they rest, pick

fur-burrowed ticks & lice at leisure. Lemures haunt the sky-deep night;  
a yabbi's coyote-like shriek rings through the thickest  
boughs of theetsees, disturbs slumbering orang

utans in comfy, well-built nests.

Tattooed men of the woods, asleep & arranged  
around a dying fire, stir & grumble beneath the starry deadlight.

Lianas embrace the poison tree, riparian nipas click-click-  
click at the slightest hint of wind. Gamboge mangosteens stand  
weirdly nacreous at midnight – trunks thick

& cylindrical shimmer yellow, verdigris, madder. Mangroves itch  
the riverbank's mud. Land crabs – tentative & harried – scuttle across sand  
beaches. Ectoproct colonies thrive in a neritic ditch.

Gourami oragami down in rivers & lakes, hang  
limp & drift on unseen sublacustrine currents. Bruang  
snuggle in caves before sleep, sirgang

furl tired drake-colored wings in nids shaped like loaves.  
Arna rub rumps in kurrajong groves.  
The *bintang baniak* watch over silent coves.

## LATE MAY

*for David Craig Austin*

The corrugated skyline of low-rise tenements  
rustles the sable night. Venus pokes her knowing  
eye through new leaves of the blooming  
catalpa & all throughout this sleeping city  
wide awake sash windows  
are thrown open to let in the vaguest  
hint of thick air.  
Sumac, heavy-scented locust  
even cottonwoods recently wrung clean of feathered seeds  
gag. Corkscrewing swallows follow unseen insects;