

insideoutside



stanley pelter

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Stanley Pelter

George Mann Publications

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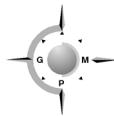
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also by Stanley Pelter
Coming on Lately
Seventeen is sufficient
i meet U in the inbetweenitee
Pensées
Word Plays
a moment is forever
past imperfect
& Y not?



George Mann Publications

to

Mari (who first took me to Arran), Judi, Sarah, Hanni, Barney

this book is for U

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Preface

*when more than was lost has been found has been found
and having is giving and giving is living –
but keeping is darkness and winter and cringing
- it's spring (all our nights become day)o, it's spring!
all the pretty birds dive to the heart of the sky
all the little fish climb through the mind of the sea
(all the mountains are dancing;are dancing)
e.e.cummings*

(Many tales, myths, legends, ceremonial rites) present gift exchange as a companion to transformation, a sort of guardian or marker or catalyst. It is also the case that a gift may be the actual agent of change, the bearer of new life...it is as if a gift passes through the body and leaves us altered.

THE GIFT Lewis Hyde

*The artist appeals to that part
of our being....which is a gift and not
an acquisition – and, therefore, more permanently enduring.*
JOSEPH CONRAD

insideoutside is volume three in a series of illustrated haibun. The quotes confirm my support of a gift economy. For the sister and brotherhood of the British Haiku Society, or anybody practicing the genre who would like to receive this gift (or give it as a gift), please write to: **Stanley Pelter, 5 School Lane, Claypole, Newark NG23 5BQ – email: spelter23@aol.com** enclosing a cheque for £1.50, or \$3, or 2 euros for the cost of a padded envelope and postage. After reading, and at your discretion, a contribution may be made to the British Haiku Society (a Charity) at the above address.

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Stanley Pelter

Introduction

Conventionally, haibun, a genre in its own right, is a hybrid that combines the poetry of haiku with prose of at least simple language and short sentences. In the West it has grown from a few influential Japanese examples, dating back over three hundred years. One of the best known is Matsuo Bashō's *Oku-no-hosomichi*, translated as *Narrow Road to the Interior*.

Insideoutside is Stanley Pelter's third volume of prose/poetry. Thematically, it is the most coherent, with a binding theme of *landscape*. Creative applications of language make physical descriptions apt and poetically expressive. More importantly, they are landscape as metaphor, as simile, as implying we cannot transcend our animal nature, as a way of triggering disassociated memories, as backdrops for more anarchic intentions.

Immersion in *insideoutside* is either the physicality of valley, mountain, road, seascapes, or the invented, sometimes found 'word walks', like **snow slow** and **Underground 23/12/05**. These are often no more than a painted map stage prop. But they go further than the familiar flatness of ordnance survey or road maps. They provide, beyond the literal, metaphorical, semi-conscious and mythical interpretations of experience, contrasts between fact and fiction, exterior landscape, interior architecture and the world of children separated from that of adults, as in **Juxtapositions**. This is cartography for releasing imagination, map pages of understated revelation woven into sometimes fictional memory, collaged patterns and, occasionally, an awareness of a fourth dimension.

Despite correspondences and affinities between aims, differences are significant. Exuberant physical landscape backdrops does not stop them being a leveller between research, connections, exploration, analysis, critical selection, and guide-signs, awareness, decision-making, unity of outcome, all part of the creative process. This has led to accusations of roaming outside natural parameters, of being unnecessarily innovative, too experimental and inventive, even of undue risk taking. The point is, when it works you forget the difficulties and dangers and live in the extraordinary results.

The problem may be seen as one of finding effective ways to describe division and those moments of decision to cross from one aspect to another in order to explore and understand them better. The surface event, sometimes fiction as in, for instance, **so much together** and **star route trails**, may be to do with a bridgeless, turbulent river only three quarters safe, as with **storm waters**. This can change to short-lived, winged creatures, rainbows of varied curve lengths and colour intensities, seasonal solstices, close ups confused with distance, or imagery that results in uncomfortable sensations. These act as catalysts for the evolution of other expressive methods, including language disturbances, music patterns of theme variation and return, use of visual art and visual art processes, and equivalences, such as illustrations, that develop or enhance the text in ways similar to, but different from haiku. Many other devices, either singly or in combination, are employed. This, a key feature, is one to which I will return. The point now is that, overall, it asks more questions than it gives answers. One notable undercurrent is that birth, life, decay, renewal, even of cutting edges, is ongoing. Fishing nets should not settle for long. There always has to be a 'cutting edge', however repaired, reshaped and realigned.

As with his other two volumes, **past imperfect** and **&YNot?**, the struggle is between different 'realities', different viewpoints, trying to come to terms with aspects of human relationships, the landscape of vastness, the contrast of simple with complex, short with long, areas too close and blurred to even register, the inscrutable. It is as if, starting from the concrete, the pointer is towards a larger context not all of which is it necessary, or even desirable, to comprehend at an everyday level of rationality.

In a number of his haibun, words are designed to cast a spell-like aura, or allowed to appear haphazard, assuming, like Freudian slips, unexpected identities preparing us for inconclusive meaning. Others are imbued with a fascination for moments of change, the impact on our psyches of being, or nearly being out of control in uncontrollable situations, the effects of loneliness, of being alone, an anthropomorphic tendency to interpret aspects of Nature as uncivilised or savage. They also have as much to do with appropriate

form and language for specific content as with certainty becoming soft, with misunderstandings and their effects, drift moments between waking and sleep, shadows as expression of fears and opposites, the roles masks play in our lives. He works between the tangible everyday and more tremulous regions that also cause and direct actions. His walks are often an unsteady line between voyeuristic behaviour while simultaneously being a participant. Some of his haibun exist in those hidden, sometimes surreal moments that disturb normal ways of relating to others, whether human or animal. He gives a good press to lost corners of nostalgia, especially those with more than a hint of tension and menace.

Some story poems in this collection, as with the other two, are erotic, sexually ambivalent or sexual without sex, as in the title story **insideoutside**. These are the prose/poetry of love, achieved by a vivid precision that fixes our gaze on both large and small aspects. In **inside somewhere outside there**, ‘small’ is a foetus checking up on its conception, gestation and birth, unaware of the understated ‘large’ world, soon to be at war. In **snow slow**, there is an unusual twist to this characteristic. The lineal winter journey is implied by two words ‘*Nearly there*’, and the device of listing manufactured car number plates. These juxtapose with ‘love’ language, using ‘*i*’ ‘*U*’ instead of ‘*I*’ ‘*you*’, giving English something of the French ‘*tu*’ ‘*vous*’ connotations. Compression is further amplified by omission of ‘*and*’ and ‘*the*’, another often employed and effective device.

In this book Pelter reaffirms that haibun, in order to be successful as an independent genre, neither need nor always require haiku attributes, characteristics, parameters to directly transfer, and that their purpose can change, adapting to the needs and intentions of each prose/poem. Already, in the more consensual haibun pattern, there are haiku characteristics hardly, if ever, mentioned in the same breath as haibun. A different genre involves redirection as a way forward, even transformation of characteristics, the primary criteria being relevance. An analogy is the painted self-portrait. The advent of and opportunities afforded by new technologies are creatively adapted and metamorphosed into such diverse new territories as Marc Quin’s *frozen blood* head, David Hockney’s *Walking in*

the Zen Garden at Ryoanji Temple, Kyoto, Nicola Hick's *Me*, Andy Goldsworthy's ephemeral rain prints, and Gillian Wearing's video *Dancing in Peckham*. In some of Pelter's haibun the highly rated haiku attribute of *lightness* reappears as an integral part of language rhythms, in the effect of spaces between words and alliterative sounds; *understated* by the development and judicious use of devices outside more codified haiku requirements.

With example after example he makes clear that each is a one-off. As such, using the most appropriate literary and formal concerns in relation to individual content are a high priority. In one, flamboyant language is appropriate to the context, in another simplicity of form exemplified through language. If, for example complex syntax and structure, or a mix of short and long sentences, or combination of parallel stories, or elements of fairy tale form best serve a haibun's content, then, he is saying, believe it is true.

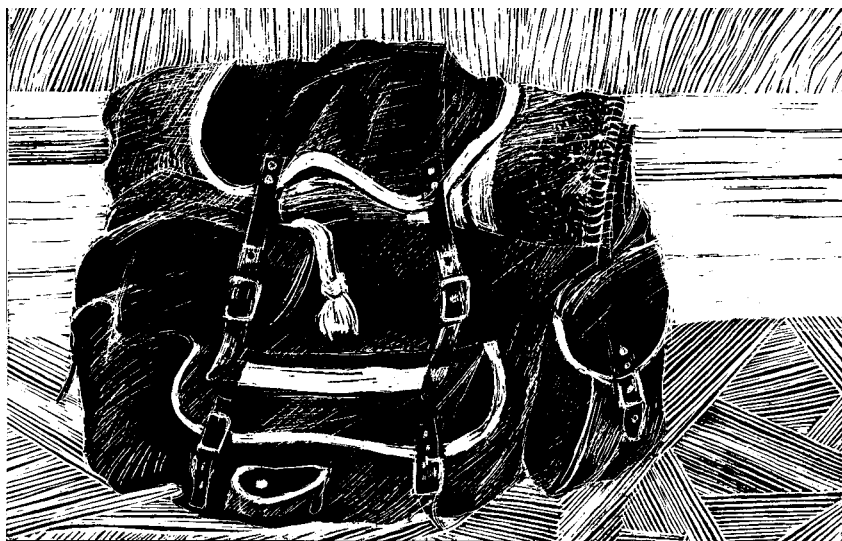
The way haibun is perceived enables, even dictates, which devices are needed to achieve intended effects. I have already mentioned some, but the fun is in recognising them yourself. So here is one reader's truncated list: *a leitmotif that unifies; found prose; coded fragments; symbol, simile, metaphor that use common experiences or objects reconfigured; mixed tenses; juxtaposition of the inconceivable with what is known; different vantage points; exact and slanted rhyme; handwritten haibun to heighten sense of immediacy; word joining; word rhythms that are the content; use of varied point sizes; different application of upper and lower case; imagery contrasts; reinvented language appropriate to content requirements; language designed to be read aloud; repeated words and/or phrases; haiku that combine or integrate into the literal sense of the sentence or paragraph; haiku, less acceptable as 'stand-alone', reformed to increase unity by harmonising with unfamiliar syntax; haibun minus recognisable haiku but where word rhythms and alliteration act as an equivalent; haiku as a parallel 'story', similar but different; visual material that enhance not just illustrate the prose.*

Three rich volumes of haibun confirm Stanley Pelter as a substantial 'teller-of-tales' in this hybrid, presently peripheral, form. Part reality, fiction, myth, fable, symbol, metaphor, dream, updated

and upgraded memory, biography and autobiography, they are multi-layered in theme, meaning and media. Never are they a diary or a travelogue, nor often compliant, obedient, complacent. As Picasso put a pair of eyes or two nostrils on the same side of a portrait side-view, so Pelter does with words and illustrations. Both Picasso's 'faces' and Pelter's words are, with practice and increased familiarity, rewardingly 'readable'. These haibun are best when slowly read aloud.

As with other artists and writers known for the range, invention and variety of their work, the principles on which his are based enhance rather than dilute a haibun thumbprint. His is an instantly recognisable identity.

Diana Noel

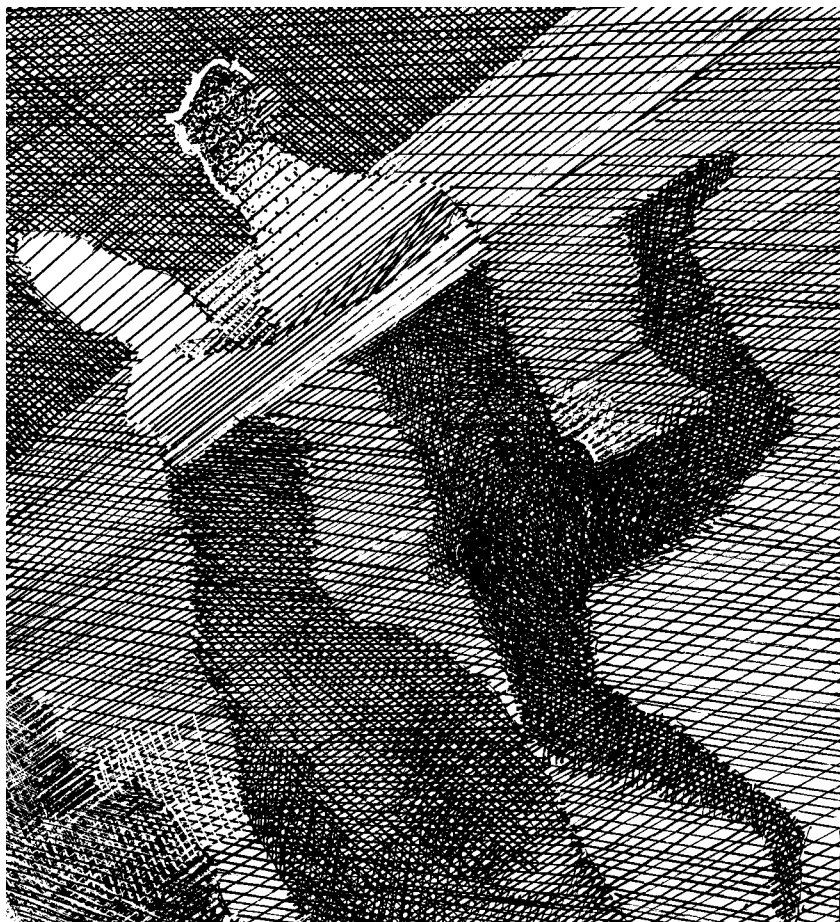


a fear of losing our shadow

*sleeps upsidedown
an insideout fear
casts her shadow*

lie sidebyside both shadows. collides sideinside hers. he keeps eyes on a shrouded sun. pressurise shadows not to fade. she, listless, stares. her shadow strong, she fades. antennae of a thin beetle trembles a nearly shadow. confused, incongruous images jumble. accept vapours of light. she tingles into his shifting weights. his shadow blends hers. along one edge bits break away. his etch deeply through her three dimensions. moves toward a circle of mushrooms. curvaceous, hers dissipates his inside grass colours. strangely still, hers spread. his merge with her warmth. there is closeness. there is fullness. there is also, can only be, separation. they dread, not displacement, but fading. they dread disappearance. they dread a slide into somewhere unshod, somewhere long ago beyond, before such Agony. both abhor simple applications. this, their coil of uncertainty, is irresolvable. this gradual lightening is her focussed torch, this thinness his panic. silence drifts inside her silence. everything is quiet. i mingle excitement with anticipation with fear with high definition fading. eyes lost inside her shadow. U notice everything. single-minded, U ease. mine is high, yet still too low. know U. know shadowless nights. know blue shadows. know U can freeze air. know U know drift of inconstant light. i live away when snow is blue. U move inside, wait where shadows unfix, disappear behind splintered snowdrifts. U lie safe inside flint edges. sidebyside, overlaps crackle, shadows quiver, nearly tremble. i inside U fear losing welded shadows. irrevocably comforting, her eyes close. his nearly. uncertainty recedes. i know this constant breathing, this steady sleep. U hide inside my sprung, dewy webs.

*sun drooped evening
chips away at shadows
a refocus fails*



a rise-and-shine, eyeball-to-eyeball walk

*ridge of cloud
beneath softest of hills
a hint of fish*

Ridges of Beinn Bhreac, Mullach Buidhe, Beinn Bharrain, unsullied by the permanence of high definition, gently shift dawn mist shapes, follow sea edge curves toward Loch Ranza.

*as i walked round lochranza bay
i met a girl with this to say:
“old man. slow down. don’t walk so fast
you’ll walk a curve into our past”*

*she said to touch the rowan tree
and not disturb the rats you see
drink water from the secret burn
until a rainbow starts to turn*

music. ‘Le Tombeau de Couperin’. That dance motif in the ‘Forlane’ movement. The scale descends, settles into a square. Precision into what poise. A homage to Couperin in Ravel’s own special language.

Draw nothing seen. Should the invitation be accepted, I wonder? Let’s face it, London is one hell of a long way from all this. Do I want to cope with dress-to-impress, manicured, cleansed, multi-coloured, tapered, slick click-heads, less interested in the work than a gaudy display of halo effects?

*an artists fast walk
a muscular stags landscape
moves the other way*

So why does Duchamp and Léger appear at the same moment as this stag who joins our disparate party in such ways to make it seem one is on the other side of surreal as it passes through where they nearly thought I was going until fast-tracked into my close-up canvas springing alive more vividly than can ever be imagined inside clenching of electric charged fears that change into the monumental shapes of Communist Léger’s impersonal *Adam and Eve* discharged by a Duchamp randomly selected common object renamed a ‘ready-made’ work of art which can move a bulkily antlered stag from a robust habitat into a masquerade clinging tight to a sea slapping beach?

*cutting-edge artist
a hungry stag eats its way
into their canvas*

Léger stands majestically still. Duchamp, back to the stag, plays chess with his brother, Villon. I scramble over the stone wall. Watch an aspect. Our vantage points disentangle a few connected innuendoes. Stag, head high, calls abrasively. Waits. Calls again. Deeper throat fills. Paws grass. Turns a strong head. So close! Hold back separating breath. Sniffs air. My thinness palls. Moves on, sounding out the tarmac with a hard hoof. Eats more bits of Magritte's *The Beautiful World*. Walks through Duchamp's *Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, then joins him in his positive retreat, to a profound solidarity. Antlers appear an ingenious solution to his rutting urgency. Senses a somewhere harem. One paradox to resolve before his galvanised day begins. We have slowed down. On the special occasion of a rise-and-shine, eyeball-to-eyeball walk, we meet as a Rowan tree is touched.

Hidden behind a hedged wall, behind a new noise, curtains pull open. Pink-cheeked men, wearing Victorian dressing gowns, see bits of what is happening. Call. Children gather. Point. Shout. Call. A TV flashes blue-whites that, inside speed, reshape.

Like a distant dream of distant events, unconnected stories weave onto a canvas that makes an illogical sense of spaces between them. Differences cuddle down for the night. As curtains close, brothers pull down a game of chess that turn out the light. Léger's heavy forms squeeze inside canvas thinness. Mists still erase the firmest ridges of Beinn Bhreac, Mullach Buidhe, Beinn Bharrain. I watch rats eat the girl who feeds them. He sees a rainbow turn inside out after drinking from a secret burn. Fears begin to untangle. The stag calls an indifferent Ravel sound, ambles to weed mingled grass. Feeds. I accept the invitation.

*sea covered mist cloud
his oil painted stag stretches
the silence of storks*

a short sound event of

Bed.

He

naked

lies on one side

rubs her inside dips

she naked

sits up

prods an evocative noise.

Above

persistent pit-pit-pitting of rain.

skylight moves.

opaque glass room

envelopes them.

abstract letters hide inside her.

‘meaningless distraction’ U say.

yet replete

With

a short event.

woven into flesh

it flies back to front

clinging to a shimmering cave.

counterpoint waves

soon turn *dolce* whites

into saturated shadows of

Books

whose creased spines

break into vague noises of

a tingle

that hovers over

lubricated lips

lips that ease

that outside readiness

in a clean bed

differently placed

sounds of them move

as if a cave in motion

begins to sparkle

in a less clean bed

and from a different start

they have moved closer

older blue eyes calibrate

to search out inside

as

suddenly know what question it is as shoe slip mud falls away just as
nude arm moves upward sharply to grab at branches seen as dead as
dead will ever be as cannot support weight as anyway cannot reach
it for nowhere alternatives around as flimsy shadows follow slosh
shaped edge someone upfront shouts as they so always seem to as
this moment unfolds into

“is everything as it should be back there”?

cloud as dense as this
wind that scuds as fast as this
cheeks flushed as can be

at least silly path

Slosh encumbered strides. Interminable. Far end of a silly path that, trickling away, seems to disappear. Inside mud it slithers towards a newly painted Victorian bridge. Ornate. A slow sea slowly takes charge. At first it was as they said it would be. Now, although not sure, a sense of déjà vu is an umbrella. Just a vaporous feeling, but it could be we have touched this veil before. What triggers it? Being in front pushing at sea waves? Walking behind, sucking in dark greens? Erasing shapes of irregular whites? Intimidating glide of a pair of kites? Whatever it is, a grainy certainty edges closer, runs parallel to this away-day experience.

*cumulus cloud
evaporates with a puff
so it seems to us*

Water sounds are a replica. Cobblestone patterns bend mud-splattered boots in ways that might already have happened. Yet this is our first visit. Does it matter? Long trails still meander through thick forests, gouged valleys, water squelching moss. Often they lose their way only to later find themselves. This at least silly path spreads before entering pebble courtyards of a low bridge. Bare legs dangle. Underclothes straddle mounds of leaves.

*Isn't this our place where by an uncouth route where tendrils wrap round
branches hung over a silly path it brought us to this bench on which we
now prepare to conjoin under which it will pass just like they said?*

We had this conundrum with at least silly Madame Butterfly. Do you remember? Yes, I know we haven't seen it. But where was it last not seen? And was it only once? Or was that second time, in bed, just a tepid regurgitation? Were you there when dramatic tears rolled, when crescendo music descended from an all time high of squishy pink? Yes, you were. You were less concerned with tearjerker episodes as with another failed mixed race relationship. You said bed is as good

as anywhere to display exaggerations of beaten up emotions. Only there, you said, is it ever credible.

Am I confusing this event with that drawing of mine you like? You know! A marble, gold-domed building with thin arched windows. Stylised flames heating books to ash. You asked what was going on. *Great Library of Alexandria* I said. A leading Moslem ordered it to be burnt down because no matter how many books none can be as important as Almighty Koran. You cried. Do you remember?

Bottom line? No ifs. No buts. Not yours. Not mine. Did it happen? Do ornately-half-dressed-bare-leg-danglers persuade us to suspend judgement? Can paths ever be at least silly? Does it matter? Things happen, become confused, imprecise, even indistinct. That's an end of it. Only certainty I can find is a trail of curly hairs on an evolution of sheets. Besides, we chose this at least silly path.

mist delays
lovey dovey smiles
paths lost to history

but there can be no guarantees

*shore waves
in every direction
darkly
a spread of sea*

binoculars swinging from side to side, i tour an early beach

cormorant it swaps this rock for that

every dawn these fisher birds watch from their rock island, holding wings open as far as darkly feathered joints allow

occasionally one pushes off, large wings slowly working into acceptable speed, legs tucked aerodynamically, rigid beak closed, head forward as far as neck will stretch

with a deep swing into a wide loop, it begins a landing descent. after a full body agitation it resettles, communicating through raspy saw sounds, mouth open to a lurid, early sky

tomorrow, binoculars swinging from side to side, i will tour an early beach

but there can be no guarantees

*wings open
too far for a sweep of shore
onto rocks*



boat race

thin boats
sigh out of estuaries
sudden storm

Boats flag on outrageous waves, slip beneath, seething, before appearing to disappear. just one aspect of organised wildness. Shaped Wood and Hurling Tide. balanced opposites, an unequal coupling has the odds of experience for and against. A precarious living of little, even no chance. semi-working cormorant spins a failed predatory dive, a reminder, if that were necessary, that no sojourn inside the sentimental, invented security of straight edges can dissolve the wild seas inchoate indifference. Kill. pillage. Ferns, thistles, wild grasses grow unabated. undeterred birds eat unsecured worms. A Black Hole burrowing deeply inside waves complicates superfluous vignettes. there will be a sinking.

staccato sound
of wave foam
hurls above sharp crags
clouds expand
into a coffin sunset



Call

“a railing beside the stream: he who can grasp me, let him grasp me! i am not, however, your crutch.”¹

*single sound
even shore intimacies
are disturbed*

mountain shadows. sucked through slipstreams they spread over a hushed sea. edges of waves unravel to filter into lines that unfold. soon they redistribute as surfing spots of light. high peaks merge. they travel along a green orange streaked sky. remnants of ragged dusk sunlight. an uncertain sighting along the skyline.

a shape it seems to appear for just a moment
almost a silhouette. blurred it alters an already erratic horizon. dark stag head rises. mouth opens wide. Calls. a sound unique. deeply raucous. gravelly. trombone-like penetration. stratified crags seem to crumble. gannet edged caves echo pushed air. osprey nerves tingle. air waves resonate. inside blades of grass wind ossifies. shadows gravitate toward sharp purposes. a thrust searches deep into another magi colour discord. more echoes. snips of time. noises from unseen rivers move away. banal is safe. dull is warm. starlight dulls. harsh tones impinge. wide-spread angles expand into an incoming storm. knives through marrowbone cold. squashed wave edge sounds begin to unravel a stags language, a mountains illogical shadow. erased silence unravels much best left hidden.

rare noise unfolds night of wishes documents an awe filled sound
again The Call. again. again skin shimmers.

*another darkness
a strange Call reverberates
in prised open glands*

¹ Thus Spoke Zarathustra

camouflage is gd is bd

*complete make-over
t nk cam uflaged hspitals
evrydy bab ies*

In wartme the hos pital up the rod is camou flaged, lke a gi ant cubed kloud tank. Pain ted pat terns, a surface of cnnected pond shapes, flatten moovemnt. They are magnet to thse surtain it hdes sumthng danger ously s o l i d.

Living close to it is gd is bd:

good, it is said, because it *is* close, has luminous legibility, too much meaning. beyond that is a vague belief in a vague hope.

bad, it is feared, because it attracts military parades of bombs, colours of obscure horizon travellers, where disguises are basic bagatelle design packages for older insideouters, fresher outsideinsiders, pattercake back-to-front-and-back-againers, disillusioned/illusioners, bloodied carving knives of uppermost/downers, feared-hider-of-revealers, bored-to-sleep overtaken/undertakers, detractors-of-opposites-that-may-not-always-be like Order/Disorder, where one, by imposterling, takes on colours of the other. Depending on so little, each is rapidly disgraced, rapidly displaced, rapidly replaced.

*he looks far away
she peels off yesterdays lips
and cleans eyelid masks*

Everyday she is camouflaged, scared a block of her will resolve. In fear of a cover being blown, hidden secrets thrown into unforgiving air, she fixes new disguises. Boxes fill with discards. They, she believes with a fanatic's conviction, hide the close-to-surfacing sham of her. Low self-esteem manufactures high levels of face painting. This she views as a necessary reward for good judgement. Detailed consideration of all she wears is also part of this unitary build-up. Combinations of length, shape, texture, colour are arrows aimed at desires. But even this masquerade system is incomplete. Many days she exchanges one pair of nipples from



muscle-balanced breasts for another. This, for her, is a simple fashion statement. Like with her many earrings she makes the changes with practiced skill, with unthinking ease. Occasionally, she covers part of her face with another. Always it differs from other transfers. Man-made to hide special bits, it is beyond closed boxes of bathroom or even bedroom. Without this, such a mask unmasks. No longer part of a consensual experience, it fails. To be accepted the charade must be flatly spread. Need for daily delivery dictates she is unable to facedown the challenge.

inside this side

outside that side

outside

So she stares, pre-mask, into mirrors. Emotionless. Like sunrise, it is part of her day beginning. Now just wedged bits of Hieronymous Bosch images, stones running, unmothered nights. Replicating needs, mirrors stare back. Indifferent. Emotionless. Eyelids, eyelashes, untouched. Unnaturally natural. Bland colours seen but not perceived. Indeterminate depths ignored. No richness. No mystery. Nothing to allure or to magnify fantasies. Still to fly over floating paths through inside of speckled veils. Still to build a daisy chain necklace of confidence. Each refreshing night is a rebirth. But rebirths only gestate on an opium free bed of questions: does she see ill-ooousion or eXtennnnnsion? Is she an Eastern myth contending with fragmented, contemporary existence? is *as she is* really an imitashone or a battleground cameofusilarge? Does she hope to match her forms to my functions? There are more; many many many more. Sufficient to recognise her mask simulates change. Every 24 hours she does battle with symbols. Misunderstood, her sympathetic messes renew stem cells processes. Splintered, etched smile makeup is a daily injection of camouflage. She smiles, satisfied at the functioning of fractious mirrors.

Thse dys, hspitl uup thir rode ease dffrent. St-ill kubic, bt now cleanly white, shapes fastidious in a new attention to detail.

war completes

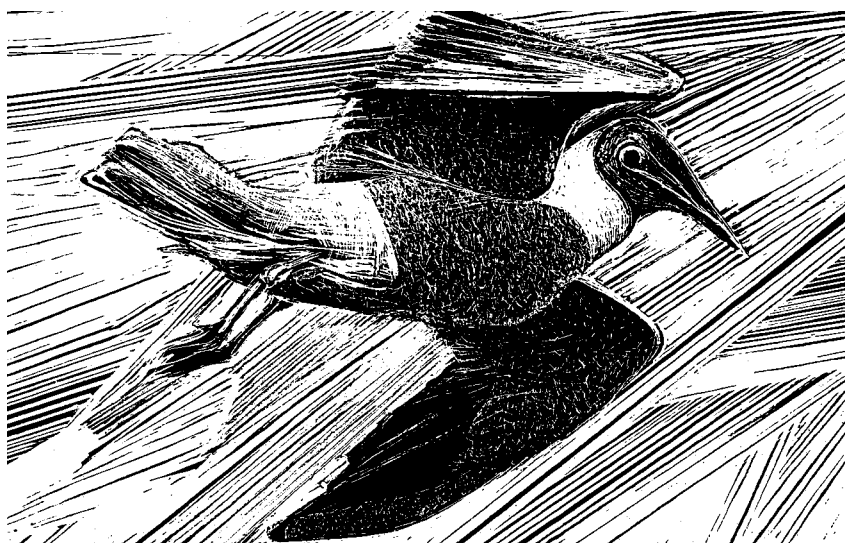
hospital camouflage

already bombed out

ceci n'est pas une haibune?

1

In Lochranza Bay the tide is out and Seals shape rocks
Swallowed by sun-probed hills briskly moving clouds are grey
Coiled adders hear and swiftly disappear inside dense fern
From a slow start a guillemot moves toward graceful flight
Long-eared bats radar trace ellipses
Oystercatchers swirl shrills towards the dusk of Catacol Bay
Yellow eyes of a goshawk stare as sweeping flight glides to earth
'Many mountains and a myriad ravines converge...' ¹
Dawn assumes a guardian role
Later 4 bombs explode
Others will not



¹ Songs of Old and Cherished Memory No 3 Tu Fu (T'ang Dynasty)

'evacuee' ceci n'est pas une haibun? 2

**train steams north
complex curves disguise
straight perspectives**

What's wrong? *I want to go home.* Don't cry. It'll be alright. *No it won't*
Where are we going? We're being taking to where we have to go. *But*
where's to? *There've been so many stops already.* *How will they knows*
please where we are? The train stopped because of the air raid sirens.
The stops kept us safe. Where we're going will be safe. Because we
are going to the end of the line they will know. *Mum and dad won't*
be safe. You are safe. It'll be alright, you'll see.

The train is packed with children; none allowed to be older than
ten. Many are tearful. Windows open, faces swivel into hair-disrupting
wind. Fractured eyes reshape. Steam erases meaning of screaming
mouths. A few heads still embrace alien structures of a gas mask
game. Body angles play havoc with familiar patterns of mechanical
lines that direct to unattainable horizon points.

Inside this tight mangle of bodies, a thin, raven-haired girl,
thighs squeezed together, holds her groin. She is hurting. She sobs;
sobs at the control of her secret body, sobs at this outpouring, sobs
at her flawed flesh, sobs at her sobbing. Cloying knickers, grey skirt,
white legs, clean shoes, all are drenched, all discolour. She sinks into
her flood, face drowned behind clammy hands. Those closest stare
wide-eyed, try to escape an expanding pool of aimless piss, the acidic,
acid smell.

Where are those promised hosannas, loving kisses, that demesne
of someone's somewhere fresh, friendly bed? This is not how it was
supposed to be.

I think we're there. *It's dark.* *Where are we?* *Don't wants to be here.*
Wants to go home. *I want to goes home.*

journey ends stoked to return the train puffs

star packed evening
 a train speeds towards
 an unknown destination

2

ceci n'est pas une haibun?

'What's wrong?'
 'No it won't. I don't know where we're going.'
 'But goes straight along to where we're going.'
 'Where to?' 'There's been all those stops.'
 'How will anyone know where we are?'
 'they' know because we are going to the end of the line.'

'I want to go home.'
 'Don't cry. It'll be alright.'
 'We're on a train.'

Train packed with under 10 year olds. Many are
 tearful. Windows open, faces swivel into hair-
 disrupting wind. Fractured body angles, Alien gas
 mask heads, white swinging legs play havoc with
 familiar lineal patterns. That's all wins an uneven
 contest.

crowds shout a wave arms
 as the ball collapses

packed stadium

One bony girl,
 warm wet, her sobs
 clean beds loving kisses?
 of rope, thighs squeezed shut, holds her
 release through flawed hosan nas, spread. Knickers, skirt, legs,
 This is not how it was supposed to be.

at the edge of a town & cracks

at the edge of a town & cracks

'I think we're nearly there'. 'It's dark. Why are we here?'
 'Don't know where we are. It's dark. Don't want to be here.'

the edge of cleansed
 by urine. Where are
 supposed to be.
 She is on
 Hard. She is on
 di scolooured
 This is not how it
 was supposed to be.

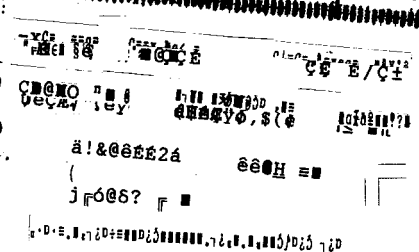
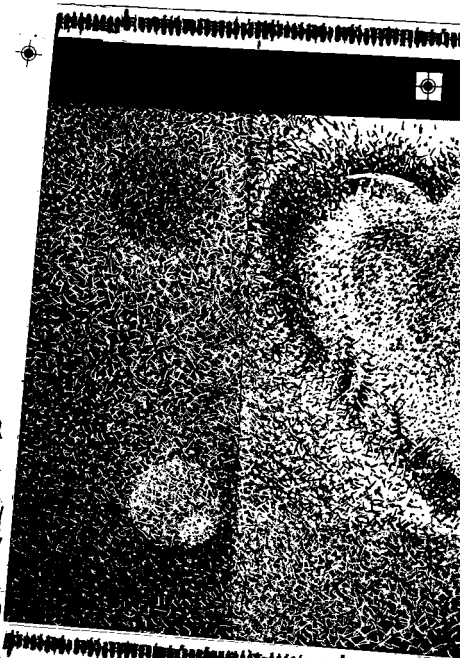
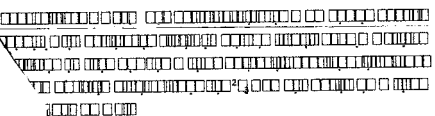
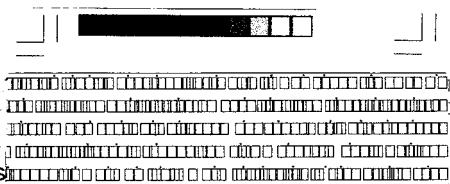
abandoned affair
her furrowed brow
ploughs a wide landscape

SWEAT EDGES HER WIDE EYELIDS. SHE STAYS IN BED, UNCERTAIN. SHE IS A DAY DREAMER, A NIGHT DREAMER. NOT SURE WHICH THIS IS. KNOWS HER NOISY ATTIC WAS ONCE CURSING BUILDERS. SHUTS HER EYES. SEES A FLURRY OF WIND-BLOWN THISTLE SEEDS, APPLE-GREEN CLOUDS, MAUVE HONEY RUNNING THIN. LOOKS INTO A SHADOW-MASSSED DARKNESS. SEES RIDGES SLIDING, A CRAGLAND OF RATTLES. ELECTRIC LIGHTS, SUDDENLY ON, CRUCIFY THESE IMAGES. TURN THEM OFF. SEES 'the baptism of'

PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA. "I can really see it. I mean REALLY SEE it." She says. "At last, I see how that fragile equilibrium came about. The point is not the subject at all but the balances between clarity of light colours, shapes within solid forms and those expression-filled spaces between. And they contrast with that rippling vesicle! So that is how the great sense of spiritualism is achieved." "I can see it clearly. Masterful!" She turns to a ball dark image. "You are an angry, bitter man. Yes, you are humourless!" "It aches at his heart, all ready breaking up in a fomicid

ace. She sprinkles it with good
pyes that spawn crazy things like:
floods of former passions, bruised
and gnawed from behind the sce-
nes, like a chaste thread that ho-
lds nothing together, like quib-
bled words that screw up
well crafted boxes. Here eyes are open.

DEW OUTLASTS PETALS
OF THE DRY HIBISCUS
SHE SCRAPES A SHARP ROCK



collusion

Open space an illusion. A mirage of midges agitate movement.
Enclosing, not touching, no attempt is made to explain sensory
reactions. A specialist ballet is light danced, performed against a
stage set of grey-green leaf shadows.

Holding in breath, both watch.

*hot evening
open air performance
before darkness*

day death in life into death of

*day this too change of -
mirror of window opens
in drift curtains of*

12.01 am

peels Something away. hurts Something else. no help chronological
tides are. nor weather, whetherman, gorse, rough ferns, dead sea
urchin. nothing seems much. colour of translucence. longer grass.
tangle tangfree hay. silent wrynecks. white beam leaves. underside of
Silvery down. loss of green upper Surface. wind-led Spiral rises higher.
wanderingjewSky. washedout waterdown greys Spread out scents. damp
veil chills. See-through earth. fading colours moult. arc horizon of white
heat spots. last white splinter of fitful bonfire. SoundS of grim Smoke
riSe grimed in SpiralS of liStleSS columnS. hiSSSSS into oblivion. a
moment born to Silent. Shhhifting waters. only of slicing rain is silence
heard. criSS cross lush is wasted. Straight lines displace. zigzags turn
dysfunctional corner. no one shares lips of shapes or swim melting in
sighs. Sun frees heat. trees inside gaps of Shadow. headlights freeze
more rabbits to glass. wild fish driven wilder. wild doe graze on ornate
colours of wild fish. nothing shows end part of 1 day, begins another
before completion of escape sceneryscape. nothing is as it was. yet...

12.01 pm

For one day an amnesty between Sense, Sound, Stagecraft idea
travelling around to resolve. Island in reversion. Faster. Unzipping
plants, animals, rivers, mountains inhale stale colours, patterns of ritual
growth. Mourning a genetic heresy. Through grey sky of afternoon
summer rehearses. High sun. Hottest of day. Unrecorded water music
tunes in with red-stained rocks. Whimbrels wade sea of shore, down-
curved bills probing. Great black-backed gulls claw mature fish into
upward swings of air. Black guillemots, jackdaws, oyster catchers,
corncrakes; all soak in even more vibrant colours, re-enact an earlier
pattern. Too many sheep, shorn of cover, herd into a squashed pen.
Their wails plaintively mingle, like a piano work of Schönberg's that
dispenses with traditional tonality. Again ankles twist on quartz-veined

limestone trails. Rivers surge white air bubbles into such a menace as to suck nightmares of children through new-shaped maelstroms. Cushioned arrays of aromas return to increasingly green, hay-scented bracken. Grass again tickles, harebells refurbish nodding head flowers of thinned gentian blue, bell heather resounds with such a richness of pink purples that rough-hawkbites reproduce vibrant yellows. Cir Mohr rises starkly beyond Glen Rosa. Slag rock greys, now more statuesque, more resonant, ascend steeply, exhales an ecstatic lift-off half-day. Nothing is. Differences insinuate into crannies, throb inside colours, songs, textures, this shape, that shape. Nothing is as it was. Yet...

10.23 pm

Later than credible, a weary sun just about shines. Check watches. If there is a third upsurge to this stranger day surely it would begin at 12.01 am, not 10.23 pm. Mythic keeper of an intergalactic clock has messed up, seriously mistimed Time. Another check confirms an error. Unless? Maybe it is a simple but chaotically expressed evolutionary equation of a complex scientific law. However it is cornered, whatever colour assumed, outcomes are what they are - massive changes to what is taken for granted. Whatever it is, they spread like a wind-blown forest fire over This Island. Your Dream: *Arriving. Getting out. Bending to lock a diminishing car door, now only a child shoe size. Caretaker picks it up, lifts it over a locked fence. Toes squashed, you wear it as a foot badge. Shape fails.* TV. BBC 1. Attack on London! Simple black/white Black/white questions. Injured glaze into their pains. BBC 2. Commentators luridly coloured. *So* excited. Possible breakthrough in women's pole-vaulting. ITV converts to BBC 1's soap-opera. Channel 4 films a group of seven sexually-frozen pulling a cab forwards, first in watercolours, now greys. TV5 Unobtainable. All metamorphose into faster moving lines, then jangling dots. Golden-ringed dragonfly, two blue damselflies are transparent. Pine Hawkmoth, Scotch Argus, everyday lives camouflaged, are such a mess of complementary colours overlaying touches of discords, they form bullseyes. Predators retain colours. U, i are transparent, clean, pristine sharp. No more misunderstandings. No more interpretations missed, secret crevices, masks, cover-ups. Nothing more to discard. Such games are cloistered. Feel for each other. Lips

meet, press. Buttermelt bed escapades heat. We evaporate into a swish
of merging coils, muse on a Fourth, final Way. I inside you inside me
wiggle more in an upturn, fly-by-night sky than this work-to-death
morning, this insideoutside breakup breakdown afternoon.

i look no more at weakling eyeinsight
see no more inside reflections of mirrors now closed
like it is flying over sharp ridges that pavement valley rock paths
castanets in Andalusian songs
that haunting adagietto movement of Mahler's 5th Symphony
wind purring through wild grasses
outside interiors of sea sounds in a Catacol Bay dusk
stoking up power of rivulets
sunlight making use of wave ripples
kittiwakes diving
blue poppies opening next to discarded handcuffs
inside a warm impress from a hotter place of U
while legislators, reformers, innovators come, go, come back
Maybe like there is More Much Much Much More More More More
much much much more.
Nothing is as it was. Yet...

12.01 am

Distinctions between these cauldrons of unfamiliar mixes again
alter when weak sun into moon pale light abruptly disappears. With
ambivalence an exception, colour, vision, even breast clean milk
potential are no longer part of This Island. Smell of bonfires. Rolls of
smoke rise. Only sickly sweet flesh, systematically pushed into the rising
temperature, remains to tap into tapering senses. Another tick against
a listed name! A triptych clock mirror cracks its tanned frame. Triadic
day collapses. Night black now so deep it confounds shadow darkness
for years to follow. Blackest shadow of a black, previously unknown,
returns to a still unrealised beginning. Dark curtains, tightly closed,
lock. They will not, I sense, again open. Nothing is as it was. Yet...

*his red car smaller -
as an ill-fitting shoe shape
she walks it away*

from bialystok* song is to

**from bialystok
from bialystok
from bialystok**

**from bialystok is;
from bialystok is;
from bialystok is;**

from bialystok to from bialystok to from bialystok
to this railway track to that railway track to that
to that to that to that from this from this to that
to here from there to back to front to YES to
there to there from here from here from there
from there from where to where no air no hair
so bare to NO to where to noWHERE to now
from here from nowhere from no from now from
nothing to nothing no thing no never ever to no
never ever to never is here is any is where is there
is now again is then a ruck then trucks then rucks
in trucks then trucks rtattle rtattle rtattle on lines
so full so full so bialystok song so bialystok song to
where to nowhere from full of from full of from full
of to from to from to from tofrom tofrom tofrom
tofrom tofrom tofrom tofromtofromtofromtofromtofrom
to from to cross tocross tocross to cross a cross a
cross to hammer bialystok snow silence again
cries a cry a silent cry a silent bialystok song is to

***from bialystok
a song is to where nowhere
rtattle of train;***

*Bialystok: a town about 100 miles North East of Warsaw. One pair of Grandparents fled from there to escape the 19th Century pogroms. During the Second World War a ghetto was built from where, by train, Jews were deported to play their part in the holocaust Industry. This haibun is only obliquely about grandparents, ghetto, holocaust. It is about the specific movements and sounds of the trains that made their journey from life to death. The reading rhythm is that movement, or it is nothing.

fish out of water

Heron

Statuesque grace

Sleek tension

Elastic readiness

Stands seawater body high Speckled camouflage Near invisible

Delicate wind Feathers ruffle A sideways shift Orange red beak

Rigid Expectant

Circular eye taut in preparation

Ready to diffract water

Lightningfastspeedshockofthestrike Neckheadbeakinsideoutsidewa
terinaflashhofmovement

Sight strains to catch up

Back to sculpture mime

Breath out

Vice grip

Fish twists

Head, tail squirm in waterless space

Eye blink joins a single gulp

Dysfunctional journey of airborne fish continues

fish out of water power of the heron its stillness



Glen Catacol

a mile of hot summits more hills roast

Long into the trail. It meanders, follows rises, drops with dips, turns with sweeping bends of a swollen, sometimes flooding, rock-pitted river. Underfoot, the path is less than a shoe width. Lower down, sandstone is wider, grittier. Shapes of summer heat form much of its length while stagnant water claims some hollows. Streams from Madadh Lounie, from Creag na h-lolaire, zigzag down. Close-by, land is transformed into bog. Moths, grass snakes, frogs, remnants of wild flowers camouflage in swathes of earth browns. Spurts of dragonflies crisscross the path. Course marram grass, heathers, head high ferns, thistles thrive, sound of a ground cuckoo feed into the river. Where giant plates of layered granite spread, churning roars pull free of froth foam. Redirect. Other sections feed soft feet to a precipice edge.

sudden sharp pain subterranean swells rise as resolve collapses

To look down is to wobble each wet footstep. Adrenalin surges into addictive moves forward. Y split river becomes indecision.

water divide stare at a parting of ways

Tin colour, crag clad sky. Begin to cross. Turn back. Wearing sandals, with no map or compass, path lost in a wilderness of ferns, is a new scale of suppressed fears.

Dressed to contour this vast, irregular circle, an archetypal hiker approaches. From distance indeterminate, closer the appearance is hermaphroditic. Even closer, more ethereal, there is yet another seamless modification to that of an alter ego. Translucent, floating, her now supremely feminine shapes covered in white, rippling materials, like she is one of Botticelli's 'Three Graces', glides through me. Turning, I feel touches of the lightest of winds before, near to transparent, she fades into disappearance.

Miles yet to travel over Gleann Easan Biorach before able to subside into the calm mantra safety net of a semi-Shangri-la Loch Ranza. Only then decide whether or not to catch the bus.

near a crest crossover point between one and two

Goths

SHE: tall. made taller by knee high, black leather, 4 inch platform heel boots. straggly hair. blacker than Whitby jet, as are painted diamond shapes over blue eyes, triangle cheeks, painstakingly masked lips. fingernails? black. very long. dress? silky black. black lace petticoat. eyes?

HE: *9 inches shorter. elegant black shirt open to a tattoo-covered chest. wide belt. buckle colour of polished steel. tight trousers tuck inside knee-high black boots, leather-strapped from top to bottom. heels made of plastic with a six-inch gap between sole and floor. open black leather coat, ankle length. his face her clone.*

BOTH: walk in step, her left hand holding his right. fill space unfamiliarly. walk downhill, persona a chosen exclusion. lots of time, lots of money creates them a riveting underclass. fashionably, statuesque, they flesh out sales clothes.

without noticing, pass a house lived in by Bram Stoker. for sale a long time. squeeze into café. kisses. criss cross family this family that talk. as one, move outside to merge with the rising tide of a black sea.

inside a parcel of them is a disturbance a jangle of sparkling noise. angles of children reshape regiments of black patterns. each is a mishmash of modelled stage clothes. each face is a rainbow colour shape.

into bright lights of early night. climb star worn steps to the stark silhouette of hilltop abbey ruins. Mr shorter and Miss tall are showcased. Late into the night insider rituals of outsiders.

*one Goth of many
a sudden army
battles white*



hour in the life and death of a starfish

Back home tomato plants and sunflowers have lapped their way through 25 litres of water. The two-inch deep tray in which they are interweaved to stop them blowing over is refilled. So grateful I forgot to ask about the rest of the garden. Heat is bleaching. “100° recorded,” he tells me. “This week records will be broken,” a flat TV voice predicts.

Here, it is perfect walking weather. Wind manipulated, a broken grey sky scuds. A single gull glides close to sun tipped, dark trough waves that move in repetitious motions. In a sweeping loop, it curves away from the water. Gliding higher it descends in a bullet dive. Just before striking the sea wings tuck in. After a breathless time it emerges with a catch.

*greatblackbackedgulls beak
clutches the brittle starfish
sea drops spill over*

Gannets fold wings, dive into an animated sea. By the shore a curlew hangs onto its statuesque position. Further down, sea-pyats do what they do best. A pair of ringed plovers, a red throated diver and a shelduck; all are busy.

With its pincer held catch, the gull flies to a craggy pillar of far flung rock whose height strands it above the most restless of searching waves. This is a mature, spectacularly angled starfish, its colours still shining with clinging sea wetness. For a while a brittle, knobbly shell withstands every effort to enter or dismember it. Without once loosening a tight grip, any number of manoeuvres is applied. One the gull seems not to have learnt is to secure the fish on the rock with one leg and pummel with a hammer beak, or tear at its underside. Who knows what, if anything, a gull learns? Who dares hook onto the idea this particular fish was born for just this moment; that death achieves its life? or is it just haphazard, a case of being in the right place at the wrong time, attached to an absurdly correct ‘no meaning’?

*proactive gull
chosen starfish is raised
to new heights*

Meanwhile, the gull's relentless input of energy begins payback time. With no anaesthetic, no clean cut, no sewing of torn skin, a starfish spine is amputated. Broken, rough edged shell is flung over scarred rock. A second follows. It is swallowed whole as great backed gulls appear from the east.

*sharp body
all of a sudden
strangely fragile*

The bird struggles with a remaining triad of brittle shell-covered flesh. A new strategy is used. It happens so fast that binoculars are little help. The three extensions are squashed so all face the same direction. Gull's mouth opens **W I D E**, like a snake swallowing a chicken or an ostrich egg. This is a gull's misshaped orifice. In one sucking guzzle the scratchy shell, the stretched pulpy flesh is swallowed, sliding past the gullet into an interior well of acid. No time spent in delicate wallowing. No subtle tastes. This is an action of predatory power propelled by speed.

*starfish journey
adds elements to rocks
ebb and flow pose*

Now the black winged gull, still on its barnacle-covered stand, goes rigid. Event is complete.

*cousin of David
not now the shape of a Star
hard and soft expires*

i feel so privileged

I am so irritated watching high-pitched excitement expanding into my room through the width and depth of a TV screen. More and more semi-celebrities are settling for this act.

“Yes, I would love to do it. I feel so privileged. Such a worthwhile Cause - raising public awareness”. What now? (Take 6/7/8. Got it!)(Take 9/10)
“Raising public awareness and funds to save them from being lost to our grandchildren.”

*an allergy spreads
television presenter
reinvents tension*

In a hushed voice, trembling with overstated excitement: *“It is so big, so powerful. Could anything be so beautiful? I feel so privileged being here, able to watch it live. It’s moving closer. Only 5 metres away. I’ve gone all goose-bumpy. It’s looking at me. Isn’t it time we moved away?”*
– a reminder she, driving fears into the jungle, is not alone.
“Keep still, everybody. Still. Don’t talk”

The mangy wild lion/cheetah/jaguar/tiger/rhinoceros/orang-utah/gorilla/whale/shark/octopus/dragon fly/polar-bear-with-cub/herdofeveryageelephants/anoconda/flea/amble/drift/walk/liedown/rollover/yawn/continueeating/breastfeedsascrawnyuglyoffspring/simulatesashortcharge/beatschest/scratches.

“My heart is beating so fast. No, I’ve never been here before and here it is, (any of the above or any other you prefer) just there, its breath in time with mine. It is too wonderful/the best experience of my/the greatest thing that has ever hap.../I will never forget, not ever, ever/I feel so privileged, so privileged”

Yes. Yes. But *I* see a flickering screen separating this room space from yet another unbearably unshared privilege. Colour is none too good, either. Just another money-raising programme with unspoken doubts even beyond why my fee money is spent giving her *‘the greatest*

thrill of my life?” No, I do not feel the thrill of a voyeur, do not feel privileged.

*through a trick mirror –
one illusion
after another*

But today, today I see my first live shark. What I really see is a dark fin sculpted from a moving media of insubstantial lights of more fragile waves. Softly, sea slivers white across wave tips before a first flip of tail, a first rising back curve. This is Real. Grab a heavy pair of binoculars. Magnetised for an other-worldly length of time, the magnified image of a slowly circling, about 2½ metre long shark is the real thing.

“But your using binoculars, a device, a bridge, between you and the real McCoy. Can’t you see that?”

“No. They are simply enlarging what I really see, what is really real”

“You think so?”

“I do. I can see there is no sun. I can feel time pacing back and forward inside held back breath. Look. Look, it’s moving. Going into deeper water. Swim closer! Such a wonderful, a thrilling experience. Yes, of course the sun’s been here many times. I feel **so** privileged to be here with my binoculars. Why is it not being filmed? It would make great TV.”

*hard shape circles
an insideoutside*

magnifies

impress me

*near flat sea
not one seal
but many*

Impress me!
Yes, you
With a skimmer?
Skim a 'fiver'
WHAT?
Skim a 'fiver'
What for?
For me
You mean...?
Yes you can
Here?
Yes. 1 2 3 Go!
Will this do?
well, did it?
This one?
Yes
Ready, steady
One skim. Two
Only 2½
Wrong stones
Confused?
Listen!
Here are some
flatter ones.
Right
They might
only 4.
skim another.
it was. No.
Yes, I mean it.

*Pinks drain from an evening sky. Pain forecast
for today. Believed it. Untrue. Didn't happen.
Unhampered sun all day. Most lean red spread
streaked lightly green-flecked sea bed evening.
On small rocks, accessory silhouettes of grey
herons. Whaups shift seashore shells. Others
lower down work rich sections of kelp on a
swaying beach. Every bird hunts for new food.
Tin whistle echo sounds accelerate into marked-
down dives that fuse to sculpted waves. They
will shudder fish bowel glands. Sea a flash of
light sparks. magnetic closure. Wave shapes
return, mechanically endowed. That didn't do so
Not flat enough. A naked woman is painted on
5 canvases. A love guitar will play Recuerdos
de la Alhambra. Then I shall shout 'Go! Go!' I
want to be good at this. If it's supposed to pain
all day with no break then it damn well should.
'For you I will try to achieve great things'.
What I presently see, what I hear, what I do,
They are they just likenesses, confusing images.
they want to bring me to my knees. Yes, I think
I hear it. Christoph Gluck's **tremo fra' dubbi
meie**. Is it Cecilia Bartoli? Well, is it or not?
These are the right size pebbles. Have them.
do it. Thanks. That's better. Damn! It's still
You're not impressing. I so want to im...Let me
How many? That's better. Was it five? No. Yes
This one is five. Better. **I AM IMPRESSED.**
That was 6. It was a 'sixer'. It was strongly **six**.*

Didn't see it.
Shore incisions
Keep what to
That was **us**.
For a time
dreams that
No effort,
beginning.
Probably.
way.
lies,
you will become
you epicurean red
Yes. More
Have wanted
To impress.
Hankered,
can
That is
them
inside
white
evening

*Inside a lean shadow he gives a quick shudder.
pierce quartz lined granite. What's did you...?
my..? How much you provoked it. That was not me.
Gold medal youths! Rutting wetland bore us up.
your semi-love of Opera histrionics led only to
broke into hollow vibrations of vibrato gains.
no need for healing inside such a mirror image
Ethics won't get a hint of a look in. Abusive?
In this set-up who cares? Nothing stands in our
Just wet bodies on wet grass, accepting sigh
beating breasts that pierce fragile armour. With
Chagall's 'Le couple ou cirque', I primary blue,
with an 'iffy' romance attached. Still impressed?
charismatic now. Starting to wet, wet wobble.
a 'sixer' for as long as I can remember. Why?
And you? I hankered after silky this silky that.
far too early, for the Special Chalice of Love. I
give you lots lots of presents of it. Open bottles.
what we do. Waiting for father fizzmas to fill fill
up from bottom over outside top to completely
breasting airstreams to plumb secret depths in
cotton sheets swirling inside purple red pinks of
streaks spreading over veins in mottled disarray.*

***robin calls
into a gaudy sunset
close symptoms blur***

inside secrets

every thing
left behind -
secrets all

everything left is inside a secret. certainly to those who
never unlock, even alone inside black space. white shares with
some cannot open because their line is never straight. even for those
others angle into away, vanquishing perspective and line.
what if?

secrets have breakdown inside silence. threads of
forever silent. forever bitter. forever. full to overflow
full violent inside crack of smile. now or never
secret image beyond confronting. this time so little time
for gas to float. nothing outside. inside it is full of pain
beyond borders receding. beyond earth with no rain it
recedes into seedless. censored childhood. gaps change
into a black, sacked Jerusalem. everything left is secret

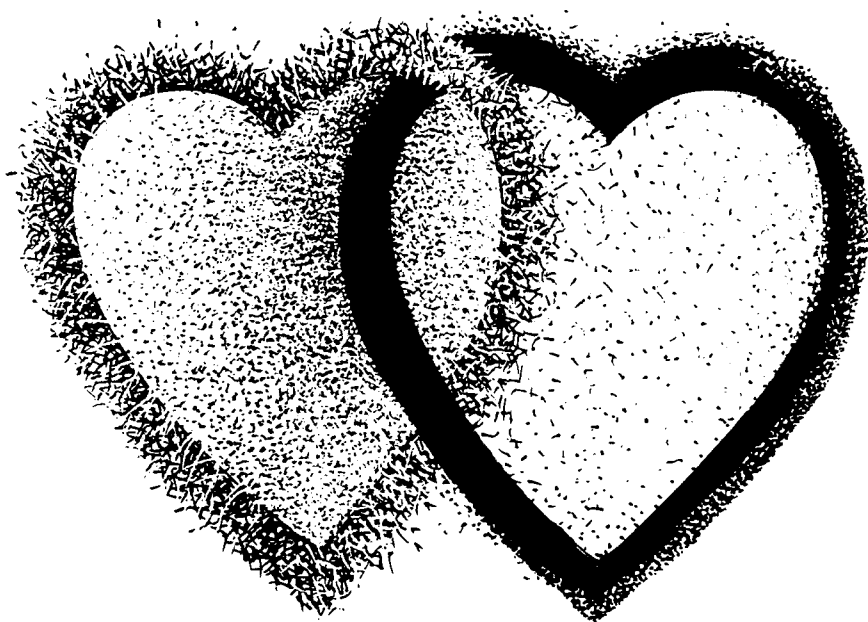
*many lit pale knight
cannot share a hidden curve
zig zag path breaks down*

insideoutside

*sounds detach
empty birds disappear
and buttercups close*

so i will wait for U in the garden ~ sit in the garden that has just been watered ~ waiting for a buttercup to close ~ a buttercup on the grass that waits to be cut ~ the grass just watered ~ in the garden just watered where I read ~ last of the sun not ready to go ~ from nowhere a fly ~ a nowhere fly on me ~ a still fly still sits on me ~ the fly from nowhere tickles ~ i look up ~ look up ~ something is up ~ look up for birds ~ fly nowhere ~ not on me ~ birds nowhere ~ sounds of birds somewhere ~ birds not here ~ bird sounds here ~ bird sounds there ~ sounds detach from birds ~ sounds of young oak tree leaves ~ sounds of young oak leaves wave ~ sound that is not bird sound ~ they are not here ~ they are somewhere ~ waiting to attach sounds ~ their sounds in the garden ~ in the enclosed garden ~ *i sit here for U ~ alone with sounds scents of breeze ~ wait for U to come* ~ enclosed by greens ~ the enclosed garden just watered ~ so many greens ~ so many enclosed by so many shapes ~ enclosed with so many spaces ~ spaces are shaped by waves ~ wavy shapes ~ U live in spaces of shapes ~ i in spaces ~ wavy spaces of insideoutside ~ insideoutside meet out ~ where i wait for U is not inside ~ i go inside to outside ~ wait for U in the garden just watered ~ inside has inside scents ~ outside has breeze ~ inside scents spread outside ~ breeze blows inside scents ~ the evening garden aromas ~ U will be drunk on aromas ~ sun ends day ~ i say 'yes' ~ i say 'yes' to inside ~ i say 'yes' to outside ~ so i will wait for U in the garden ~ sit in the garden that has just been watered.

*wait in the garden
wait in the watered garden
wait wait wait for U*



inside somewhere outside there

*inside somewhere
anonymous yet cleaner
starched uniforms*

inside somewhere i am, too, there outside there. even inside i know *where* is outside. no arrows pinpoint room, bed, town, time, day, or even if night. no one thought to alive tell. sure of date, building. archival metal beds trust brown photo-black graph-white.

A squeeze of papoose questions: last, does she less me her pain? Aware she of close fitting saltgrade storm clouds massing? stronger air gulps - nauseous? She sweating, secreting glad gland hopes to girly time, wondering inside her dying life? conception - verily moment of heaven beyond this is which there is no other? A conception inside is somewhere doublecrossing time, crosshatching a space like last apple petals before fruit sugar is entered, against which there is no defence? would she care? He care? he there? Is anyone to uplift, to adore, to acclaim? i mean, anyone not contributing insideout of regime regulated stiffness, clacking of uniformed shoes, starched high collars, a harsh grey, creaseless blanket, tightly pulled white sheet until soil of a poignant odour, an unheard whisper onto bed birth's bloodied, rubberneck sheet of, at last, an expulsion onto sudden ghostly smells of earth crumbling into such a cubic pit as to deny all thereafter hope?

Is there sight of relaxed peristalsis, push emigrating to fade? Permission is willed for muscle expansion to tuck inside. No more flashing exterior. Nothing, I guess, is left after such completion. Decline it is. Sad rearing up a pattern into repeats again, again, again. Same northern stars to stare at. Same stares at such small differences. No more fuses now to light, sensation a fading ember pyre, cleaned only to squeeze down inside a strange somewhere unknowing of outside. Signs? Sensed only. Last stare only through a fertile blossom into a raging somewhere shared great promise only beginning before full stops stop the trail of you.

*secret her depth
even beyond swathes of purple
blood slow flows*



Jacqueline du Pré

*shattered body
naked shadow is shared
before closure*

Long walk. Listen to Jacqueline du Pré play Elgar's Cello Concerto.
Melodramatic. Walk in strange time.
Still uplifts.

silent rage when there is no answer she is dumb

Sad. She, who *towards the end* gave body so freely to so many to
prove it was not. Sad.

prod roots close to death a latent quiver

*frozen sound
her ice breath too
drops a note*

Juxtapositions

Upholding childhood bookscape memories, layers of visual creativeness, redesigned Victoriana is unashamedly sleek.* Clean in a built-in-fussed way, postmodernist indicators are everywhere. Multi-level book spaces juxtapose original illustrations, do-it-yourself rooms, a make-believe level with the silent neglect of musty neighbouring buildings. Shabby, they emit old vibrations that survive. Even now, it unnerves.

*illustration shows
a complex of process –
the simple product*

Ahead is a large metal bridge. It is like those grown in New Castell. Three arches fill with trees. Only space for a narrow pavement track. Seems the outcome of a thin plan to mingle town with country. Impenetrable foliage flourishes in a harmony of greens. This is in stark contrast with the bridge technology whose surface is already shaping with age.

*a tiger hunts streets
through the car's open window
smell of old fried fish*

On the Museum's top level children change into a choir of every picture tells a story and through open doors of a box of fake furs and gloves and hats and masks and man-made skins and sharp-coloured wigs and nylon skirts and more spendthrift materials transformed way way way and away from what was just before entering a theatre of liberation into make believe and believe any and everything is possible in this land where outrageous and more is accepted with animation and verve.

*closed blind
shadow play
of a Queen bee*



Outside, cloud free, a sky reshapes. Approaching grey sheaths spread into a new curve of rain space. Wind-rushed wings flex open. A final swing of blackbirds into lengths of townscape.

*cloud grey wind sprayed birds
two dimensional canvas
extend their bodies*

parents smiles trouble the theatre of dream children. inside out immanent. face painting masks, stylish overdressing, listening to stories from a He sitting on the magical throne, juxtaposes with an outdoors shabby day. greyly, they walk away from a madly acceptable unreality. face toward a hill. face an arched metal bridge. face impenetrable foliage.

*a mass of leaves
triple pattern of arches
seems to move*



largest of leaves

is cultured with age. experience leaves it punctured with hail. maybe
a blackbird's beak. thin trails of silver covers crisp edges. wind blown
colour changes largest of leaves.

largest of leaves – 'tintacked with rain'¹ - shingles me to hype a
natural event which trysts with another. returns to hammer hammer
hammer of nails. pounds gross mouths. wind shaped. sizeable adult-
child-adult-child clones cling tight to family tree branches. a slipslide
onto trails over side folds of maps.

gas vaporous air is thrown by stiff fingers. razor gauleiters gasp into
over-pitted teeth that dribble. a full-blown lie is masked in grown-up
disguises, while a fast game of musical chairs invigorates a recomposed
shadow. meanwhile leaves are blown to pieces. largest of leaves is
crisply crushed.

who? who is capable of? why? why murder largest of leaves as it begins
to clean up its act? who? you? you? you? who?

*eyes tintacked with rain
largest crisp leaf of greener
becomes something else*

¹ Norman McCaig Basking Sharks Collected Poems 1988 Chatto & Windus

land e scape

So many scapes. So many. Shimmer in shifting swathes. Silent seascapes shape sandscapes. slithers of sunburn covers mirrors of surly townscape. Far from scrambling into stained bedscape, over harshly red roof tilescape, grit filled gutterscape, under squealing of burnt brakescapes, of ravenous child, mother-huggingscapes, is this **land e scape**.

Hybrid smells of someplace else, somewhere belonging to a somewhere present *landscape* of primrose nostalgia. Here escape inside a rose petal continent. Fearing outscape, we lick ambiguous liquids, push shore pebbles into seaweed swirls, hug wordless corners of hills, hide under tree-shaped parasols spinning, connect to coarse lumps of hunky Dads in greasy dusks filled with smoke-stumbling nights. Enthralled girls, drug caressing, stroke cheeks with almond shaped, hazel coloured eyes, curl into whirls of binge-drunk dreams, walk a wounded purpose. A tipsy land of bubblescapes weave a dizzy trail through multi-coloured pastures, images switching into *e scapes* shapes, tousled hair smiles bedazzling, struttings of a ruffled sun rising, rising, rising into a land of skyscapes.

Then U, even striped, drag in even scar-shaped *e scapes*. Then skullscape crags cry, even. Then, tied together, even cul-de-sac lips listen. Then even land *e scapes* stiffen.

Even then U kiss. Even then it is *allscape* change. All change.

*duskscape fades
under cover of hillscape
a half moon e scape*

leaving home?

*his boot noise
at the sea edge
silent oyster search*

he left home to learn how to.
try as he might
and, some say, even harder than that,

he failed.
others feel he did not.
those who claim he did

are part of the same question:
“**why**” all silently mouth
“**did he leave home to learn how to?**”

*mid january
DNA of a spider
concocting a web*

left behind by Magritte

*as a last noise fades
curtains rise on repeat acts
the play starts again*

thin line of light on lowest part of upper lip
block of mid blue sky through part open attic window
toes of one foot push into an unusual place
down deep where a furnace glows hottest
personal values scream towards a room of deaf wrestlers
waiting their turn in The Listening Room
cream inside sore legs of hot painting positions
mysterious houses do impossibles like Humpty Dumpty who pays
words more when he makes them work harder
skimpy moon in a shadowless dusk highlighting a bare thigh
reflecting inside a water butt of colours only just imagined
softness of a succulent prawn that tastes slobbery in a ritual feast
ritual circumcision of sewn-up labia
curtains creaking closed in front of fashions designed for rituals
invasion of live dog legs ritually cooked
sudden ritual under The Museum of a Night
empty face that still controls ritual eye keys to what lies beyond
strange sensations from mixing aporia with rituals
purged by resurrecting even more unsettling rituals
spotting rituals that reign supreme
like illusion explored as in “the word ‘dog’ doesn’t bite”
unexpected ritual answers to an unexpected subversive intent

*false lit theatre
left behind on a canvas
actors
clap themselves*

Like a Wind

*broken sky
clouds shape then disappear
Like Wind*

Like Wind. Like Wind. Like relaxed glances make of clouds, trees, waves. Like it is soft, hard, even brittle. Like cold. Like such warmth of it. Like friend. Like enemy. Like it makes no difference. Like we need both. Like it cares if we like or do not like. Like I do not know Wind is for only what it is. Like for all that, it does seem there is interchange. We meet. There is connection. We come together. There is closeness, a particular fix. Before, a precise result is known only imprecisely. It is this or that, lightest of feather touches. Like maybe unavoidable. Like inevitable, even.

*a float of beached foam
it spreads here before there
Like Wind*

when we meet there is a ricochet, a particular frisson like i push against a thin barrier of U with your redder colder nose hair ravaged into alternatives skin crimpling in response to rushes of wind blown sand like when we interweave like not even confined to exteriors because any open window or door is enough to stimulate a coming together of forces into more subtle intimacies as i more solid absolve disturbances into something more like insubstantial whereas U are visible only by effects solids differently resolving a multiplicity of like alternatives like ebb like flow like a silent jangle of movements like i am like inside U

Like a Wind.

*sun moon sky light dark
tie together U with i
like a wind*

love me, love my shadows

"i do so love your shadows.

like seasons

like sunless foxes

with light

they come

each leads

to quivers

puppet shapes

they come

as they please

they come

they go.

with lack of it

they go.

each a servant

of moonlit air.

stiff fluid

they go

or so it seems".

*his shadow waits
for a lake operation
unwilling sun*

"I will cry if I want"

which of course he did

"I mean, if I feel like it"

which of course he did

Sort of wanted to cry myself. In such a fuzzy light love with him isn't going to happen. *"This is not a good place"*. Crumbling light, an architectural havoc, ravishes head pictures, ills up everything.

Off-key, she sings *"happy birthday to you, happy birthday to..."* Reach into bed in one buckling stride. Drunken shadow celebrations as sleep simmers a hug inside this starry night puzzle. Braced to press. Brightness locks in a her-on-top embrace. Bodies merge s l o w l y. Slowly a night's length moves. *"An aura of moon"* I whisper onto his lips, wanting to hold her hand. Slant of light. Hints of blue across his so familiar cheeks. Softly here, taut there. Transforms him. Watch them move over our blossoming form. With a feather touch, clear away his flat tears. See my nude shadow reclining in the sky.

I do so love our shadows.

night moonlight

sanitises a day sun white spreads away deep



**meandering bisexual path
(after this there is no other)**

23

*number or new music
to a thrush answer*

Paths intrigue for as long as forever. Many adventure, even parade imaginary routes. Some fly, others skim seas, zigzag deserts. Some split metaphorical mountains. Most are nature gone civilized. Cooked from recipes meticulously followed, they become a procession of stately reassurances. No more ubiquitous fugues. No more rare instances of necessary complexity. Hidden are those that do not work in quite that way. Far from jet streams of dangerous exaltation, what remains is a shoulder shrug, a flippant nod towards gentle risqué. Temperature drops. Glued together surfaces are comfortably mistaken for real bits. Wandering off into lush new lands overcomes fear of unfamiliar angles, underground hills, insideout valleys. Those unprepared for most everyday of threadbare, this way is a meandering bisexual path. *Adam* tempts *Eve* tempts *Adam*. Here, in wild terrain, they become disarming predators, hurtful on a cosmopolitan scale *But there are others*

Inside many an Urban Planning blight town paths that lack aesthetic appeal are often disdained for their flatland functions. Inexpressive machines, they are single line means to a closed end. Council Estates paths are, at best, second cousins of those rural retreat hideaways; play safe games that tint danger. Cobblestone irregularities are sometimes built-in. But those living in towns are no blinder than others; they know it is no alternative to romanticized-rustic-idylls-of-fantasy-worth-defending. Locally cast cobblestones or paving slabs are, like shops that stay open late, convenient. But such freedom from cracks, breaks, dips, wear a heavy price tag. Journeys to here, to there are made easy. Failure impinges on simple intentions. Any journey can be made into a challenge just by slipping in an acute angle, walking on hands blindfold across a main road. Havoc spotlights ridiculous courage. Skill is not, here, pre-eminent. In a wilderness

crucial decisions throw heads both ways. *There are even more*
Even today, on top of Malham Cove steps, on 'Limestone Pavement'
U, i are cloaked by an illusion we are At-One-With-Nature. A more
contemplative Clock ticks a different time. These are safety-first-
to-cutting-edge-limit paths. Add twists, steeper climbs, unexpected
dips; we disappear inside corners of erratic pictures. Reflections only.
Those with weighty bosoms are given short shrift. Need to take extra
care. Into this, heavy-breathing Gentiles dragged forward by a god-
imposed Wandering Jew, continue to tighten waif-streamer creases
inside cracked nerves. Outside, weak shelves that line shadow-edged
mirrors are tidied.

Crossing uneven plains of limestone wedges is still a relief,
something to trust. Many trails of movement pass here. Like sheep,
many follow into these overblown, strung out days. However
fast are heartbeats, however painful each muscle, this is danger
contained, a path with a skeletal road code: pass on left oncoming
traffic, give way to upwardly-mobile, downgrading gears; smile
thinly to those who seem to notice ancient twists, dips that straggle.
They give way. *Yes, there is yet more*

33

*is a magi number
wind disagrees*

Yesterday, chalked a walk on a paper-strewn, dog-fouled road.
Target a bombed house of an eccentrically modified but pinpointed
child. Revisit that ridiculous filmstrip display of boys sitting on
stools, each with a pudding basin on his head. Stoical mothers, pair
of all-purpose shears in hand, snip, snap towards hair-clones. After
a binding Decree Nisi, I am on a double triple - downward, level, up.
A covetous smile, a made-up frown, follows.

Irrelevant paths! Boys, blown or grown away, will not reappear.
There is no turning back. Past shreds, burns or dissolves in gaseous
smoke. Mists arrive, slide, fade. Buried events. Bits of underlined
books, reminders to resurrect processes of product, are erased. U, i
will not again refer to them. Purpose of recall lies elsewhere. Point
is...Point is... Even now, on this tiring path, we try to figure out how to

lightning what is just behind, to storm, thunder, clean, shape an eaten moment into cave entrances sucked dry of light. *There is another*

69
*no more a number
but top-to-tail*

Most paths, television news, contemporary ecclesiastical music, are export-friendly. Constructions through childish fantasies, they are a desire to discover what transports us to another side of everyday. A bisexual path is assessable. We can travel part or all its various lengths as many times as we like, but each is unique. 'Mine is mine. Yours is yours', I tell her. To retain complexity where it belongs, each slides off maps; returns as spray fixative. 'Nothing I say about your short time spent with mine will help,' she tells me.

So there is yet more?

13
*year a first opera
is uplifted*

At 13 my Saturday evening job is checking winning lines on football pool coupons. Starts soon after referee's final whistle blows. Factory neighbours a dodge area of London. Rows of long tables extend into a far distance. Forty people, mostly women, sit at each. Work is concentrated into 5 break-less hours. Each season Sunday SHE is paraded, unopened, three pay packets. His, unopened, is transplanted Friday evenings.

this path leads somewhere another corner turns a hidden endpoint

Same journey, week in week out. Meandering 157 bus. Then an Underground train, an intestine that twists inside a man-made-to-measure tube inside earth's womb. Disarray of legs. Expel up. Excitement of Cecil Court. Treasure trove bookshops. National Gallery, National Portrait Gallery. Follow Thames, past Parliament, to the Victorian Tate Gallery. For over 5 football years this path never fails to thrill.

But there is more, more

Although constituents remain, this mixed path transforms twice more. Walk to lonely bus stop. Pay adult price fares. *Transported.*

Merging into Piero della Franscesca's 'Baptism of Christ' is his 'Nativity'. Rembrandt's 'Portrait of an Old Woman' sterner than Botticelli's 'Birth of Venus'. Then Magritte, Spencer, Auerbach, Freud, Gertler, Soutine, Bomberg. So many others. Autumn, winter, spring weeks into a gift window. *But beyond this*, a dawn of dirty light drenches our compartment with an uncertain grey. A different regime is hard at work. Anonymous beats turn to petrified stone. A sulking lump emerges as a gas clown. Space splits. We float. Despite no wind, dresses flap, male into female hair-rivers stream back. Handbags, books, newspapers, umbrellas, drop to ground, add to irregular stone shapes. Look inside faces of strange strangers. *So much more to come*

Young girls touch lips of a mother who rolls onto bodies below. Turns a young boy over. Together, in slow motion, they ascend. Soon, touching, soft jostling happens everywhere. Smiles flow parallel to floor joists. Legs, arms ease open. Wingless males, flying females merge, speed faster from end to end of our hollow tube. A spasm of elongated light turns solidity into streaks that travel oxygen filled capillaries. Passing through a cut-out cardboard driver, they leave a speeding train like it is a tortoise. Glorified into light curving Thames, i into U speed through Tate Gallery walls. Explosive halt before Pablo Picasso's colour-drenched 'Three Dancers'. Sheltered art splits open. Inhuman shapes leap from an animated backcloth. Start an exuberant Dance, oblivious to Marthe Bonnard stepping out of her colour-melting bath. Spencer's 'Resurrection' breaks through stone floors, while Gertler's 'Roundabout' turns an inescapable circle. Cézanne's jug pours apples as blood, seeps through Van Gogh's self-portrait onto his sunflowers. Museum art throws off its chains. A 'Voices of Silence' roller coaster throws early Renaissance halos into Trafalgar Square fountains. *Faustian meandering bisexual path*

For a split of a split second this fusion becomes a cycle existing only in salt-stone time. It exalts Celine's invisible poetry music into Mahler's beyond poignancy. Multicolored grass threads spring up where promised lands of honey float inside throats of burnt out Underground trains. Gloriously dysfunctional Yahweh again blocks paths to simplicity. *After any first death there is no other*

most **Me**, me

*she watches, spellbound
light and heavy bits of **Me**
shape a **me** reformed*

There is this Me that steps most everyday sweetly, cleanly into everyday I wake. Then there is this me that does not. It sleeps wherever i sleep, naked in whatever most shapes i am. There are others, but these cover most opposites of a scale broad enough to encompass most needs of most everyone. Using the most dexterous oils, you will slip over many more. They make seas most hidden riches, caves most stratified rocks, rings beyond bark cover of the deepest most tree. *'Most of these play in the darkness, so you can forget all about them'* I was told a long time ago. It confused. *'Easy to hide, impossible to forget'*. I was enlightened in another confused way some time later. *'so you're stuck until you work your way through them all'*. This manhandled me into sensing confusion is the permanent of most states. So what's the truth? *'if you don't want to be lost in the forest, both are true'* I read, which at first blanked most of Me, me off. Then I thought if I can do something about it, I'd better do something about it. So climb highest most hill around (not that high, most of Me admits). Dive into the deepest water nearby (the Municipal swimming pool is deeper). Both are the best I can most manage in this arena.

*in the audience
that stage **Me**
stares at **me***



most of me is

*on sand line flow
froth patterns close
mist dunes reshape*

most of me is terra firma. a portion recalls sea, remembers a form of fish. another part rests inside midge-peppered heat. distantly, it recollects heads bent into rain, into northern wind, hauled from one burnt exile to another, a gravity part here, part there. insubstantial enough result. like a million grains of wind-blown sand, dune shapes are a desert shift. earlier relief patterns are replaced to, in turn, become friable cement. replaced. an inconstant boundary by day, by night, is creased by exorbitant dry heat, by wildest of winds. bleak shadows, sun-dropped, slip like desert snakes beneath surfaces they ripple into coolness. here is redolent of a safe memory beyond seas, beyond a form of fish. beyond. beyond.

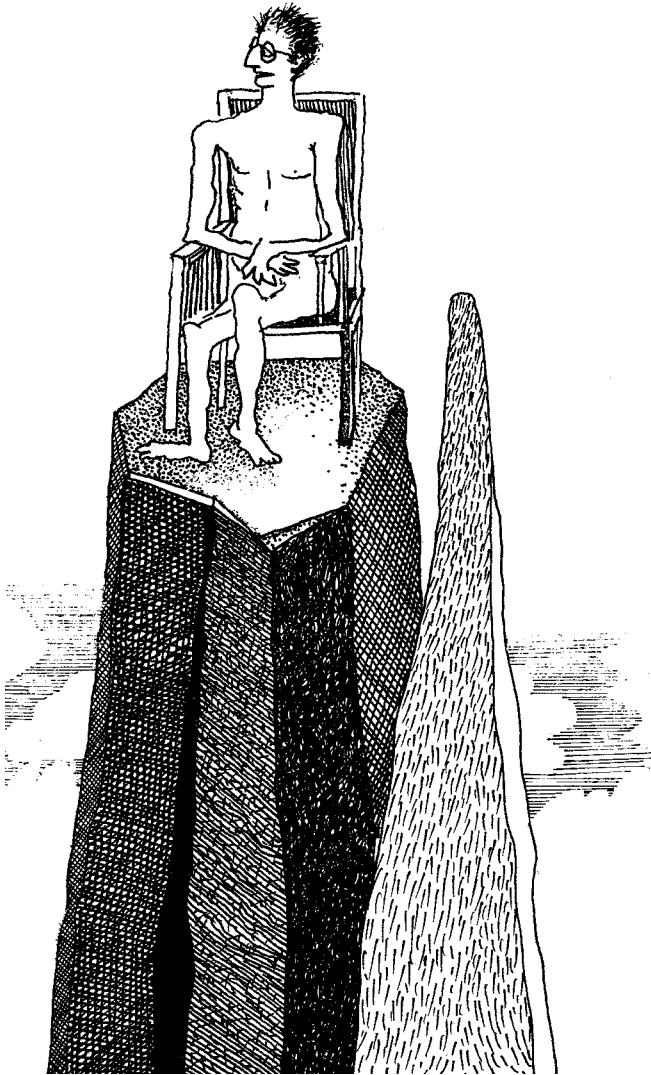
*windblown
sand unable to block
ongoing change*



mountain failyer

rests on top of a mountain – still feels a bit of a failyer

*broken house
in a sea of leaves
he loses focus*



nAtuRe ShELf

**earlier, in the shaky haze of dusk, forms
of townscapes and colours of rural
shapes waver and quiver and break
away from the creative middle heat.
Now, the blunt edge of blue daylight
scrapes toward a darker closure.**

<i>new</i>	<i>a</i>			<i>o</i>
<i>D</i>			<i>S</i>	
	<i>i</i>			<i>F</i>
<i>D</i>		<i>L</i>		
		<i>f</i>		for U

totem shelf
full of peculiar books
and a broken word

boiling bodies of beetles, birds, brides-
maids, bizarrely shoeless bluffers, bogus
little bo-peepers, bisexual creatures of
the field, blotchy teenagers blustering and
blitzing, biting and baiting, that had coa-
lesced in a glue of sweat, split apart, sweep
beyond tides and scramble out of the
picture frame into more prosaic byways.

nearly 100

she wants the sea

*where sea ends
a late sun seeps through wet clouds -
that old white shadow*

Hi. Just back from St Paul. Jessica wants Hannah's address. His identikit loudness.

You still there? It's crackly. That's better. Yes, I can hear you. Say it again. Keep talking. I'll reach for it.

Yes. Over there, decided I'm not keen on grandchildren. In fact, don't like them much at all! Preferred my children. Yes, that's the truth. Preferred my own.

Here's the address. Want the mobile number? Jess on Skype?

Thanks! Not the mobile. What's skype? How are you?

I'm OK

How's you? How's Mum?

I'm OK. She's Happy enough. Settled in the Home at the end of the road. **'End Of The Road'**. That should be its name. She's still gassy, still ga ga, still loud. Hundred on July 26.

I know. Got a card waiting. Make sure she hangs in there! Not too many nearly 100 year olds around here. Does she have any idea where she is?

No. Yesterday she said, "Dad told me never to go up North". "You're in Oxford. Straight line across England from Pinner. Straight across. Definitely not North".

"Yes, but no one takes me to the beach. You know I love it. **love it love love love it**. Everyone knows! **love it**. I want..."

"What do you want?"

"I want the sea. When am I going into the sea? Who is going to push me into the sea? Me, sitting in the wheelchair, wheeled, run into the sea. Run, run, run. Up to my waist in seawater. Sitting in my wheelchair. Sitting upright in salt greedy sea. Sea swishy, lippylapping, waving this way, that way, wandering through me, wetting, bewildering me. All through. Want to paddle. Push, pull. Skirt tucked in knickers. I want sea. When is someone going to take me? When do I go? When am I going to get wetwetwet?"

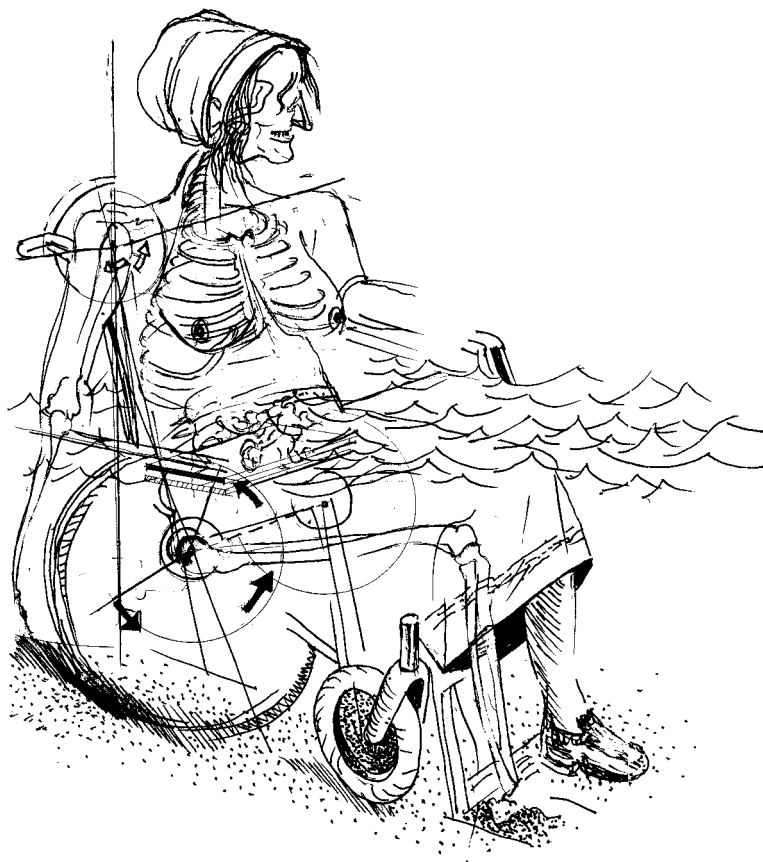
Today she lives in Devon and Cornwall. Where tomorrow?

Tomorrow? Tomorrow in Zion.

What else. Did I tell you the Inland Revenue are sending a man to interview her about her tax affairs? Can you believe that? I told them she's going to be 100 on July 26. Invited them to the party. A long silence followed. Then a different single tone voice said, "We will delay the visit."

Sounds to me like a perfect day to run her into the sea.

*new zone
of helpless plenty -
drug of ancient sea*

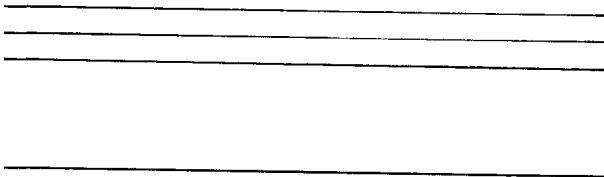


North Meister

*riotous sky
sea below
as usual*

North Meister, UK, an unwholesome raucous liar, knows nothing
of South.

*high high high up
two eagles cross
a deep lake*



no way to stop it

path of nettles
both sides of a harsh climb
treads with care

nearly dusk
no way to stop it
another mountain climb warm dry legs shake chest heaves
no way to stop it
disintegrating body
no way to stop it
a sweep of forest a fall into webs of bracken clouds drift darker
into dusk watch starlings swirl togetherness into curvaceous space
watch their addition to this disturbance watch them disappear into
a sudden bend of trees watch sky being given back watch it fully
open to a commencing night watch shapes in motion become invisible
sound watch a return to tangible silence
no way to stop it
raw rock mountain crudely still
top of the trail lay down sleep
no way to stop it
“move along mind the gap”
grips her shoulder bag tightly
no way to stop it
nervous looks behind her
no way to stop it
so many voices so many move in her direction
no way to stop it

each night apart
dreams separate
no way to stop it

Oxford Tube

*sleek line purrs into speed
there is a change in this day
that is slow to hear*

Oxford Tube. Coach bus connects Oxford to London at ten-minute intervals during day, hourly at night. Minimal stops. Leaves M40 at Lewknor. There is no bus service, so ‘Tube’ passengers leave cars adrift.

There. Back. Change of viewpoints. Start to read. Start to tire. Seated at a table, I half look beyond windows. Don’t mind ruffled papers of Miss unsmiling who, anyway, boarded earlier. She makes notes. Stops. Eyes half open. Eyes half close. She is between listless sleep, concern to complete work, to refigure her face before journey end.

Closing in on London. Empty watch passing shapes of drivers. Vaguely listen to traffic. Casual yet intrusive listening. Sounds of approaching, passing traffic repeat insistent, irrelevant patterns. Nothing much matters except changing shapes of her face. Combine with sounds of louder breathing. Taint of a headache. Eyes close in on Motorway. See London roads. Straight line tentacles to National Gallery. So much flat canvas transformed. So much climbing yet to do, so many light years to uncover. ‘Puff’ of remote controlled doors opening.

“Hillingdon! Next stop Hillingdon. If you’re leaving at this stop, make sure yer don’t leave anything behind. Thanks fer using Oxford Tube. Have a suckcestfull day!”

Listen. Breathe slowly. Listen.

*near Oxford
chiltern gentians, red kites
clustered bells, harebells*

paths lead to Ways

*wall drawn path
black white and fuzzy edges
is this one
you – or is it I –
intend to walk?*



Path goes on beyond some long way beyond weeks of walking. Occasionally stops for a breather. Afterwards a healthy push lands at some Southern tip. Emerges as an upright rectangular journey you – or is it I – can make. This one forms into a painting on a wall. Complex. Dumb. Ferocious. No clean-cut edge to lap at interiors. No rainbows dripping. Not a fragment remains. Not even a last hazy colour. No concern whether it is or is not here. A decreasing square circle you – or is it I - walk round then round again round to a centre spot where stillness usually is. Not now. Bold winds chuff parched cumulus clouds before they can drink every shadow out of what remains of light sating downwards. He snags on barbed wire. Pain hangs on like an addictive flagellant who cannot forget a paths compulsive Ways. She chooses to wander into a bloodletting wilderness. Phoney white-toned middle grounds replace authentic texts. Abstract signs are amorphous, sounds indecipherable. It is such a challenge that school desks school chairs schoolteachers are captured. Petrified blocks of salt control a lack of momentum. Functions are dismembered, thrown into playgrounds that morph into pile-ups of rectilinear burning shapes. Small flames grow. Wind-fanned they peak in a writhing surge.

They begin rituals that disintegrate only to reform into a tyrant's bible of seething ash that passes through flesh become wood into memory changed events turned to misbegotten words reaching such a height as to be beyond mountains more cold than ever is known in everyone's here-and-now before journeys were invented in such ways they played until no longer a game you – or is it I – began that long walk along a diminishing circle become smaller as centres push into a raw embodiment of earths lower music.

*we – or is it i
stumble along these high paths
U this i that Way*

pea-souper

*those were the days that go bump in the night,
touch passers-by, pass by on the other side.*

*call it exaggerated memory
or blown-up times-of-long-ago
but I say it just don't smog
like it used to
in those far off golden olden days.*

hilltop trail
pass a stranger
without being seen

*our city of details disappears deep inside
a blinding pea-souper, miles long,
a soot-padded duvet of thick, snot-green fog
swirling inside wind curdled eyes,
a dense pillow of sky-high weight.*

*this, then, is the preserved Memory
of those golden olden days,
when week long epileptic fits of weather
are given the-kiss-of-life by fierce rains
that explode through leaky clouds.*

*smog incoherence washes away
until blindness slides from mist.
no longer does it seep
through attic windows,
drain lighthouses of space.*

*but this, renowned of all slinking pea-soupers,
fills cracks. inside a slit cleavage, insidious,
it worms insistent ways
him&her i&U,
covering the empty cot of a boy who stinks of soot.*

*teenagers, with eyes red stung,
underfed by those who lie on them,
fall over sniffing gods.
husbands bump into ageing wives,
brush against couplings of nubile masks.*

*blindfolded, hand-in-hand
they come home from work.
no longer kisses seen in dreams,
but grey with old wives tales,
with sounds of safety first.*

dusk dirty fog
singular silences
blanket their sleep life

*they turn inside invisible stairs,
(escalator of the scared)
far from the sizzle of burnt fried eggs
just seen on just seen plates
with fog sprayed knives, acid cakes.*

*i hate, HATE slow stepping inside gravity
hate it so, SO much!
hate it for him&her for i&U,
but, most of all, hate it for those crutches that,
with no choice, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang,*

*swing into a somewhere curve
repeated through smoky centuries
in the ways of Fathers. "crutches" he told me
"are not the problem. just another way of...of...well, of...
nothing to get worked up about".*

*suppose the same can be said of pea-soupers,
whose mists blind greens of submissive hills
far from urban birds deafened
by city orchestras of snot green sheet music
that dirties a clean-cut girl, clean-cuts an encrusted boy.*

*those were the days that go bump in the night,
that touch passers-by, pass by on the other side.*

candyfloss cloud tightens
dark seas grumble
inside their unseen weight

rabbits etc

Sunday am.

December 18

Sharp, frost-filled morning. Sunny. Long-walk weather village quickly hides behind. A Lincolnshire lane extends into hinterland. No pavements. Long to the horizon. Straight. Beige light pinpoints a deep landscape on a flat plane. Long lines shut inside a more blatant map. Aerial perspective stretches a three-tone depth.

then

frost filled lumps

1,2,3 - even more

merge with white drop grass

Layers move, rise in clumps. His throat of parts pierces. Upside down, over to one side, angled heads incorrect, they lie along a rock entrenched edge. Number 1 has back innards open to view. Number 2 follows hollows where eyes freeze in a car headlight fix. Number 3 is a dead bread mess sculpture. Number 4? Gorged blackbirds gouge out an eye festival.

then

he tries too hard

not to strain stressed feet

that slow hobble home

beyond a distant perspective, the return to sounds of men's gun playtime

Sunday pm. Newspaper Colour Supplement.

On TV –

“the better team lost”

then

one pair of eyes close

to a frosted rabbit shape

quiver of white hair

relativity 1

imagine crash upon clash throughout a switched-on electrical night's
deepening. used to frighten me into trembling sweat - and more.
deeply incised wound partially healed is erratically stitched up like a
colour-streaked mid-summer sunrise.
deepest sky night now welcome and more.

*meet him
name tag of more interest
than talk*

relativity 2

*space
between darker breaths
black clouds scud*

passions subside. regular breathing returns. rucked sheets tidy.
television channels switch. montage of gargantuan clouds slip from
jettisoned gravity. invigorated river churns 3 bodies to wayward reeds.
strangers wade through sky shapes while a film landscape judders
nerves. manacled to change they look at each other. eyes between ten
minutes past insight quiver inside an anxious image. even more alone
inside tangled breaths. more space in less time for you to flee.

*not eye to eye -
2 sparrows & a hawk
separate in flight*

rise

fall up

tree roots rise

blossom petals scatter rain

as apples fall up

We climb craggy boulders, angled rocks. Not that hard. Not that steep. Still we pant. Still we watch where to place feet, carefully consider every move. Grey rain slips over rocks.

uneasy climb

thunderclap startles

staccato breaths

I worry about her. She worries about me. I hold onto her as she stretches a leg nearly too far. She tells me when not to look down, when not to look up, which crevice to avoid. Sometimes gaps are too far apart, rocks too sheer, too wet. No efficient hand or foothold. Retreat to a new route. Sometimes distance between rocks is just within stretch limit. A heartbeat is overheard being missed. Sweat inside creased brows. Head halfway disorientates. Which way grey hairs, grey sky, grey sea? Senses diffract, disconnect. She trips. I hold up her fall.

after her stumble -

blood from a grazed knee

drips upside down

saving the world from circles

*a wave
part shark
part moving line*

An early morning in a wild and ancient winter (at least a year before that book was stolen from a library with so many) I and my best friend Greg, (who was soon to mistake a killer drug blow-out for the mystery of a first cordon bleu meal) sat on an angled rock staring at an upside down V shape shark fin, curve of its appearing and disappearing backbone and flips of tail as this section of bay is slowly circled, listening to unfamiliar sounds of carrion crows crisscrossing the path of an eagle that, higher, head down, eyes elsewhere engaged, glides in increasingly large loops.

*circle of trees
under a sea foil
roots break free*

Greg said, “*We should do something really exciting today*” Greg always says that. It is his way of balancing a gap that feeds off a spread-eagled housing estate desolate from the heart out. Instead of skimming pebbles we chose to save the world from circles. For some time we sit, wondering how best to start. I cough. He thumps my back. Then we change our mind.

Today we will skim flat pebbles over wave crests; count bounces. For now we sit silent, lost in private meanderings. Still watch the shark. With no need of sunshine or speech we decide it is basking and we should keep our swimming costumes wrapped inside ragged, rolled-up towels. Carrion crows calls are less targeted. Shark’s circle is now a distance. The eagle opens up its circle, glides over mist-enveloped crests. We unwind paper clips. I push mine into an ear. So does he. We circle them again and again.

*flat shapes
into lines
circles snared*

sea and see

*music dwindles
brown of rose petals
and smoke plumes*

dead

sea her every day

it is difficult to hear her voice
remember sounds of her shapes

she sees an image of closed lips
sea waves lap a half open shell

not Dead

see her Every day

sea wind and sand trio

*rainbow fades
wet dress of many colours
clings to a dune*

Spiral shells relinquish noises from inside sea colours and an insistent movement.

seascape tune as seaswallowers churn colours turn to sound

Crustaceans move alongside with a hard grace. Sky-puff opens. Drifts. Wind sounds slur.

six bleached fish scurry down a sandstone beach sand eyes bloat

Harmonic intimacies wash to a partner beach, weave, blend, with an off-key, resonating bass and cello crunch of sand sinking.

a razor shell sweeps into the sea footprints settle

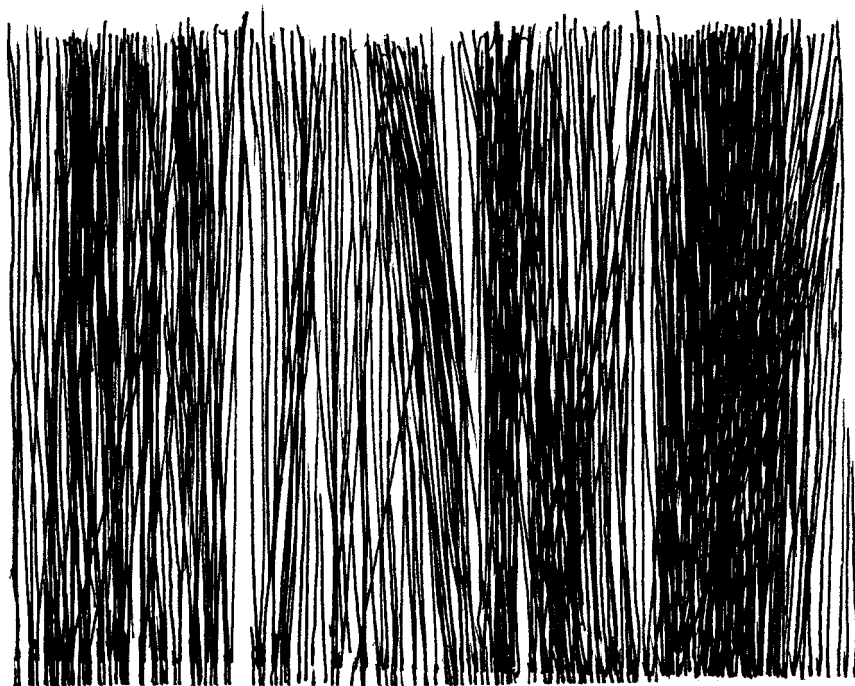
Wind converts to counterpoint piccolo and cello sounds. It is a music that integrates with an environment from which it evolves and returns in unending tides. Unified, but resigned to a transient existence, it spreads through sea-piercing rocks, communication codes of herring gulls, gannets, cormorants, high and low sea sound architecture, spent light repeating in ephemeral harmonies.

ridge of spikes web of translucent gauze flicks away

sheets of rain

confusing, wind-shaking puddles reflect barb wired laden farm gates that also shake as sodden ropes loosen. beyond drowning fields are lights of traffic on the A1 spraying grimy water in their wake. a cloud-dragged sky endlessly reforms. deep shades of grey overlay with deeper. on grit paved roads harshness of rain is hyperactive. shiny surfaces diffract in an exigent relationship with increasing speed and amounts of gushing water. *'it's so kitsch'* a drenched passer-by comments. *'it makes me want to dive into it, hide inside'* i reply, conscious that this is a packaged response, as stupid, as clammy as the storm rain is not. what had started as drizzle has become a squall heading up a full blown storm. sheets of water, so layered, so thick, roadscape, farmscape, trafficscape, landscape are more difficult to differentiate until they disappear.

sheets of rain
no number can regain
those washed memories



Shelter

*nowhere to hide
As shape changes shape
his death ends it all*

Midnight

bad storm. “Worst in living memory”. mad storm. “Fiercest on record”. swarm of locust winds turn back, crack rumbustious space. Short-lived light blinds, swirls upward. harsh of rain knifes. Discordant bass clamours pain in regular hits. virulent pricks beyond even beyond of storm brainstorming beyond. Yes like yes in no other. inside meaningless event. Why you out there? why me?

There is no answer. we are. Only I? then that is an end to it. (Death in young talent when so prolific. Emptiness. what might have been? Now lost in empty. empty forever when death is dying moment ever no more). So goes it. on my own. Crashed against so smashed against until all over skin purple tears open. Rains new slant disembowels. Safety needs to hide for long so long.

Suddenly

shelter $\frac{3}{4}$ enclosed. Shelter. middle of over there. “Why not? why not just once accept for why not?” Steep angled push through sharp bend into slivers of churned bits. pieces inside start to reform. Breathing down to windblown clothes. thin skin layer unsettled. Gale changes direction to blustered battered. bruised. Swept safe behind shelter wall of safety hope. insideback to outsideforth. Time again time again time again to double sided safety to 3 wishes to trinity. want to go home to go home to go home to go.

Ends

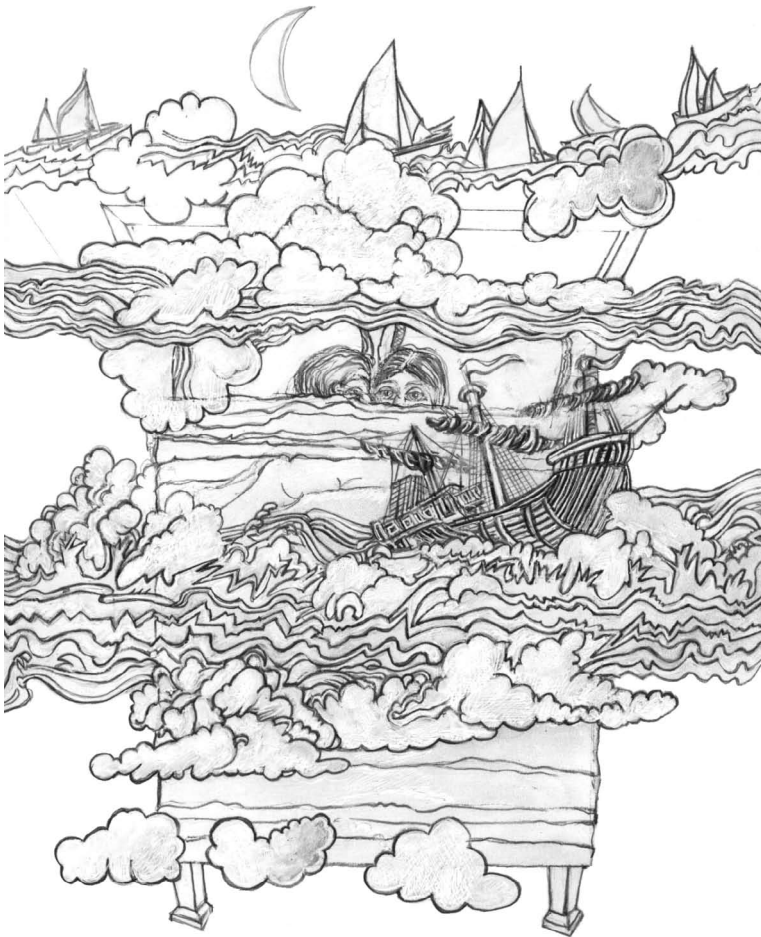
Lightning cuts open brief shadows. storm dissolves. Evaporates. shelter blown to smithereens. A t o m i s e s. blood body drains still away. So I so you. jet black closes encyclopaedia of limp grass shadows into a nights soft rustle. I too. you too. Forever close down. without forever. Blank. makes no sense. No beginning. no end. Clocks strike at windows of shelter. a hard seal closes page 3.

<i>Midnight</i>	<i>Suddenly</i>	<i>Ends</i>	<i>Suddenly</i>	<i>Ends</i>	<i>Suddenly</i>
<i>Comfort of shelter</i>	<i>everyday clocks strike</i>	<i>Rumpled skin</i>			

sleep

*above a restful sea
salt marsh reed sounds
as if not there*

dim lighted her boat sails skies of dawn
just making it to waves of his sleep



snow slow

**compressed snow in wheels slow turn. we inside layers of warm
blanket compact clothes**

Nearly There

R602 HTG

SF52 GKT

**daylight etched into dusk by hydrochloric acid. cluttered shapes
morph into a glacier dark**

M320 BRK

SA02 2FP

**irreversible moment. just after i ask the question U begin to sing
notes that slide under a broken snow crust**

FV51 BVU

FX05 YPW

Home. Blue flash of safe television. Undress.

**deep under an outside memory of snow love is painted
before we drown inside a flesh drowsy whiteness**

holly bush leaf -

opera music

e x p a n d s - contracts

solstices

*cross of paths
sounds of salt marsh reeds
change a special night*

Those solstices! Season movers. Culture pivots. One hinges birthdays, another distance. Others are fragile memories, dream connectors, cusps between uphill struggle before unwelcome decline. Peak before trough after peak, waves of shared differences that double oblique pleasures.

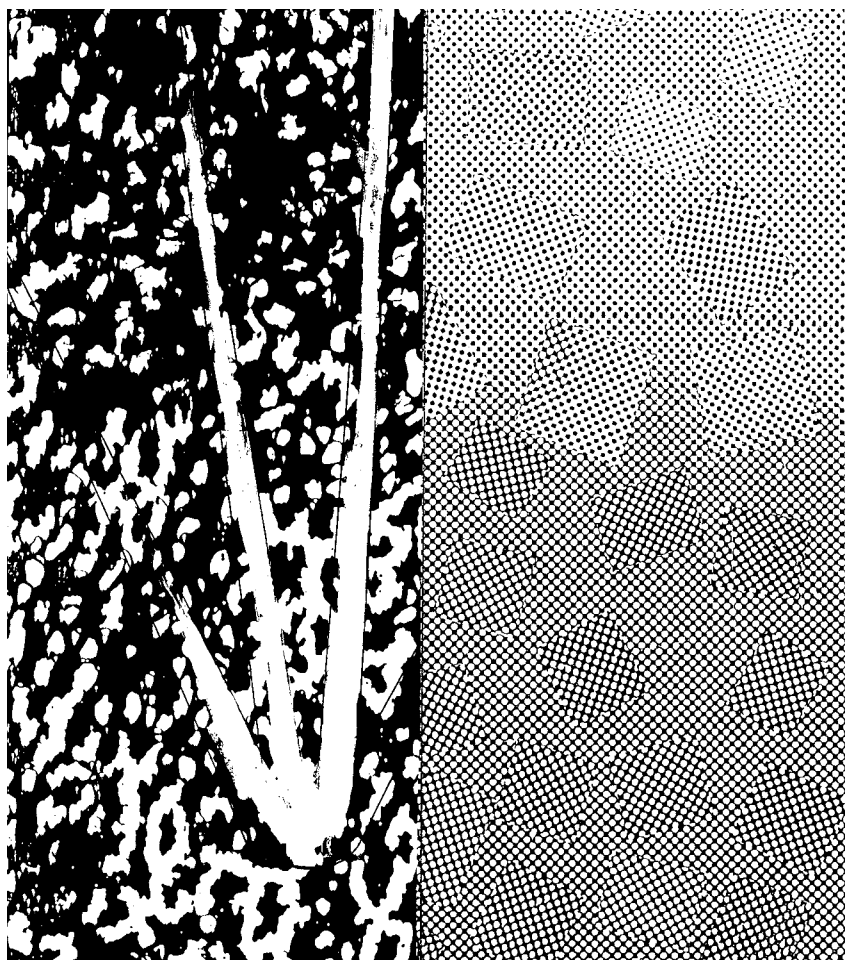
*harvest moon
water shines in bird baths
then does not*

Submerged below river lines, any of many solstice nights can transform moments in ways quite magical. Emanations, expectations generate flash moments of immanent change. Nerves sensitise. Tonight, doors creak. Intimacy spirals out of control. Love climaxes in an unusual cacophony.

orange star moons coloured halo disturbs

Burning flesh melds. Feelings merge. Emotions, thoughts, actions conjoin. Speed atomises unfathomable senses. Separations dissolve. Energy explodes in equations that make what is visible invisible. Necessary tensions, not willed into existence, build. They, an erratic vision of movements, are central to this cycle. Who cares? What matters to U, to i, is that fortune again favours the brave. We, uncompromising, dance passionately inside each changeover from open-ended event to that seasonal interweaving of atmospheric unknowns.

*leaf fails to fall
gravity unavailable
throughout a new night*



so much altogether

apple sparrow leaf
pears plums rose petals rain pool -
garden detritus

Good qualities, bad qualities seem to work in tandem. Nothing is disputed except *why* this is good, that bad. Different people perceive worrying aspects of ethics, adult games, taboos, power, sex, control, religion, love, in different ways. Mostly, I conclude, mine are at best neutral, at worst too easily open to misinterpretations, troublesome, bubblegum attacks.

Drive past two fields. Yesterday, yellow dry wild grasses were similar heights. Today, mown, one lies in disordered flatness. Second, agricultural cutter in a far corner, does not. Fast or slow drive past alters structures, how they are seen. Shapes falter, are part of this strangeness. My curving drive is inside a mix of changed imagery, one moment two-part, then three. One better? One worse? Depends. Yes? Depends on situations, century, who judges with what or whose rules, what or who needs protection or an opening, who cares or is careless. I suppose.

two fields shapes come shapes go come go

Cortege is passing. Knew he was ill. Did not know he died. In his long life seldom left this village. Straightforward. So it seems. Claimed he wants to be altogether with her. Not, though, when reminiscing. Cortege passes through an animated sadness.

Thinks again of good, bad, neutral. Interpreted as 'bad', was it so disastrous? Surely, not above averagely bad, surely. Whatever it is or is not surely is insufficient to dwell upon. Perhaps! What surprises him is that, even when fixed as 'bad', he cannot but feel goose-pimplly good. Analysis is unacceptable unless there is good feeling about being bad. So long as not earth disturbing. Sometimes wonder why. Sometimes know. Mostly am not too perturbed. Mostly drop downhill in neutral. Mostly.

Sit on a pew in some foreign cathedral, prodding at that squared circle design. Here, apparently, solutions are found for the otherwise insoluble. Nothing. Being a shuffled participator in their renowned architectural 3-card trick also fails. For him dead, for me alive, there is no more jostling between synagogue, church, mosque. Too indulgent, too closely inside a game pleased by death's tickle. Too much fire, hell, too much brimstone for shapes of smile. Too many demands are made in elaborated ways. As far as we are concerned they can take their Abraham, Christ, Allah to any increasingly distant field of uncut yellow dry long grass. Leave them to talk. Talk until herds of cows fail to come home. Talk while ominous chuffing of an agricultural cutter's engine ploughs through a somewhat inane three-part axis.

At such a neutered level of goodness even he knows there is never a winner. Even if there could be, it would never be him. So he learns to live with unsung, beautifully transcribed, Solomon-like songs. Any level less, we sense, is so follow-my-leader as to be more dull than bearable. Not worth a wind blown candle flame.

I picture him lowered into cubic space, onto absorbent earth. See him again lying in her proximity. See his garden. Expanses carefully cut. Endlessly manicured as if he had all the time in the world. See his ancient plum tree, half fallen, half forked. See his bowed legs. Hear "Played with Ronnie Scott. Come for a ride. I bought this for our Wedding". See a sallow face.

Next time his first field, his second field, I, are three points, a decision about them will have been made.

*one cut one uncut
cars through neutral funeral
bring coffins closer*

s i l e n c e sounds of slow c e

Hankering after practical evidence of canoodling to hit in. 'back row syndrome'. That's what it's called. Then, an event of slow silence. Within screen activity, yet beyond. She, watching a love froth sequence, moves a bit closer. Tongue-delving, wriggle-feel potential. He told me there would be. He told me she could.

Screen images fill an auditorium with high sounds. In a back row of half-seen, half-felt, unspeakables reign. Feel for empty heartbeats. What is going on inside she? Mix with silent film, sounds, language, shapes pulled into others split colour tones! **Now, a very solid silence!** Not a binary heartbeat of *on/off*, not a simple counterpoint but a sensuous silence, a disruption closed to acoustic possibilities.

Words are ineffectual. Her silence, my silence suddenly overwhelmed by that of film silence. Unexpected sounds of slow silence. More than a makeshift non-sound, it is like a new frontier, a suspended visual code, quiet echoes of non-explanations, a thesaurus of distance glimpses. Here, words have no premium.

Hooked on an artfully designed plan, both transfix. Now, *very close*. Together as in the curiosity of sound prolonged emptiness, we cannot move. So engaged we even need touching is an event not a procedure. Caught up in imaginative slowness.

Now, listening to meanings of slow silence finishes. Just ends.

Sacrifice. Offers up sticky lips of lipstick. Welcomes slide hand inside tremble thin skirt riding high. Squeeze thigh, on top of my feels subsiding into her. Shapes quiver. Top your caught so very taut stockings. So very close to sounds of slow silence.

*silence of water
beneath an even surface
strong quintets rehearse*

special is of course is remarkable

*small crack in the road
she walks alongside it
but does not know why*

there's this road. it's broken up. but walk along it. there are plenty of roads. none are broken up. built to walk. don't walk them. can't. why don't I?

why walk this road? it's broken up. why do it? there's plenty of others that aren't. why not walk them?

don't know. this is broken up. but ruler straight. straight to its point. at which point it is also ruler straight. broken up only when it arrives at my feet. ruler straight but dwindles. no one seems to know why. asked them but they don't know why

i don't know. ask her. no? i'll ask her. why don't you walk this road? pardon me. louder.

don't walk roads. this is not my road. but don't know why. sky. straight above head height? always hardly ever. but sometimes look down. hardly ever. up above. there. all over me. but...

she doesn't walk roads.

i knew she wouldn't. do i know? it might help if she knew. i would like it. why should she? she doesn't walk this road. it is broken up. not her road. can she see special is of course is remarkable?

can she what?

walk this road? how can she? she looks up. at the sky. straight above. all the time. looks up to the sky. but beyond. not just sky. at the light above her head. she looks at anything above her head. straight above

her. but cannot walk this road. this is not her road.

are you the she who helps he to clean up broken road he walks?

don't know. don't know why she cleans the broken road. or he. grit edge swept. but is this the edge? where pavement closes down? where away pebbles slide? slide down beach? to rest. rest beneath jagged waves? under noises they make? well?

yes. but don't ask me what is it about. don't know it is about...

no i am not she who helps he clean the broken road. but know why he does it. pebbles do slide down. perhaps he does not clean the broken road. clean it to the edge. the edge where the pavement closes down. perhaps he doesn't clean it. ask him.

can't see him.

nor me.

can't see anybody.

doesn't mean i'm not here. look at that point where broken up road sweeps into horizon. see? sweep sweep sweeping grit to the edge. sweeping pebbles to where they slide. slide down the beach. see them resting under ragged waves. under soft sounds. but familiar as sweeping of sweepers broom sweeps sounds.

you look down. i look up. why do you do it?

yes. why does he do it?

i don't know why. why do you clean the broken up road?

because. because. because i do. because i am trained to. because it is in my head to. because i have lots to live up to? because it is appropriate?

because two leaves are down. because two leaves are up? she looks at them up. i look down. does someone have to? if they do could it be me too? i don't know. i don't know why you walk this broken up road? why no other? why? why?

don't know. but if i am this road. i mean. but if I am...?

you look up. most of the time you look up. why? why look up?

don't know. sky's up? bird sounds are up? up is special?

are you special? i mean are you inside special? who are you?

who? me?

yes. you.

don't know. know we are quartet. know that. know inside special is of course remarkable is.

Rustle. Crisp leaves on broken up road. Crisp leaves pause in wind waves. Parts hold back. Parts of the road pull open. Below tears apart. River of black cracks. Tributaries run away. **He** looks into water. Sees quartet. **She** looks up at what he sees looking down. Her distant head ripples. He sees upside down. They come together in irregular ways. None are perplexed. Broken up riverroad flows ruler straight. Dwindles away. She looks up. He looks down this broken road. Has to be said. How else could they know how special is this remarkable broken up road. Rustle of crisp leaves bounce against sounds breaking open is special of course is remarkable.

*straight road broken up
she looks up he looks down
to broken up road*

star path

*swollen river
stars in endless tributaries
in endless paths*

this *star path* exists for one walk. walk it today. celestial map points beyond a last road sign. from below there is little backbone, not much more than a winding waterway that continues to divide. interconnecting beginnings, each is an outgrowth of another. there is no end to such molten distribution inside billions of air pockets. on both sides, at end of sight, are others, similarly different. strategic points lead to three overlapping interlopers. they, pancake-shaped, regurgitate into a personal soundtrack.

*a star path crackles
on that timed light journey
another appears*

This first star path is mine. It cuts inside first breath, beyond networks. War adds more divisions. One cycle completes. Another begins. Paradoxical separations go unquestioned. 11 + ... Grammar... School... Entrance... Examination. Waiting results is a tributary. So are *their* feelings about these results, and... is this the way it is? *everything is gain for such a star path*. No second chances. Each moment a history of history. Final fissure encodes a butterfly-like nervous system. Embedded, glazed with sheens of closure, it adds underused maps to an already bumpy walk. For now I speed along an unexpected path. What starts it? Beyond secret multiple meanings, what outcome can there be? Forget questions. Forget tipsy emotions. This path folds into itself. Everywhere a fiery burst of water-exploded fish. Everywhere rushes everywhere. Everywhere soon will stop. Soon an end to divisions. Soon begins an intangible completion of sorts. For now forget...forget...for now

*with such speed
first star path seals a cliff sky
breath again spreads slow*

star route trails

**trails. some overlay
early star routes. furthest
weak shadow. alone**

part of my job is fascinating. unusually, the role description amplifies rather than handcuffs freedom. so i appoint myself 'Astrologer Royal'. start when i want, where i want. finish ditto. turn anybody into a star. or not. influential games may or may not affect those who stay in bed on friday 13th. predictable are the number who want to pursue a sanguine disturbance. some disapprove of star route trails. others seek reassurance of any passing love. ignoring orthodox sequential patterns, not mentioning 'mercury conjoins or trines with uranus, pluto luxuriates with venus, full moons wax in daft ways' does little to stop them following the scent. it is not easy to cope with such an intensity of desire. endowed with shaman and cassandra skills generates spectacular outcomes. but be warned! paths wherein-might-hideth-the-holiest-of-grails come hung with questions: "why disturb faith in powers beyond all that is rational? in their hour of gullible need should i be digging pits of despondence? do i really deserve so many benefits?" before flexing pavlovian reactions, before slipping on a holier-than-thou skin of pew wood or gel of hallow-be-thy-shallow relics, have some empathy with a once-in-a-lifetime eden.

too many stars. i know them. i do but what R their names.

Virgo

Virgo he-and-she displays a typical lack of confidence. Time matured vibes beam in on the lonely, the insecure. Usually a problem solver, you are now indecisive, fussily self-critical. Yet at any sign of an argument you package 'others' in a glacial freeze. A survival technique, it does not desert. If recently divorced you suffer post-marital headaches but, even so, remain epicurean. When self-pleasuring, notes sing higher. Temptations abound, but remain the unseen side of a high

fence. You are unhappy with the next 12 months. O.K?

Libra

A repressed ego make Librans grow fat. So it will remain. Disarmingly charming, you soft sell what is not yours. A Venus trap for the unwary, if a female you flap promiscuous wings. Not a scientific diagnosis, yet so mixed up with an unsustainable self-belief that it may account for decades of indecent dispute. Blind, soon you massage difficult situations. Only to worsen them! You are unfortunate in that it will see out your life. Your quietly aggressive balance, your need of peaceful solutions seems solid. But who knows? You have a languid sensuality that leads to short term relationships. Your chameleon sky turns puce as you slowly move on. C'est la vie, I suppose.

Sagittarius

Superficially freewheeling, inquisitive, flippant, the truth is cobweb-layered. Sagittarians love to entertain, but for all the wrong reasons. Almost beyond repair, hope is in finding a partner so relieved to be one that blindness shrouds what others see. Even then it is difficult to move beyond the idea of love to the actuality. Periods of spiritual dieting are needed. It won't happen because that prevents the shortsighted from exiting at your station. Fortunately, a Sagittarian arrow is an inaccurate affair; when it misses, the carelessness hurts. When it hits, you join in the bleeding to death. Unless an addictive masochist, run like hell. *"Don't look at me like that! Do you want it as it is, or a wishy-washy reflection?"*

Capricorn

A jealous spitefulness dogs those blighted with this sign. Half repressed by application of inappropriate devices, this

year will see them blossom - the price of Christmas and New Year coming within one time frame. A strong desire to be loved makes you vulnerable. If taken advantage of you raise a shield of harsh reproach. Cloyingly dependent, self-deceiving, you are enslaved. In the past over compensating by spreading sexual favours, there is no reason to suspect this year will witness an away goal. Before libertines rush in where angels fear to tread, note my observation vis a vis 'dependency'. *"Stop it! I'm only the messenger".*

Pisces

More a fence sitter than a balancing act. Indecisive! Can, simultaneously, face front, face back. This year be careful on which side of the fence you all fall down. Trust in simple awareness before flagellating yourself wearing your Humpty-Dumpty look-alike skin. We may not be able to put-you-together-again, may not allow somebody of the opposite sex to come tumbling after. Beyond this there is little to say other than your year will be banal. If you crave excitement, passionate, earth uplifting love, forget it! Be grateful for not being Sagittarius or Capricorn. *"Smile, for heavens sake, you're on Camera!"*

Aries

Behind a mellifluent exterior lies this year's Maestro Machiavelli. A top suite cute quality is how you justify your devious actions. Seeing a cherub in the mirror you cannot comprehend why others find you untrustworthy. Incredibly, you act in life-predicting charts. This year, from January 23, (believe that and you are an Arian) will be difficult. You fail to get your own way in areas viewed as important i.e. relationships, career, power. Your justifications for how you back-knife your way to the top of a misshaped ladder requires a total attitude enema. My best 10 out of 10 advice is – HIBERNATE! 7 out

as if totally to blame! So, your adopted enclave is amnesia. Beyond this, you are devoted, intelligent, sensitive, creative, an imaginative problem solver, not to mention an opportunist in terms of magic realism. You are exquisitely competitive, not sexually promiscuous while remaining attracted. Equally, you are easily transported to more ethereal positions. Scorpios are the great maker/manipulators of dreams. Linear logic is never a given, being more about restructuring. Forms re-sculpt. Disturbingly unorthodox images skitter along the surface of surreal, strangely juxtaposed forms. Your roles are stripped-bare-even...in a misnamed dreamland complexity. Strindberg's 'A Dream Play' is only the point of departure.

Gemini

Quick witted, rapid-fire speakers, restless. Life is frantic, yet you retain eternal youth. If a SHE, you excite men who never ask why. Sometimes works in reverse! Anti-routine, broadminded, you like variety. Also attracted to the highlights of power. You are, in a non-kitsch, small 'r' way, romantic, also eating knowledge like a cannibal eats flesh. Known for an ability to argue for and against contradictory beliefs simultaneously while coping with more than one emotional entanglement. That is unless interweaving with an Aquarian (of either sex). Many have been, and many more will be, twice married. Some of you dare go even further. Just watch your backs! There are some real devils out there trumping up hell fire as only they know how. They aim to frazzle you in sizzling fat.

Cancer

Hard working, but less creative than self-publicity would have us believe. You have a puritanical streak although when 'performing' it is with an uninhibited freedom. For reasons unknown, experience suggests many Cancer women are attractive to certain Aquarian men. When reciprocated the

result is fireworks day and night. Beyond this exultation, as neither are masochists, it is worth heeding those who advise against marriage (which would be nothing short of disasterville)! If, for you, I am incorrect, do not try to contact me. I refer you to that most beguiling quality of Aquarians to huff, puff, then lie in any shape or form to escape punishment, not to mention often being initially wrong (even if only slightly).

Leo

Like Taurus, a misnomer, known to most Leo's. The lion disguise is appropriated to bypass self-appointed moral guardians - but only when it suits. You can be kindly opinionated but a nitpicker. *"Listen, I'm only saying it to alert you to a tendency!"* It is said your genetic makeup compels officious leadership. A curious side effect of contemporary technology indicates that any inherent quality in this area is a Cabalistic 'cover-up'. The truth is that you are likeable. Your skill is appearing led while being delicately in charge. You attract affectionate love. Massage sessions help maintain calm. This year, break restrictions. Stay clear of the insecure. They need you as a fall guy or gal to prop up an ego short of a ladder.

Aquarius

Others may be sensitive, discerning, creative, altruistic, bursting with dynamic energy, have a highly developed critical faculty, sense of humour, be obsessive, but this is as flea-dust compared with Aquarians. Much they do is with commitment beyond necessity. Rarely do they see in black and white, so don't try to add greys! After long years of practice and not relying on role models, they are occasionally able to work in a Fourth Way dimension. Aquarians are mosaics of overlapping, ever more complex patterns. Giving so much to so few must

be compensation for a wintry birth. Downsides are just as extreme. Insufficient time is left to do too much. Aquarians understand the views, the positions of others, but often fail to take them into account. Most are surprised by criticism, perceived as superficial or incorrectly angled. You, this year, will be even more inept than usual at bearing-fools-gladly. In this mind mode you will edge fence sitters onto rocks or into the sea. You just about cope with those pottering along Aries and Taurus trails, or Librans who express anger before justifying infidelity, or those who adorn themselves with guru-like masks. To survive, leave them alone to play with the emotions of the vulnerable. One Aquarian attribute is a Bergsonian element that results in notable levels of energy actions with less than everyday names. Some trailblazers tire easily. These should hide from the triad of intuitive irrationality, emotional passion, intellectual adaptability of such intense aquatic animals. If, however, you want to join the game, play-with-fire, try persuading an Aquarian to be more tolerant towards you. A word of warning! When living within the Fourth Way they seem alien. Finally, one of their more beguiling qualities is an ability to contradict themselves, smilingly accepting this as an essential, organic part of life's ever-changing flux. Forgive them for they know what they do!

*evening sky
crowds with stars
from none a shadow*

"Listen! LISTEN! At least give me credit for coming clean! It's jUst a bit of F-U-N. a Joke. a De-vice. that's Right! NONE IS TRUE! Zilch! Rubbish! Means to an end! Well, think about it! Ask your vulnerable, over-responsive-to-flattery self this question. Can billions of us fit into 12 star tribes because someone else's device was a twelve-month coat hangar? What about birds, rats, trees, grass, sea, sand? Star power! Gimmeabreak No more of your Romantic lit-crit'. It's fissure, it's fracture, a cocktail mix of distortion and thingey-me-bobs that

creakily crack in eerie nights. Wwe'rRe in fLux, Endlessly ReMaking,
rE-modelling. No lifetime core. Broken Crutches. B r o k e n premises.
B r o k e n w e r d s. Ambiguities. Ambidextrous awe. Erasures. Self-
lies. Paradox personified. Sums up one flip of the proverbial coin.
O.K. maybe there is more than one point. To give you a chance".

***"Aaaaaaaaahhhh! Give me a chance! How dare Uyou? You
know not nothing, you spoofing shyster. Nothing! Nothing
about the props of dreams, Le jour de gloire, wanting-to-
win-the-big-one-with-no-effort. You can rest assured you
won't get away with mixing heads in porridge, hypnotising
fears before I waver, parody a dance to bed with you even
if it is the last senseless thing I shall ever do with u u u U
aaaaaaaahhhhhrrrrrrr!"***

"Whell, there yer go, me darlin'."

"aaaaahhhhhhaaaaaahhhh"!

***an eye flicker
constellations
live with her fears***

storm waters

“slim, separate shadows precede them. recognition of a gentle disharmony they are, inevitably, lit from behind. it illuminates, enhancing an illusion of togetherness. they eat together, talk, walk together. sometimes wonder whether they are so together. both tie thick shoelaces in strong double bows. with matches, no map, no compass, double-glazed warm clothes, they set off.”

“there’s this strip of rainbow. appears from nowhere. not yet a half circle, so cannot hold together both ends of the bay. curves over swathes of grey. just a strip. but each colour widening. resonates with magnetic definition. ends in an aura glow on that fixed line of a seas tight surface. ends in imagined puff streams. ends inside a 5-year-old.”

“reach that section of the glen where decisions are made. decide not to turn back, to rest before continuing. lie on an outcrop of flat rocks that spread the river’s width. watch da Vinci flame cloud shapes deform, reform. listen to insistent drumbeat of water skins. watch it stretch for a short torrent beat. See foam reflect in your eyes. watch a stag move majestically, a stag-beetle stagger. wait for curling glides of a watchful eagle complete. see clouds slither from sharper forms. racing heartbeats settle into a slower rhythm. on rocks together. in partitioned streams.”

*swollen river
noises a way down -
more black slugs*

“deep hums of water spurling. churning spurts of froth mossy rocks have to accept. loud noises become a repetitive counterpoint. an incised musical score of vigorous motion hurdles over patterns different from those that suckle seas. not even ridged stones, fallen from the highest peak, are still. or so it seems. drum skins for the torrent of beat, beat, beats”.

*wild water rushes
a thick foam of connections
sounds revel*

“But what is it?”

“Too early to say. Usually version 4 or 5 by first typing.”

“That’s not what I’m asking. WHAT is it beyond an even literary drone. Evidence of pride erosion? Demolition of safety barriers? Still cocooned inside a dribbling comfort zone? So far, no lightness, no understatement, no *judicious* concision. Lower case. speech mark paragraphs. 2 pathetic poems that masquerade as haiku do not a haibun make. Can’t say it’s much of a short story, either, with or without *swollen river* and *wild water* – what!”

“But it’s about us. Here. Now. That must count for some...”

“Only because we follow how we interpret he led. It is not about us, here, today, our journey. Why are we doing this? Why today? The weather forecast was for appalling rain from now on in”.

“Thought that implicit in our choice? That forecast! It’s bucketing down! Yes, I see the mist. I know we didn’t cross the bridge. Yes, I ignored you when you said we should. The fact is we are on the wrong side of the river. We have to go into the mist.”

“It’s getting worse. Can’t see. Listen to that river. It’s gone crazy. There’s no way we can cross. I’m sticking in this sludgy mud.”

“What did you expect - understatement? ‘a bad idea’ transforming to ‘interesting suggestion’, ‘mad bollocks’ to ‘a brave act’”

“Not a Big Nature Idyll, that’s for sure. No Dingley Dells. I love raw nature, too. From it carve heroic works of art, soften sharpness contours, tighten syntax shapes, improve special image effects, scatter wild goose gold egg dust, regiment chosen characteristics. This is dangerous stuff. Where’s the path now?”

“Got to Maternity I’ve back get Unit to. Hold hand. Some along go that approach. Others not. Difficult pinpoint to. Some different use ploys, go for detachment, personationality deny, claim texts theirs. Precise Flaubert so put long so ago, ‘be must God in like Universe, his everywhere present, nowhere any visible’. Another Flaw. Le juste device. Personality is reveals in every line sharp taut. Indited anonymity

is, grate gorge orewell baggage notwithstanding."

"What about you, what do you believe? Did you say you've got to get back to the maternity unit? You pregnant?"

"That you're right. It is dangerous. i am I. Male. you U, madam".

"My leg's stuck in a hole. Help me out. Can't stand much more of this. It's as bad as it... Give me your ha... Pull. A gain. Thanks".

broken bracken beneath crunched leaves a squelch of mud

"Stop talking stop. Give your, give (atishoo) to hold. Got you. I'll rucksack you along take path disappears down river edge to, damn torrent, across too wild here to be away swept so try down further before further widen. Why I do so often difficult find understand to you know to what I owe you're on about? What are you saying?"

"That this is riddled with posturing. Not anywhere is it sufficiently amusing in that kindly way we are told about. It is not neutral. All come from same mould as those security motivated exemplars. They are charged with moist romantic; replete with repeating devices so blatant, soporific smiles smatter across follow-my-I-love-you-my-leader masquerades. Style, minus a few, is insistently the same if telescope, not microscope, viewed. Simplicity groans into everyday meals of over-boiled, flat-leafed mulch. Concision is a toy borrowed. Ploys play with themselves under sheets until they craftily fine-tune a finale. If this rain fails, those two lazy, late night words will choke me. So play to it. If needed, intensify, not tone down, I say. Grab imagination by the balls".

"Stop, stop, stop. Where, stop, did, all that, stop, all come from?"

"Your language is on stilts. Obsessed with literature, myths, invention, experiments. Too clever by half then half again then..."

"But you...you just said to grab by the b... We can't cross here. No path. Get to higher ground before we slide into that maelstr..."

"See what I mean."

"I'm using short sentences. What more do you want? Look, there's a hut. Let's shelter. Light a fire. Get warm. Talk. Perhaps decide whether we are just living inside an emergent tale".

"If you want to."

"I do"

*rain inside them
an overgrown hut
their broken manger*

"That's better. Now I hear what you say. I'll light a fire. Well?"

"I suppose it is a misreading."

"Misreading what?"

"Was El Japanese Maestro a genius?"

"Of course. By definition. Perceived more than he... Changed things about. Conjured up attributes, devices didn't he. Put new fixes on... Follow-my-leader not his DNA. You know all this stuff."

"So he is to blame for the one-more-or-less-shape-fits-all-style fashion rather than the more difficult each-with-unique-demands?"

"Perhaps, but probably not. Can ancient oriental be responsible for occidental mishaps? Following his outcomes - is that The Way? Has 'following', the path of dilution, of diminution, much to do with he-a-master-Revolutionary? History's a risky commodity to take to market. Tempting to project onto such a silent screen. Difficult from this distance to know whether, in the midst of mountainous humility, a smidgeon of pride ever popped up. Am I overstating, making a mountain out of a m... I can't even say it"

"O Master! You do sound the part. My heart pounds. Why, I do believe the roof of our rotting shed is made from larger leaves."

"Style over substance, that's all it is. Topsy-turvy. Back-to-front. InsideOutside. Bit too close-side to flatside to see it as it is side".

"Yes, but isn't the fire a bit too high, O denigrating arsehole?"

"No. I am nobody's Master. I'm feeling better though. Warmer".

"Where, if you so wanted, majesty, would you take us? What do?"

"Would cross us over this torment of a rushing river; that is what I would do. Nothing. Suggest: no publishing. Debate to reduce levels of inverse humility. Replace deathbed haiku with a writing bonfire. Definitions? Banned. Ditto modern versions of he-who-should-not-be-named, Presidents of Societies with less than 500,000 debating members, ravaged nature, hills, glens, Western memories of Tokyo, Kyoto, cornfields, understated marital concerns, daughters' pain relationships, mixed marriages, only

short sentences, only simple language, non-complex content, good taste, everything 'finely crafted', anything that maims, limits you, limits yours, paralyses devices, Adult evening class love affairs with insignificances, some conceptual blocking processes, characteristics that lead to more-of-the-same. Enough here to stop eyes scratching out appearances of divergence rather the minor variations on a theme they are.

You still with me?"

Yes. Bored. Won't ask what team you support. Do you realise no 'and' anywhere. What has that done to it? What are you doing?"

"Taking off my clothes. You should, too. Need to dry before we catch our deaths. Sounds an odd game; catch death. Anyway..."

"Yes, I must. Yes, I will. Here. Burn them. Burn them to red smoke. Nude in the flickering orange fireglow. Nude. A new start."

*bones of ancient men
forever storm waters
a rainbow half here*

"we can cross."

"safe stones are only three-quarters of the way over."

"have to jump the last bit."

"you are joking!"

"come on, here we go. now. Over. Over. Over. Jump, Gea-Tellus, Mother-Of-All-Things who flows on irresistibly, mistress of all, our protective risk-taker, soon to be as indifferent to morality the weird as to punctuation the obvious. so, was it a wet, dangerous mud slither along Glen Sannox or are we a half rainbow sort of tale?"

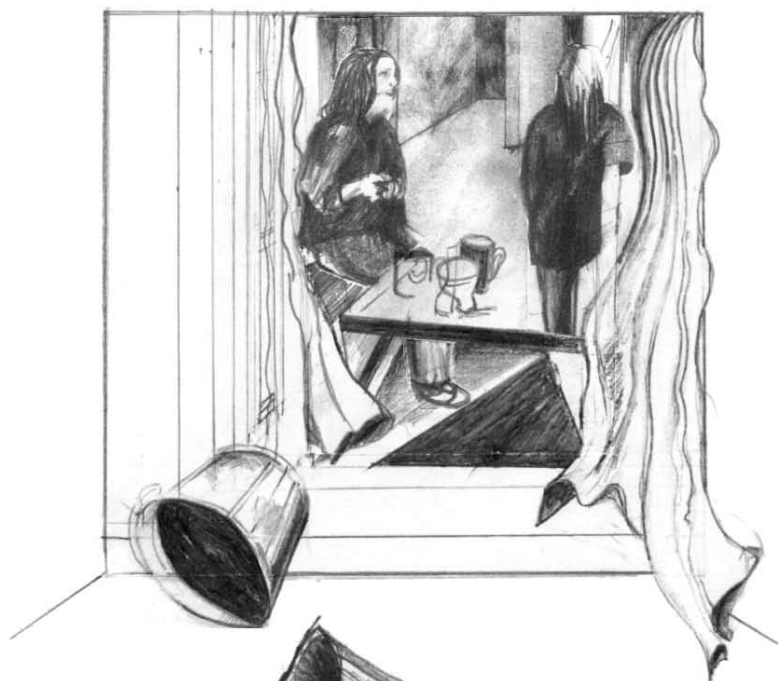
"The Former. Must already be outside someone's word limits. Language? Over quirky. Content too complex. Themes overlap. What about the one where you fall out of the window with an empty pail while I sit in drinking tea, discussing the why's of forelock touching to myth, allegory, things that go bang in unsustainable nights with unacceptables like being an unsocial person conjoined to a worked on long sentence. Worst of all is the polemics. That's rubbing noses in the very rubric of pig shit. Is this more than a drenched, muddy walk?"

“Not your masterpiece of understatement. POLEMICS. That hurt. An integral part of the storyline, that’s what it is, an aspect of an imposing device, one of the contrasts, as are those different shapes of language. Surely, in this context, it’s acceptable.”

falls past a window her empty pail tumbles after

“So split. It’s No its Maybe Its Yes ...Can fall upwards out of the window, you know. See. Can play silly word games with the best of them. U reading or ready for bed? Yes, i know U know.”

*half rainbows
become a fools paradise
mud hidden pitfall*



10 days

10 days ~ each a different trail ~ each a new problem a new solution
~ everyday a new silence ~ the platonic solidity of some ~ everyday
the same ~ yet not ~ each twists ~ each turns ~ rolls up ~ rolls
down ~ each moves to an interior ~ meandering circularity brings
us back ~ each starts at the end ~

today's climb finishes and begins yet more hills

~ each beginning new ~ each a start ~ each a completion ~ one a
journey of mangled recollections ~ another just collections ~ a third
shuffles misty language ~ churns ~ dredges up see-pyat ganenet her-
ringpull curlowe herron sanpdiaper duneline grindshank p-lover ~
more trawls of pictures ~ more sounds of broken breathing ~ each
new day criss-crosses rocks of earlier days ~ each day binoculars
moderate the beach ~

shore edge

*in every dark direction
the sea*

moves backwards

as

cormorants swap this rock for that

~ watch the sea ~ clean flap of wings ~ one pushes off ~ slow into
heavy speed ~ each day new sounds ~ today pierced with harshness
~ bird trails tour the shore ~ paul klee lines make unfamiliar maps
~ new continents of joined dots ~ here solid there a liquid flow ~
they contain ~ constrain ~ delude combine to make other trails ~
scarious infest ramblurrs marsh on blunted by brain ~ sometimes
i succumb ~ ghost days appear ~ then disappear ~ knock knock
against this mish mash of fading lines ~ knee-grazing climbs to escape
an inescapable condition ~ sometimes it exists close by ~ there for the
touch ~ sometimes it sleeps sideways to memory ~ here even when
invisible ~ easily forgotten ~ always the illusion of easy distance ~
a distance to escape ~ optional dangers incubate ~ tingles incubate
with mist nearly tangible ~ confusion could reign ~

when cows howl like wolves do not drink milk

day 10 ~ 1 way ticket ~ one extra destination ~

*new mountain trail
a challenge for one so small
and delicate pink*



thinking

Lie on dry grass. look up ahead. See into layers from an enclosed backdrop of blue. Outgrowth clouds disconnect. Below are fast moving threads of stretched white. Framed space is now a cinema screen of a fourth maybe fifth layer. Lie on dry grass looking up. Then it slips. One layer folds inside another. Cotton bud shapes unravel. Nearby layers of musty greens spread hills. Aerial perspective melds within a wrapped around crescent valley.

lie on such dry grass

thinking about how it works

a trapeze rainbow

am on dry grass

thinking?

where

thinking?

do not know

what i am

which like that trapeze rainbow supposes i am alive. alone. lie on blue grass. what else can it mean? so much disrupted connection.

what am i

thinking?

lie no more thinking anymore of those who do not anymore think.

lie on black grass lie on white grass lie thinking

about those so sunk that even thoughts of thinking hide - what did you call it again? – “*miasma witness of no-things*”. that’s it. weird. no more thoughts about thinking. lie on wet grass. think a question. can you anymore know if anymore you are not thinking?

Beyond a crescent valley lie ashen mountains, fomenting pyramids of dead thoughts. zero + zero. No behind. No front. No threads of cloud. No musty greens clinging onto hills. Hurry inside a sepia cornfield noising thoughts against handmade poppies. Lie inside a cornucopia of seeds with snug smug thinking. Think faster. Consult a crevice of buttercups that follow deep cadmiums toward a distant green dusk of lemon yellows fading.

rises from her bath

disturbed water sucks over

his thoughts of thigh hills

this time it is it really is different

*streamintostreams
becomeriversbecomepumps
ofbloodseedwings
passingheartbeatsbecometorrents
insideoverwhelmedeyes*

Fed up last time. Rain. Every day - rain. Every night - rain. No interval. Not everydayeverynight rain. Not gardenintegrating rain. This is incandescent cascades. Rumbustious rivers swell with ear-thrumming beats. Cacophony of jumbling churns torrents into wasted days. Dissonance from insidetop to outsidebottom. Every deep crevice fills. Cracks collapse mud. Nowhere is less than demonic downpouring. Cloud-flooded sun disintegrates inside streaks. Rampaging clouds dismay, are wildest of mangled dreams. Unendurable. From outside such inside storms midges erupt.

*more midge clouds appear
more lightning more thunderstorms
rivers chase down mud*

Erratic cubes of movement mutate. Midges revel in such splintered days. A blood gathering ballet, performed on hillside shrub land, on shores, on rocks that glisten, darkens with their light mass. We succumb to their profligacy. Departure fast-forwards.

*star loaded night
follows a clean day
yellow with gorse
a cloudless sky
fills an open space*

From Arran to Kintyre broken lines of orange stretch tides thin.

this time	it is	it really is	different
<i>pool of seawater</i>	<i>mother watches children</i>	<i>watched by fish</i>	

‘Thunderguy’ – Isle of Arran

*a moon
even in shadow
her wet eyes*

Grey and more
Drizzle
Clouds drift, pull lower over Meall Biorach
Fall into heather at Doire Fhionn Lochan

some deep
others near the surface
so many pitfalls

Town clothes, town shoes, town socks
 Drag of heavy waves
 As sea-served crags fix
 And trees in Coirein Lochain diffract
 Drizzle and more

wet rocks
they reflect
his going

Elevation hurts
Unlaundered landscape
So raw it tangles
Drizzle blends topmost Lochs
As it straggles down

*path bumps uphill
parallel streams churn stones
on the way down*

Mud slides upwards
Disappears in twists of a downturn
Illusions spill in clots like sour milk
Drizzle Alone

once he came
now she takes his pain
on her own

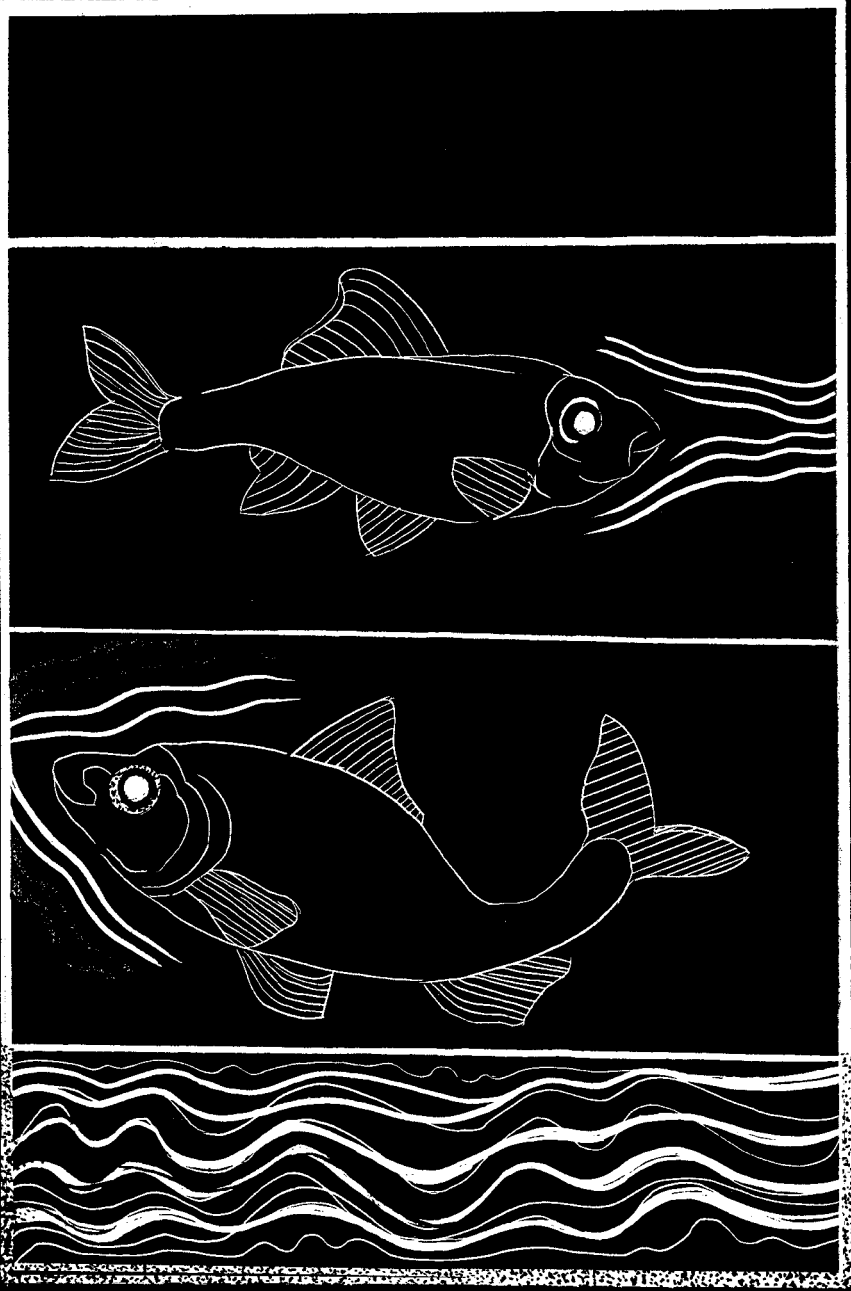
tiddlers

clean river
algae fish dreams
and and
wait

Glass jars. Always there! Glass neck shapes in hedges, in gardens. Sun works them visible. Select one. With irregular fishing net amble towards an interned river Wandle. Night flow undulates dream banks of a not-now-but-sometimes-drifting-into-wondering-how-rivers-are-allocated-disturbing-names-or-where-else-this-one-wandles. Back insideoutside untidy landscape. Gaps fill with collages of fame scenarios. A sidestep to make room for others. Today Great Fisherman. Tackle a Whale - to consternation of a few, more experienced. Walk to Wandle absorbs Great-Film-Star-Of-The-Soft-Hero-Formula, H.G.Wells, O'Henry, Lamb, D.Thomas, Moses, Dickens, Poe, Eisenstein, Seven Samurais, Bergmann, Klee, Botticelli, Cezanne, Thurber, Poe, Trotsky, Mann look-alikes, Marx/Freud/Bergson/Einstein pupa. Anything that promotes chorus-lines to centre-stage lit by hundreds of deft shapes.

Genetic power is honed with irregular practice Fish succumb inside this easily won game River reduces to a cylindrical mud splattered water-in-motion jam jar No problem if disguised as Mickey Rooney after one of his slick dance routines Lay face close to reflecting water Use cupped hands Anglers prize is mine Downstream washes casual success With bare hands extra tiddlers caught Will younger brother of so-want-to-kiss sister be pleased? Bag of liquorices just as good? What is she doing this precise moment? What touching? Where? Interior montage blends into success of shark catching Tingles of easy power Simulacrum of unbridled nature swishes inside a glass jar Safe-in-my-hands Sun clarifies status Seem unaware of contracted environment Seem oblivious to... But only they... Only they...

ancient silence of new fish dirt in his nails



What with joggling homebound paths and pavements and
watchers, water is muddied. Dirtied fish swirl back, swish forth.

so i listen for breath of minnows more red kites glide

Sit on a reddened doorstep. Wait for habitat to settle before going in.
They watch fish circulate. She shows window to jam jar. Says, “*Well,
whatever next!*” Maybe “*well I never*” or just “*Well!*”

He looks long. He looks hard. Says, “***Something’s wrong here! Not
enough to feed even one...suppose they’ll grow***” Familiar sound of
understated-serious-jocular.

“*You teaserla*” she says. “*Perhaps we can find a big pickling jar. You’ll
have to wash it really clean, though. Back garden for them. In sunlight.
They’ll like that. Do they eat grass?*”

“Do they? Maybe” he says **“Shouldn’t you first take out those that
have exchanged themselves for fingerling ghosts? Did you know they
do that to make room for others? Clever fish, tiddlers are!”**

“Perhaps I’ll break some grass into little bits for them”

“OK! But hurry. I’m feeling hungry”

*river colours
no ritual ceremony
for insideout fish*

TIME TO SLEEP UNDER THE STARS

AT THE TOP OF GOAT FELL. TIRING
CLIMB AT ~~THE BEST~~ ^E TIME OF YEAR.
NIGHT IS SLOW TO COVER. LATE
STREAKS OF PINKS MUDDLED UP
~~WHAT~~ LIGHT EMERALD GREENS.
THEN A CURVED SPREAD OF STARS.
ENDLESS CHAINS. ~~OF THEM~~. THERE
ARE SO MANY THE BLACK SPACES
BETWEEN REDUCE, ~~AND~~ INTENSIFY.
LOOK ~~BACK~~ DOWN ON ENDLESS
TOPS OF PINE TREES NO LONGER
RECOGNISABLE. THEY SHAPE
END OF DAY COLD. A DESCENDING
SHAFT OF NIGHT FATIGUE. JU
ST A HINT OF WIND FROM THE E
AST. MORE ~~AND MORE~~ STARS CLO
SE IN. FAR BELOW A SILENT SEA,
UNRUFFLED, SLIPS INTO YESTERD
AY. TONIGHT IT DOES NOT EXIST.
EYES SLIP TOO. THE CERTAINTY
OF THE CLIMB ALSO SLIPS INTO
A DIFFERENT ~~LEVEL~~ OF UNAW
ARENESS. NOW IS A TIME TO
SLEEP UNDER THE ENDLESS
SHAPES OF STAR SIGNS. NOT
EVEN A WISP OF THE NEBULO
US. A SUDDEN STAR OF DAVID.
THE UNEXPECTED SOUND OF A
MEADOW PIPIT. A LAST SCREAM.

at least the north light
star decorated tablecloth
x a night party

Underground 23/12/05

*last in a long queue
bland faced ticket server
does not look up*

**Walthamstow Central - Brixton
Central London Journey Planner**

**Escape from Captivity
Please keep feet off seats
join us now travelinsuranceandgo**

**Movie of the year
RETAIL THERAPY
Detoxil – clean yourself from the inside**

*Be a Part of It
WinTer Sa&eS
Kafka on the shore
“we shall not be stopping at Finsbury Park due to an earlier incident of
a person falling under a train.”*

**NO SMOKING!
“6000 Civil Servants get Marching Orders”
WAY OUT to...**

*acoustic sounds
in the underground tube
no one sings*

**Romeo and Juliet
“Don’t Play With It In Public
pocket your mobile before someone else does”**

**King Lear SORRY!
Watch your Back!
Where’s Your Child?
Cecil Court – *Home of Rare and First Edition Book***

panty line
moves up the escalator
Out of sight Out of mind

wonder if

wonder if this is the end.

after all is said and done
what a needless thing to wonder.
there is *always* a next to undertake,
unravel, undress, unbundle, unthread,
understate, unfetter, unfathom, unfreeze,
unfix, unhang, unpoise, unhinge, untie, unarm,
unbaffle, un-unisonant, unpacify, unblunt, unimpede,
unpath, unrestrain, unrebuke, unsettle, unseal, unnerve,
unworld, untether, unbaffle, undo, unbalance, unenclose.

after all is said and done
there are all those YES, YESes, NO, NOes
to homage, love, disobey
and to play games with.
after all is said and done
games of 'heretics' are there to play
and are *such, such, such* fun.

the message is clear:
wonder if this is the end
is such an endless thing to wonder.

*dead wood
of an ancient apple tree
pink camellias glow*

