

1976

# Progression

Moshe Dor

Denis Johnson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Dor, Moshe and Denis Johnson. "Progression." *The Iowa Review* 7.2 (1976): 82-83. Web.  
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2062>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact [lib-ir@uiowa.edu](mailto:lib-ir@uiowa.edu).

Than silk from a silkworm? What fairy's flowing robe has ever enjoyed it?

Your cornerstones, pillars, beams, and even the tiny nails driven into them  
Sink in a deep slumber, enchanted by their own complete forms and weights,  
Like indifferent minerals, scattered, at random, over the mountains.  
Yet they keep awakened, their strict positions like the constellations in the  
sky.

Cubism and fauvism, those whirlwinds of the century, take their origin in  
you;  
*Deformation*, by virtue of you, becomes a worthy mechanism. By virtue of  
you,  
Depression, heaped up like a pyramid, scatters. Inflated egotism becomes  
incandescent.  
The age-old mustiness in the walls vanishes. The sea-wind with ozone in it,  
blows in.

What wisdom could unravel the meaning of your expression in strange  
laughter?  
What rod, that crushes up impurities, could be merciless like you?  
The water, earth and wind of Korea, by which you were fostered,  
Treasure forever a far-reaching pride for the thundering flaps of your wings.

*Translated by Kim Chong-Gil*

---

MOSHE DOR / ISRAEL

---

## Progression

Even more terrible than crumbling, the dark  
feeling of niches, the jokes  
of purposeless entrances and exits,  
the conflagration  
of maple leaves like a forewarning:  
but to keep silent?  
A temporary solution, the memory of your body,  
and more limited, of your breast,

its nipple standing up between two hungers,  
my lips, words that are moaned, loss  
of the pre-eminence of man,  
and animal swept by the primeval . . .  
but to keep silent?  
Maple leaves burn, too foreign  
to scream, the hand ages on the  
steering wheel, wild horses will not stop  
the attrition of cells, seeds, hopes.  
A meadow and a lakeside: the drawled speech  
of fishers-for-sport drags lead nets  
through opaque waters. But to keep silent?  
Even more terrible than crumbling, the sudden  
consciousness that when a star  
sears these fabricated skies  
no one looks up, for the change in it.  
The car doors will slam,  
an odor, faint, of smoke, then nothing.

*Translated by the author with Denis Johnson*

---

CARLOS GERMAN BELLI / PERU

---

## Tongue-Tied

Tongue-tied or stuttering,  
squashed small,  
    level with the heights  
    I'm stretched out by my heels.

I hold it in, clamp up unwillingly,  
& instead of blue fireflies  
    crickets fly & spin  
    in the pan of my skull,

while this darkened palate