

DON BOGEN

Only Music

The Grove 22 (2015)

I am become like a man standing alone,
one free among the dead.

Gesualdo on CD:
every surprising half-dissonance clear
in mathematical air.

A slim black computer is singing to me,
a laser is reading notes.

This impossible voice
reduced to perfection and reproduced,
a woman taking an angel's part written for a boy.

And the instruments
silent: no viol or harpsichord,
not even Gesualdo's supple lute which is now dust.

Doublet and hose disembodied.

The lady at last only a wraith of beauty,
flagrante delecto caught
in a liner note.

A hollowness cutting off time in the living room.

Passion breathes in odd corners:
five voices in a braid,
the sweet one singing off-key.

This pleasure in the ache of loss.
The small parts that don't fit shine.

Digital—it's there or it's not.

I have retreated to the castle which carries my name.
Only music will console me.

Immediate Song
The Grove 25 (2018-2020)

Words on a sheet,
screen in a window,
air moving in

where he doesn't move.
Still, in the quick world
he catches the light

as it slices across
the eucalyptus,
spirals of dry green

inscribing the sky.
Morning splits open.
He is taking it in:

smell of spiced dust
sharp in the old smog,
river of traffic

constant and varied,
cool hiss of sprinklers
spurting to life

just now, springs--a back door--
jay's shriek that clears out
all space around it

a moment, a moment.

Don Bogen was born in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. His upbringing took place there and in Pasadena, California. Academically he obtained his A.B., M.A. and Ph.D. in English at the University of California, Berkeley. He began teaching at the University of Cincinnati in 1976 and is the author of five books of poetry. His first book, *After the Splendid Display*, was published by Wesleyan University Press in 1986. It was followed by four others: *The Known World* (Wesleyan, 1997); *Luster* (Wesleyan, 2003); *An Algebra* (University of Chicago, 2009); and *Immediate Song* (Milkweed Editions, 2019). In 2016 his translations from the work of the contemporary Spanish poet Julio Martínez Mesanza, *Europa: Selected Poems of Julio Martínez*, was published by Dialogos / Lavender Ink. A critical book based on Bogen's work with the Roethke Papers at the University of Washington, *A Necessary Order: Theodore Roethke and the Writing Process*, came out from Ohio University Press in 1991.

Bogen received a *Discovery Award* in 1980 and *Grand Prize in the Associated Writing Programs Anniversary Awards competition* in 1982. Other awards for Bogen's work include *The Writer / Emily Dickinson Award* of the Poetry Society of America, grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Ingram Merrill Foundation, and residencies at Yaddo, the Camargo Foundation, and the Santa Fe Arts Institute. His poems and translations have appeared in journals in the U.S. and abroad, including *The American Poetry Review*, *The New Republic*, *The Paris Review*, *Pleiades*, *Poetry*, *Slate*, *Stand*, and *The Yale Review*.

In addition to his work in poetry, Don Bogen is active as a translator and has collaborated with composers in the U.S. and abroad. In his career at the University of Cincinnati he taught literature and creative writing, working extensively with doctoral students in the creative-dissertation program and serving as poetry editor for *The Cincinnati Review* from 2005 to 2018. Don Bogen is currently Nathaniel Ropes Professor Emeritus of English and Comparative Literature and serves as editor-at-large for *The Cincinnati Review*.

(From Don Bogen. "Biography" at <http://www.donbogen.com/bio.htm>)

