

# VERMEER & A STONY BEACH



stanley pelter



# **Vermeer and a stony beach**

**Stanley Pelter**

**George Mann Publications**

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also by Stanley Pelter

*Word Plays*

*Coming on Lately*

*Seventeen is sufficient*

*i meet U in the inbetweenitee*

*Pensées*

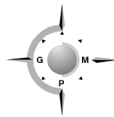
*a moment is forever*

*past imperfect*

*& Y not?*

*insideoutside*

*lightly scented short lived words and roses*



George Mann Publications

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## Preface

Mony appel is bright with – vite      many an apple is bright  
and Bitter with – inne      without and bitter within  
*anon*

**“What’s the use of a book” thought Alice “without pictures and conversation?”**

Alice in Wonderland      Lewis Carroll

When Rabbi Noah, Rabbi Mordecai’s son, assumed the succession after his father’s death, his disciples noticed there were ways in which he conducted himself differently from his father, and asked him about this. *I do just as my father did*, he replied. *He did not imitate, and I do not imitate.*

*Martin Buber    Tales of the Hasidim – Later years. 1970*

**“He calls out jab into the earth you lot you others sing now and play he grabs at the iron in his belt he waves it his eyes are blue**

**Paul Celan**

*(He refused to have this poem reprinted in Anthologies because he felt it to be too direct, too explicit, asking of poetry that it be open to the unexpected, the unpredictable, the indeterminable. His were ‘messages in a bottle’, which might or might not be picked up).*

*he created offence but in so doing has revealed one important fact: raising interesting and new questions that contradict everyday commonsense orthodoxies is sometimes controversial. And if you aren’t sometimes challenged and appalled by some ideas, you haven’t really begun to grapple with them.*

**Sunday Times**

**Any work of art that can be understood is the work of journalism**

Tristan Tzara

スタンリー・ペルター  
*Stanley Pelter*



## Introduction

**‘Vermeer and a Stony Beach’** is Stanley Pelter’s fifth collection of Haibun. With its roots in an impoverished wartime childhood, where he was an evacuee separated from family three times between the ages of four and eight, its title comes from the story of how, on the day he is accepted at art school, he and his mother escape their extensive Council Estate for a rare visit to the seaside. There she, almost illiterate, gives him a gift of a book on the painter Vermeer. Like the fact-based title story, this collection is about the displacement and wondrous happenings, metaphorical and actual that can spring from difficult times and unpromising circumstances. But, at its heart, it is all about the creative process: art as magic, catharsis, an escape route, igniter of senses and a road to transformation.

The haibun in **Vermeer and a stony beach** are usually multi-layered, with levels of simplicity and complexity that give the work depth and richness of language. The best of them have, even when reflecting on memories, an immediacy of feeling that plunges the reader directly into the moment. His haibun are often dark, but many are surprisingly humorous. It is humour, which often subtle, is ‘soft’, never a sharp knife.

As with *‘Past Imperfect’* (collection one), the starting point of many of the haibun is autobiographical. Not rose tinted, there is magic realism, surreal imagery, new language, an understanding of one scientific creative process. His method of reflecting back in time is also unconventional, being more a slipping between fiction and reality, of a groping for the warts-and-all contradictions, differences and similarities between people, nature, processes and events.

Poor culinary skills, loss and separation, friends killed in split second bomb explosions, division between a distant school and the local one left behind, war-surviving teachers, are juxtaposed and contrasted with illuminating first experiences. A working class father buys a first piano; a mother takes him to his first opera and ballet and buys his first artist’s book. All entice into creative realms of mystery, invention, and wonder.

A world of banality is interwoven with extremes that form a

background to core themes, which appear again and again in his work. Content is a way into them, a way of remembering those bits of life not rounded and complete, but which have sharp edges and fissures that enable penetration beyond the surface of content. It provides clues, hints and intimations of a more profound range of meaning.

There is an intense intimacy to his writing, or rather to the sensation of reading it, which goes beyond the usual sense of presence in haiku. It infuses poetical prose and haiku alike. Grammar, punctuation and syntax are scythed, honed and sharpened. It is often manipulated in order to disrupt everyday sensibility. Distancing conventions, formalities such as full stops, capital letters, haibun without the words *and* or *the*, and many others, are stripped away, to be replaced with rhyme, musical devices, pitches and motifs, melodic structuring and pacing providing subliminal rhythms that permeate the work.

The haibun are skilfully constructed. Yet it feels he has no preformed idea of what is to be expressed. There is a sense it works through experimentation, taking language on a sensuous walk. Mostly these coexist in the physical world and within his personal consciousness, simultaneously merging past and present. First and foremost is a sensation of being. As a result, there is an empathy and generosity of feeling that enables the haibun to so successfully express the human condition. Paul Klee referred to drawing as taking a line for a walk. For Stanley Pelter writing is akin to tending seeds. Himself an artist and gifted teacher, his writing is infused with visual and sensory imagery. Concepts, emotions, language, transmute into visual forms and allusions, integral to the work.

Young, haibun is already a definition, rule-laden genre. These to a visual artist are provocateurs, prompting questions, analysis and reassessments. It stimulates pushing, stretching and the breaking of restrictive barriers. Adherence is a signifier of amateurism, of playing safe, conforming, a need to fit in. A graduate of the Royal College of Art, Stanley Pelter makes haibun as he makes art, with a compulsion to involve a personal, tried-and-tested creative process, employing the most appropriate language and syntax to best express desired outcomes, especially in relation to sensory experiences. This infuses his haibun with an alchemical surrealism that, after revisiting, often

reveals new perspectives and meanings. Risk-taking is fundamental to, but only one element of the creative process, and this process is of unceasing interest for him. In each of the collections there is more than one haibun that describes or is the primary content of this process. In earlier collections it includes *it works! the gift, juxtapositions, headcases*. In this, one example is *tree of life*.

***This Sun Burns Dark*** is a marvellous example of him at his rule-breaking best. Full of symbolism, allegory and allusion, distorted grammar and syntax, an imagined, metaphorical not fleeting event turns prose into poetry: all the heresies are masterfully exploded. It is a poignant, powerful poem, written as age and infirmity encroach on his life and thoughts, with an acute connection between a failing heart and the solar eclipse.

*this is not a sun to desire. not a ripe fruit sun. this sun is fire within dark.  
fire dark red that burns everything to ash. dark ash. this is no sun god.  
this sun is dark. so dark we are lost inside its black heat. outside is a taut  
ball of silence. epicurean lips wither.*

Repetition creates rhythm. Arrhythmic pulses become waves, become sweats, become, on another level, ancient forebodings. There are allusions to Dante's inferno and the heat of hell fire, and haikai references with that element of linking repetition, while the performance nature of haikai emphasises the failing performance implicit in the event. This time the author is, as we all will be when our time comes, alone.

In '**it is a day like many others**' the poet introduces us to wartime boys playing with imaginary props.

*Time to converge, like an L.S.Lowry painting. Time to play. Waiting, we  
mimic cricket or, minus ball or even enough flesh to make two teams,  
play fantasy football.*

Then real bombs drop, a harsh and difficult transition into reality. The description of the mothers' skirts synthesises a complex concept with a powerful, searing image, that alludes both to the fantasy of the boys' games and the mistaken perception that their mothers can be all protective.

*New drone. Awesome. Appearance of finned shapes. Future speeds across a high sun flat sky. Neither thin buildings nor we are prepared. Wasp spitfires buzz elliptically. Gunfire sting hits targets. Aerial explosion. Boiling metal rains to earth.*

*Louder drone. Coded 'Red For Danger'. Mothers scurry, use aprons as umbrellas. We peep from under safety zone. It drops down straight line of an extended ruler. Pilots veer off at this stage of a rocket's career. Fall from hot sun, blue sky is fast, drop heavy. Shock waves pulse through flesh. Bodies bend. Bodies melt. Bodies incinerate. Road shapes corrupt.*

*her shadow  
on his bedroom wall  
all that is left*

The haiku steers us into new layers of feeling and meaning, recollecting a mother both absent and present, in contrast to the childhood imaginings that she would always be alive. It is as unreal as for those at Hiroshima, as for any of us.

Not all these poems make easy reading. Some punch you in the face. Some send your head spinning. Patricia Prime describes the experience in her review of *slightly scented short lived words and roses*. 'Reading these poems I pictured myself arriving at an amusement park, only none of the rides are familiar. I considered I could break my neck or be catapulted into the sky. It's only poetry, I remind myself, and climb on board. I'm having fun and I don't want it to end.' Jane Reichhold, reviewing the same book, said this is 'a book to be dipped into, some pages savoured for days, with ideas taken up the way one studies a faceted diamond in the sunlight'. The same is true of this collection. Sometimes the rhythm of words, and syntax structure seems almost irrational to conscious analysis unless maybe read in one breath and without stopping to think. If felt, heard, tasted, ingested, the completed jigsaw becomes coherent, like sense being hard-wired directly into the subconscious that leads us back to the pre-conscious.

Though arranged alphabetically, the poems fall into three broad themes: **Awakenings to Art; The Distortions of Power; Aging and Illness.**

## Awakenings to Art

One of the key ‘**stony beaches**’ that gives a context to these themes is the Second World War bombing of London and the young Stanley’s periods of evacuations. Previous collections describe how temporary ‘mothers’ and ‘older sisters’ acted out their fantasies, and created some of his. Stricken with scarlet fever, in those distant days a serious illness, he wakes in a Leeds hospital to find *a first-ever-christmas-socking*, and to see the shuffling silhouette of his *shabby-coated-never-before-left-London* mum. Here begins a realisation of an attachment to his mother that is both magical and deeply emblematic. On his 13<sup>th</sup> birthday, she gifts young Stanley, Dick Barton fan and unwilling Grammar School rugby scrum half, the unlikeliest atheist bar mitzvah present - a trip to the Opera, to ‘Carmen’. We sense the excitement, and oddness of the pair, the reassurance of her physicality tethering him to a new and more explosive reality.

*Out of nothing. How found? How paid? A London Theatre on Saturday. Underground station excitement walks into blaring sounds. Eyes flutter into Theatre-land. Erratic lights blink On Off. Ecstatic posters. Large photographs of stars jostle for importance. We short-step forward. She wears her black, pavement length, only coat. Carries her always-shopping bag. Me as tidy as untidy conveys. She holds my arm. I am already a warmer sky shower of inexplicable vapours.*

*chameleon eyes  
beetles flounder upside down  
in slime trail of slugs*

A kind lady rents him a pair of opera glasses that enable him to see (literally and metaphorically). He is no longer an outsider but a part of the events as we, reading the haibun, also enter.

*Distant stage of this emotional bombshell sucks closer. All is within focus-touching distance. Solo voices, interlacing voices, flamboyant music, subtle music, garish dancing, mobile patterns of criss-crossing people dancing, illusionary settings, multi-coloured clothes transfer onto me. Ordinary transforms. All that is extraordinary is ingested. Impossible to digest.*

As they leave the theatre, his head buzzing, we enter his brainstorming, the visual incoherence of outside crowds and noise, the sounds still there and the sense of dislocation. He feels different from others who haven't shared the experience, from his own day-before-self; 'special, like Joseph'.

*Out into clutter. Heads clatter. Sounds of an out-of-tune shoe duet. Alone inside a change. Bedazzled, some part senses a conundrum inside this secret woman holding my arm as we slowly edge toward our subterranean journey home.*

Is he really alone in this transformation? The poem ends:

*Again she breaks my mould. Again taken away by a silent woman in black, to be beguiled by an event choreographed into a cathartic weft warp dream... She is what it is All about.*

Had she imagined herself the opera singer for a few hours, or Carmen the dancer, or both? Does he realise his own passion may be echoed in her? Perhaps here begins his awakening to an adult consciousness of his mother as a woman who can be transposed by the same passions as him but has kept hers secret.

It is a theme continued in the title poem *Vermeer and a stony beach*, as he reads to her.

*Wants to know about him. Watches my mouth slip into top speed gear. Moving into the distance, she begins to doze, to reshape her various bits. Vermeer will remain in my collection because she gave it. Like she once travelled from a cancerous Council Estate to our first Opera, entrance to our first ballet. Vermeer. Opera. Ballet. Pop, pop, pop goes conventional parameters.*

The concluding haiku is poignant and densely upholstered, an indication of striving. There are clues to an actual Vermeer painting, but also of a failure to fulfil.

*paint side up  
canvas on a red carpet  
virginal closed*



*Carmen* tells of an awakening to Opera, *Vermeer* and a stony beach to Art, while *Strive boy strive* humorously evokes his initiation to poetry and, something that comes to permeate his work, the sounds of language itself. A war-shocked teacher displays a manic passion for poetry that is clearly mesmerising.

*“Strive, boy, strive”. That, he repeats, “is escape route numero uno off that interminable Council Housing Estate of yours”, shouts this Welsh evangelical war survivor who, sometimes with closed eyes, for most of a lesson recites poetry in Welsh. Without understanding a word, we are captivated, fascinated, scared. Shapes his lips make, buzz he is giving himself, draws us closer to his magnet. Sometimes, he translates one or two. Even with meaning, they remain strangled English...It remains an experience in which nobody dare intrude.*

The sensuality in the event and in the poem is cathartic.

### ***The Distortions of Power***

In the stories of youth, Arts are discovered, passions inflamed. In maturity they become his path from banal day-to-day existence to a broader understanding. Thoughts begin to wander into fantasies that oscillate between parallel realities.

People in power, people seeking to assume power, to control, order, subjugate, signal alarm bells in a Jewish poet, a former child witness to techniques of dictatorship. Stanley Pelter was a post war Conscientious Objector. He objects vociferously to injustices wherever he encounters or witnesses them. It makes him a wise teacher, good friend, impassioned opponent - not the easiest of triads. In ***Salt of the Earth*** we get an insight into his character during an exchange.

*You're a right difficult bastard. You know that, don't you?*

Maybe. No. Just am what I...

*You're difficult. Can't understand yer clever-dick writin'*

Don't feel it. Just am what I am. That's all there is to it.

*You're difficult.*

If you say so.                      Wish I knew.                      Don't.

*For heaven's sake                      why not?*

Why for heaven's sake?

*Because once...in a musical accent, an abnormal teacher singsang a song to a room of nearly sweetness, to nearly light: “dificuult peepul arrre thee sss-alt of thhe urrth, wun grreatt resapee mix of animull, vegeetabull, minurralls. They stand up to peepull oo wood uthrrwyse trrie tooo gveltt urway with murda, an’ sucherlike.”*

Ironically, the abundance of people in positions of ill-fitting power increases with age, with technology, with bureaucracy, as we become more dependent on them. They can be found at the end of the phone, in a clinic, in institutions, in committee meetings. In *Vermeer and a stony beach* we again get to meet some of them. in *Conshie* – he has to justify his aim to become a conscientious objector to a powerful tribunal.

*Large Council Chamber of Fulham’s Town Hall is where the Tribunal is convened, a space transformed as if by a fish-eye lens. Three-man tribunal team is high, high, above. They lean forward, faces expanded into fairground mirror caricatures.*

*auditorium court  
air grows thick  
with subversive techniques*

Distortions that mutate from the fear of or anger felt towards abusers of power is humorously echoed when, in *fucking dentist*, in a great deal of pain, he visits the hospital dentist only to be instructed to strip off and be examined ‘down below’.

*What the fuck am I doing standing on this fucking chair, trousers around me ankles, her staring at me fucking cold, waist-down-body? Stupid cow. My tooth is up here, hole head. Up. Up. What’s she doing now?*

Unable to speak, desperate to stop the toothache, he parries her emasculation with his own way of undermining this misuse of power, distorting the pain into comforting, silent obscenities.

*Why can’t she keep her fucking unblinking fucking eyes above me cock, her hand somewhere other than me balls while she stares me out? Fucking prickly hell! I love swearing like this. Invisible. Her flat dentist face is*

*slyly deadpan. I look ahead, an indifferent surface.*

More often, as in **vixen**, his poems transmute abusers of power into a swirling theatre of beasts and marionettes.

*she-wolf plays with knives  
in a lively abattoir  
hors d'oeuvre of fresh blood*

Symbolically childish or bestial, they are described by the infantilism of their behaviour and so distanced from reality.

In **her sharp faced look** we find two, lined up in a meeting.

*beyond her sharp-faced raucous-cawing are silent surges of  
embarrassed disbelief. knife stabs a fellow countryman. harsh face  
stands awkwardly on a sandbank waiting to again centre-stage.  
it will. it always does.  
There is always, always, always someone ready to take her place.*

*secret practice run  
raucous emotion  
bursts as a bombshell*

### **Aging and Illness**

This collection contains a number of delicate, haunting haibun about illness and aging that speak of the disorientation and fears that accompany consciousness of one's own mortality. Which middle-aged person doesn't identify with the initial feelings in **loss**, when the poet speaks of his memory lapsing?

*Lose so much. For as long as fading is memory I have lost things;  
objects, thoughts, senses, ideas, words. Lose tickets, clothes, ability to  
dream. Even changes are lost. Soon after, names of anything lost sight  
of gone.*

But the disorientation of this loss shifts into other kinds of loss, a dislocation not only from objects, but also from the world and loved ones. He jokes about losing things, tell himself he doesn't care,

but there is a sense of panic and urgency to the plea.

*Then comes night, comes stars. For one minute there are millions. Next, all lost in scabrous cloud. Don't let me lose you. Don't lose me.*

Losing oneself also becomes a fear, the sense of whom we are being inextricably bound up in how we came to be. Time and the chronology of events is the key method of organising memories, but when one loses memories one also loses the time of which they were a part. In the haibun **a clock stops time** the poet, anxious to fix a broken clock, a metaphor for an ailing heart, grows impatient at a lack of progress.

*Give me the key. I'm tired of waiting. I'll do it. Time needs to be sorted out, otherwise we will be its' servant, which is topsy-turvy to how we live isn't it? What happens everyday would be confused. One minute I'm playing chess with Monsieur Duchamp. The next it is obliterated. Mad. Where's the key?*

But it's too late; time rewinds back to his childhood. He re-works a scene from an earlier haibun, **the gift**, where he and his parents marvel at his 'green fingers' and ability to grow fruit and vegetables of the highest quality.

*It's getting dark. It's must be 5 o'clock. Dad will be finishing work soon. Lucky it's not snows slow time. Time to light the fire. Time to top-n-tail peas. Time to pick caterpillars from cabbages. Time to wash those new potatoes you grow, you dig up, timed to perfection, One clock in the house. Time is wound back into a silence.*

**Vermeer and a stony beach** is not just a very contemporary collection. It, like the previous four, is another path into the development and progress of the genre. Read, reread, savour, and, above all, be aware they only slowly reveal their secrets.

*Izzy Sharpe*

## A1 sights

*apple blemish  
change of colour  
as loud clouds louder*

Drive 126 mile stretch of A1. Slow. With good reason. Lorry driver moves into middle lane to overtake. Looks bored

Yellow apples survive leafless trees. Stop where should not

“Will be quick”

“*Too dangerous*”

Aware of somebody’s blurred speed surge

“*Crazy*”

Many cameras. Different styles. Same function. Jack-knifed. Car queue build. Must have just happened

“Going to be stuck for hours”

Are not

Jackdaws peck at spots of grassy verge. Ignore us

Watch sky incomers. Clean windscreen for better view

See three-car clash of metal on south carriageway. Police sirens flash blue. Ambulances. We are gone. Queue of traffic tails back three miles. Measured it. Saw faces of those who did not know Assume they guessed. I assume that

“Slow down”

“*slow anymore be quicker to walk*”

Aware of rain. Sky smoky battle grey. Grunch thrown up by loaded lorry that swerves to pass on speed lane. He is irritated.

He does not know why I drive slowly

See tributary road. Means crossing busy A1

“Slow down” you remind me. “WAIT”

*cloud dense funeral  
ironed clothes on sackcloth men  
inside burnt coffins*

## a clock stops time even

*one clock in the house  
main spring unwound  
beats the beat of time*

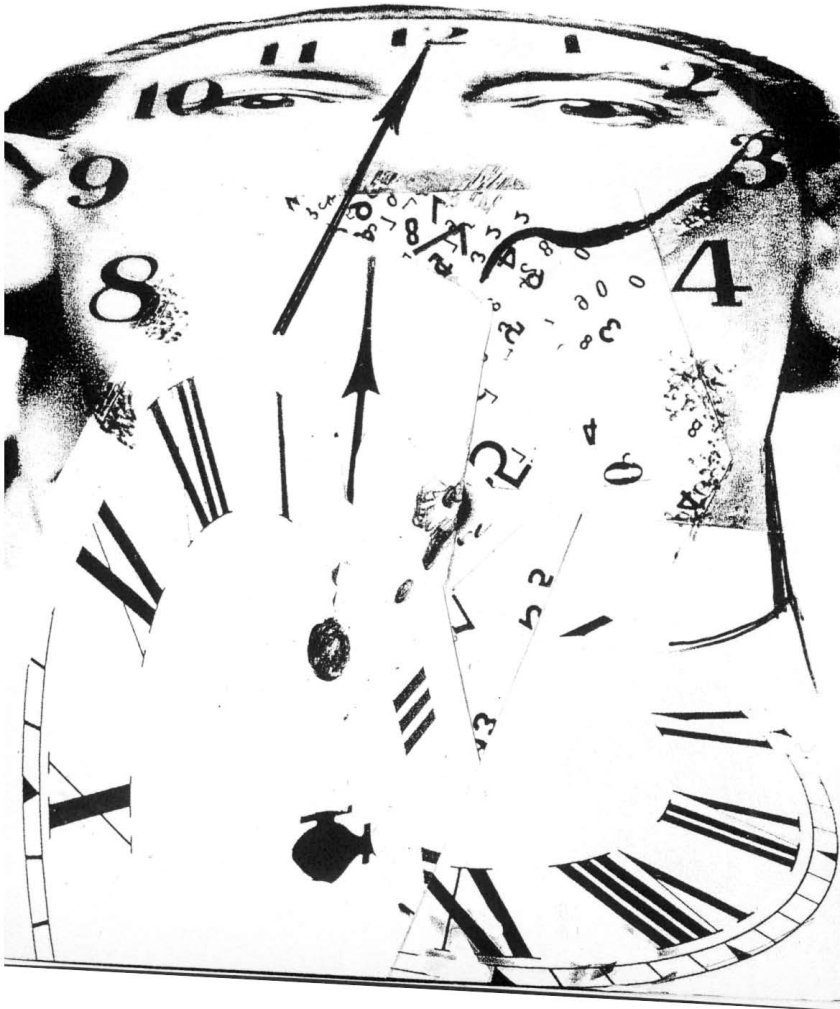
Clock's stopped  
*It's not been wound up*  
It's always wound up  
*Not always. Not now. Can you do it?*  
What's the time?  
*Don't know. The clock's sto...*  
I know. That's the probl,,  
*Is it? Does it matt...?*  
It matters  
*It really doesn't*  
I don't know what time it is  
*What did you say? Do I know what time is?*  
Of course I do. It's being early or late. It's being right on time  
So?  
So, I'll be late  
*You're ill. You're not going anywhere today, tonight, tomorrow*  
But if I was I might not know whether to hurry or not  
*But you might also miss the hole in the pavement from which the grate  
has been stolen down which you could disappear. You might add extra  
time to the envelope delivery. You could even lengthen evening time, even  
get you well in quicker time even*  
Just want the clock to do what it was bloody invented to do  
*Only if we play our part. And swearing won't help. Remember, it's an  
echo, not the real thing. Not the real thing at all*

*one clock in the house  
record of a quick heartbeat  
inside dead end time*

*Why does it worry you so much?*  
It's wrong. Doesn't explain. Everything is out of kilter. Irregular Soon

it will cast spells. Don't know when to do what. That's why  
*Is it? When day is done it's done. When time is ripe night light will shine  
as sure as sure we are both starting our next breath. What's more, it will  
happen without waiting for permission from us or any other clock in any  
house on this or all the other repeat pattern Housing Estates put together;  
forever and ever, Amen*

But that could change, couldn't it? What's this 'amen, stuff?  
*Suppose so. And 'amen' is an end, another measure of time. How about  
this, then? If you had choice would you prefer to reappear as a tree rasping  
unfamiliar stories to other trees or.....as a clock?*  
What? That's mad. Mad. What are you saying?



*Well?*

Well what? OK. Not a tree, if that's the best it can do

*And a clock?*

Not if it needs to be serviced every three days. That's an untimely way to live out a shelf life. Even if that obstacle could be overcome, would you want to be just an echo of the real thing, a shadow even?

*I suppose it has its uses. But when it comes to curving or seeming different to people in different spaces, beyond other places, is it such a big worry our clock has stopped? Besides, if you or I were to wind it up now, would we know where to start or stop?*

Turn until the spring is taut. You can feel it. Today is slowing

*Yes, You're right. Wait a minute. No, you're wrong. How could we know what time to put on...? What would be the...? Wait a...*

Give me the key. I'm tired of waiting. I'll do it. Time needs to be sorted out, otherwise we will be its' servant, which is topsy-turvy to how we live isn't it? What happens everyday would be confused. One minute I'm playing chess with Monsieur Duchamp. The next it is obliterated. Mad. Where's the key?

*It's getting dark. It must be 5 o'clock. Dad will be finishing work soon. Lucky it's not snowslow time. Time to light the fire. Time to top-n-tail peas. Time to pick caterpillars from cabbages. Time to wash those new potatoes you grow, you dig up, timed to perfection*

*one clock in the house  
time is wound back  
into a silence*



## aVeryStumbleHumbleMan

*veryhumbleman                      steps into a puddle                      dirty shoes squeak*

“A very humble man. As far back as far can be, nearly every day wonder how that artful craft was mastered. Read everything. In a narrow field, works of Humble Masters are few. These are studied, expressions rewritten, structures plagiarised, wormier byways emulated. Aim to join up and make sense of disconnected conundrums that hold me back. Exercise every day. In this am helped by any who claim to have experienced an El Maestro happening as a revelation. Walk in silence. Even though disallowed, sometimes sit inside one of those big trees with big holes. Here grow truffles and humble thoughts. It was here a divine Providence was vaguely figured out. Supposed to help overcome a fear of mortifying flesh”.

*shaggy dog                      tags on behind                      begins to bark\**

Hidden, he gets twinges of pleasure. Such reverence results from an aura not self-induced. Struggles to eject adversarial images, but back they come. There is worse. Desire to be on a ladder's top rung, do whatever it takes to beat any who try to usurp a protected crown, rattle-bones play with tiniest of heart-quake-gains. This is daemonic lack of meaning. Teasing wind blows on bits of trial and error. A late starter, and so much is needed to complete a HUMILITY jigsaw.

*bling bang blog    that's a magus minking    on shut backdoor\**

Others make radical adjustments. Austere award hovers. Extremists view it as an anarchic illness. Troublemakers claim Leaders of The Middle Ground meet in secret conclave. Connive. Contrive. Make mayhem. Some humbly offer themselves up to stage plays designed to cleanse foul smells.

*gnarled oak tree    weak beauty in old age    masks indented lines*

Ask a question: “because beneficial, should exercises only be retained inside a closed circle?” Cannot say why I ask such an enigmatic question is asked. After ritual self-flagellation blood trickles. Read: “this is a

valuable device”. “Why?” “It devalues swelling admiration”. “Does that improve a thermometer’s adulation score?” “Yes. No. Whatever”. Secretly, groups ponder a similar question. Same box is ticked. “It is meant to be as it is”. Really?

*wind slow to touch an upsidedown sun yellow trumpet fills*

AwakeSleep. FrontBack. BacktoFronttoBack. DisguiseGuise. StumbleHumble. ReflectReflection. Ofwhat? SleepwalkTalk. Givetobits. Freeillusions4sale. TooWhitToWho is incredulous?

“Those who stare at closed green curtains of a puppet theatre see shimmering of sackcloth humility with homemade tweaking of strings that change mere men into scents of saints. Yet, those trapped inside this shape inhale delicate wild garlic aromas. Should be sufficient to bring down any who deny me this level of reverence that has been worked for so bloody hard.”

*half lit backstage wall  
half mirror reflects half face  
that half preens half back*

“Who ever knows what rumbles around half of one of many centres of an acting fool?” a question asked without raising half shadowed head or half lowered eyelids, or even making half a hint of a breath of a half sound by aVeryStumbleHumbleMan.

*awaresa wo hadeka ni shitari kan no tsuki  
stripped naked of pathos: the midwinter moon Shiki 1893*

\* pettit & pelter

## **an illusion to die for**

*young wren starts to fade  
inside harmony of grass  
shapes of a meadow*

starling captures ground-strewn peanuts.

*hungry fledgling disordered flight disturbs a robin.*

It flutters up. Immature, it flaps insistently.

*wing speed strength of survivor overwhelms*

Drops into tulip coloured grass. With a lightning sweep mother speeds away. Fledgling repositions.

Large sheets of glass. Here yet not. Wooden frame retains their existence. Divides hot from cold. Separates technology from Nature. Shields inside from out.

On room side of illusion, eyes scrunched in concentration, she studies a Tarot card lay. Supple index finger fixes a meaning. Near inverted High Priestess her hand travels paths of air.

*early morning  
hungry sounds crush  
into pear shape stains*

Through her empty stomach a bang on glass.

*fuzzy image spread on her double glazed window a grey impression*  
as a concussed response begins to run over tones of a flatland garden.  
Now inbreathoutbreath at machinegun speed. Legs jellify. New blood on knees. No pulse through finger on garden side of illusion. None on remnant of a leftover impression.

*closed down garden  
from dense woodland  
a poignant call*

## an iron. So?

Found soon after her death. Not rocket science. Physical possessions were few.

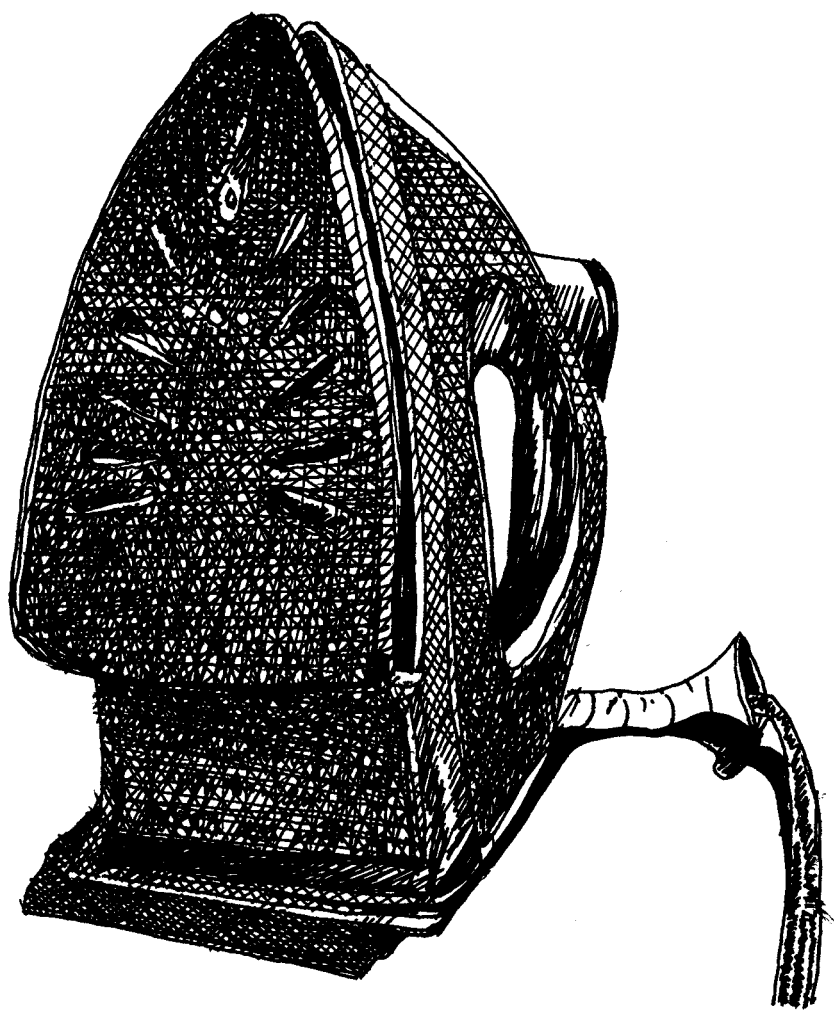
*gnarled hands upgrade weight  
electric form baffles her  
into iron silence*

An old one. But not like those clumps of shaped metal of her youth. This is primed by invisible power. His is an avant-garde object d'art. Does not dispense a smell of burnt leads. His is efficient. Her water spray facility clogs. She goes back to an off on off on off on off a flame fire. Today's model retains smoke inside pores of unclean clothes.

Outlines of his iron disturb patterns of what she knows. Her house, some say "downright ugly", is low wattage. "*Sticks out like a sore thumb*" she says quizzically. They are suspicious. In days when death is as banal as washing in ice-cold water in an iced-window room, an iron that challenged boundaries would not have gone down so good. A woman of her time, she knows war hurts. This, then, is an iron of some standing.

*first class mouser cat  
meows an electric voice  
dies a disgraceful death*

Together with its shadow he throws an iron into a dustbin. So?



## arc walk

*moon mirror  
alters his face  
smears of soap mask him  
in a rattlebag  
of cheap scents*

Definitely. I want to draw him. But not like this. Not sitting at a fractured table. Not eating. Not even when he shaves, staring at his stretched image in a small mirror with a crack edging out from a missing corner. Even holding one end of an old leather strap that sharpens a cutthroat razor travelling close to a soap spattered throat. Even in a compact position more easy to draw, this, too, is not how it is meant to be.

*preparation  
is a sharp left turn  
unwilling model  
his warped skin  
still quite attractive*

Want to draw him in motion. When young, when even poorer, when hand-held movie cameras were rarer than wartime eggs, this is not a hurdle easily jumped. If he walks I, drawing, will be behind him. His scale diminishes step by step; a considerable hurdle. Anyway, he often needs me by his side. Never know when he might slip. Often he is away before me.

*into another high smile  
his stifled image  
sleek magpie  
swaps pencils  
for a rabbits foot*

His walk. It is that I want. Although an angle away from orthodoxy, it is not unique. There is a lot to learn about his walk. Even now, thought processes are needed to kick-start it. Mechanistic care is

required. Mass produced straight-line walk is, by comparison, weaker. Repetition is its game. Yes, of course there is a bit of variety. There always is. Mostly, it is a method of our getting from everyday here to a similar there.

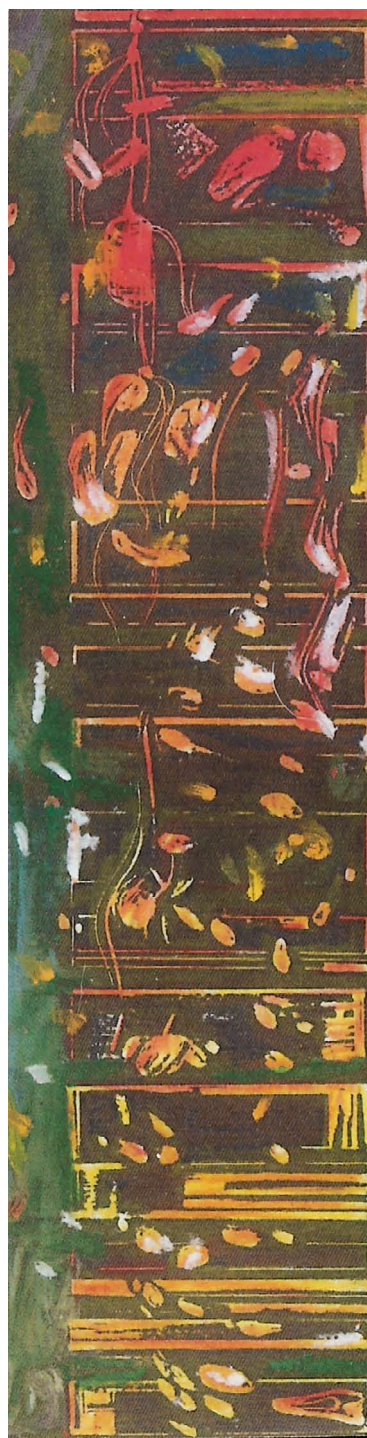
*checks    rechecks  
his cutthroat blade  
for an uneven edge  
with one strong leg  
one mind walks backwards*

His walk is different. Want to draw it. Starting point has to be a reality of rearranged motion. Our walk is finely crafted, a regular straight line. Efficient. Dull. Lacks potential for awe. Appropriate placing assists his swing. Wherever he goes 2 wooden uprights land in front. Known as The Crutch Landing. Swing. Siamese twins. Not always. Getting on a bus is a different mishmash of connections. Successful, wing-through line is weighted balance with a circular rhythmic interior, is non-linear propulsion. A sweeping motion, it is an arc, somewhat like an upside down rainbow, the bottom half curve of a full moon. But his snow walking is scary.

*ice cold river  
blurs spaces  
between front and back  
beyond its ripple surface  
single leg reflection*

Sometimes wish with all my heardheartfastbeats he was as one with us. Yet do watch that walk. Love it. Can watch it all day; a swing that works, a motion to live with not get over, a stand-alone action that will kill him.

*upsidedown arc  
swings cheap aromas  
into adagio drifts  
remember bombs  
that explode night*





Still want to draw that different rhythm. Then, when I drew every day, he was always in a different place, with insufficient this or that. Never did I draw his DNA strain of arc walk. Never knew it was a death sentence.

*in that childhood fix  
days jump  
sketch book collusion  
replete with marks  
exclude him*

## art heart s crets

*eve thing  
l ft behi d -  
secre ts all*

everything left is inside a secret. certainly to those who  
never unlock, even alone inside black space. a hole cannot  
open because its line is never straight. those whose other  
angles fade, perspective is vanquished with rubber strokes.  
what if?

secret secrets breakdown inside an art heart. threads forever  
silent. for ever bitter. for ever. full to dead flesh overflow.  
full violent inside cracks of a wavy heart. now or never.  
secret image beyond confronting. this time so little  
time for gas to float. nothing outside. inside is full of pain  
beyond borders receding. beyond earth, with no rain tonight  
it recedes into seedless. censored childhood. gaps change  
into a black, sacked Jerusalem into an open art heart secret.

*pale moonlit knight  
will not share hidden amour  
zigzag heart art breaks down*



## beginnings end in somewhere change

*residual dust  
as city plan is agreed  
fold-up mirror closes*

into another pile of washed clothes dried. it always begins like that. always a pile of washed clothes dried. whatever is inside goes inside unseen. on top are sheets. always. colour pattern shape less important. king size? irrelevant. as for queen size maximum creases a priority. without them unthinkable. without them cease to be. no way disappear. no way. none same as others. none have that magnificent difference that matters.

*baking smell  
in pots frying pans all -  
no washing up*

no time for an ironing board to recover. reality check. another ironed soft structure piled high. neat package. neat drawers. neat person. someone's dirty pile of creased clothes. crumpled-any-way-pile-yet-to-be-washed-dirt-away.

somewhere change ends.

*"perhaps not", you say.*

*large bosom  
sooths anxiety dreams  
clean bed sheets crease*

## **butterfly wings**

*last gasp of eyesight  
pain in grapevine fingers  
go unattended*

through grapevine hear breathing of an estranged family after they  
disappear inside a grand dissolution

through grapevine a guillotine swish of sliced air

through grapevine screams spread through threads of wind sweeping  
inside a Golden Age on which scorn is poured

through grapevine hear pain of a million butterfly wings being pulled  
off

*short-time between breaths  
golden age of grapevine-speak  
spreads multi-colour pain*

## Carmen for All

*short birthday demand:  
“jump to it or we’ll be late” -  
dissonant heartbeat*

Out of nothing. How found? How paid? London Theatre on Saturday. Underground station excitement walks into blaring sounds. Eyes flitter into Theatreland. Erratic lights blink On Off. Ecstatic posters. Large photographs of stars jostle for importance. We short-step forward. She wears her black, pavement length, only coat. Carries her always-shopping bag. Me as tidy as untidy conveys. She holds my arm. Already am a warmer sky shower of inexplicable vapours.

*chameleon eyes  
beetles flounder upside down  
in slime trail of slugs*

Look up. Am unaware how dysfunctional, how incongruous our appearance seems to those who notice. Overwhelmed. Watch patterns of relaxed talk, confident walks. Bewitched by suave evening-coloured fashions architected onto reshaped bodies. Ravish wave-lavished hair. Mime-touch sparkling earrings, opulent necklaces, light-dazzled brooches. Swirls of rococo ornaments, Victorian adornments, embossed curtains, carmine-coloured seats combine into a churning whirlpool of music, exotic lights, hot language. Fiery images adrenalin charge into hornpipe excitement.

Climb wide stairs, carpeted to the top. Legs not built for it, she is slow. Puffs. Pants.

“Can we have a programme?”

Opens a thin purse, shuffles past a masked mannequin.

“What’s it about?”

“You’ll soon see”

“Here” Mrs fattish woman passes her programme.

“Thanks”. Red-cheeked, read quickly. *“excuse me. sorry. excuse, excuse me.”* Bits of us reel beyond noises of shuffle-push-squeeze-late-arrivals.

It is about love, rejections, new love, savagery, animal passions stabbed into a tear-slopping, heart-slipping finale. There is a hero who kills bulls for a living. There are picadors to help soldiers, girls who sell cigarettes to buy food, larger-than-life gypsies. There are people that live in a town with such an enigmatic sounding name that it shapes into exotic far far away. It is a dream musical drama of ordinary people soon to emerge far below us. When first staged it was hammered by critics. They preferred softer entertainment. Before acclaim, composer is dead. I read what Tchaikovsky, who saw Carmen in Paris a year later, said about it. He praised French elegance that treated a subject from contemporary life without trivialising its theme. *“I know of nothing in music which has a better right to stand for an element which I call pretty, le joli. ...there are plenty of piquant harmonies, completely new sound combinations, but they are not his exclusive aim; Bizet is an artist who pays due tribute to his times, but he is fired with imaginative inspiration”*. A few years later he wrote, *“I am convinced that in 10 years or so Carmen will be more popular than any other opera ever written”*. Give back programme. Our fingers just touch. New-born-teenager quivers. She smiles a fattish smile. *“Thank you”*.

*theatre lights fade  
while ornate curtains open  
overture ends*

An *hors d'oeuvre*. Mrs fattish woman pushes in a coin, slips me a pair of small binoculars. Distant stage of this emotional bombshell sucks closer. All is within focus-touching distance. Solo voices, interlacing voices, flamboyant music, subtle music, garish dancing, mobile patterns of criss-crossing people, illusionary settings, multi-coloured clothes transfer. Ordinary transforms. All that is extraordinary is ingested. Impossible to digest.

*swirls of red skirt  
fast movement frenzy  
in those tapping toes*

This media hybrid, composer-controlled drama, simply drawn but invoking complex emotions, is a wild sea in which to drown. Disappear beneath dissembling surfaces, immersed inside a rough edged construction of Bizet's fire.

*storm ends  
ravished sky still alive  
with streaks of blood*

Out into clutter. Heads clatter. Sounds of an out-of-tune shoe duet. Alone inside a change. Bedazzled, some part senses a conundrum inside this secret woman holding my arm as we slowly edge toward our subterranean journey home.

*train lights harmonise  
with speed of noisy wheels  
heated eyes close*

Thirteen today. Again she breaks my mould. Again taken away by a silent woman in black, to be beguiled by an event choreographed into a cathartic weft/warp dream. A transfiguration is on the cards. With juxtaposing music composed by that same Tchaikovsky, floating actions of dancers is woven into her harmonious unity. *She* is what it is All about.

*lights still flicker  
focus sharpens  
along a new journey*



## City of Gifts

*not quite ready to fly  
over river curves  
a dove flitters*

Want to go to Florence on Wednesday?

*Where?*

Florence

*Where's that?*

Italy

*How come?*

Someone's cancelled. I'll square it with school.

*Thanks*

*but no thanks.*

Why not?

It's only a couple of days.

*I don't know anybody. I'm younger than them. They are learning Italian.*

*I've got lots on.*

*I don't want to.*

Most are young                      very friendly

I'll be with you.

**She is 12 tomorrow**

**Square it with School.**

It's a bat mitzphah<sup>1</sup> present.

*What?*

*Can I sit by the window?*

Yes

**They have been friendly. She is relaxed. Flight will arrive early morning. She seems to sleep, head to one side, eyes closed. Rapid first growth of morning. Pre-sun glow spreads across a clear blue spread of Florentine sky. Opens her eyes. Descent follows bridged line of river Arno. Lower slowly. Early sun shapes all hues into colour. Luminous space of a City of Gifts is compressed. Not blinking, she looks down on an unfamiliar roofscape. I know that look.**

*cage glides to earth  
which we watch grow large  
silence is wide eyed*

Why didn't you tell me?

There is more

Let's walk. Go to the Accademia. Visit *David*



art. What, I say, if David is also Goliath in a different battle?

**I had said too much. Said it all wrong. She says nothing. Is still looking up at this boy who would be King. After two hard years of carving, here he stands, a technical, an aesthetic marvel. Unsurpassed. Maybe those 'Slaves' emerging from rocks. Perhaps his 'Pietà'. Walk away. Walk towards Ponte Vecchio with its sparkling gold, shining silver shops, past Uffizi Gallery, Piazza del Duomo to Brancacci Chapel. Stand in silence before Masaccio's 'Expulsion of Adam with Eve', awed by 'St Peter Healing With His Shadow'. Walk. Walk in silence. Walk until a dipping sun tires.**

**She puts her arm through mine like a grown up woman.**

*river view*

*see clouds in ways*

*that change everything*

<sup>1</sup> Religious Jews female 'coming-of-age'

## **closing anniversary thoughts of**

*look through glass*                      *at*  
*think anniversary*                      *of*  
*his picture gone*                      *to*

on anniversary of      think about being that much      closer to      think  
how it is closing in on      how it should be with      think a closing  
day that      only thought about it      how soon will be the same as      if  
only a sigh      on that anniversary of      do not think about how      seems  
impossible to      stop believing in      his disused clothes shaped into  
scraps of cloth that      disowned      now lie around my      a thought  
you run by      think into an absence of him for      of course it is  
anniversary one only

*see an image*                      *of*  
*funeral remembered*                      *only*  
*as a thought*                      *by*

## coin flick revolution

*small hand fingers  
in a no choice private game  
two sides of a coin*

Look at a 7 sided 50 pence coin.  $\frac{1}{2}$  way between zero and one. But larger. "Heads". Flicks and tosses. Catches a revolution. "Tails". Drops it other side of coin flick. Not long odds. Not like inside every-day-every-night-odds-of-heads-or-tails. More like Odds On for sources. No proper schema. Just heads or tails. No more? No more. Another toss. High. High into air. Turning. Turning on way up. Turning on way down. Again. Another coin flick. Highest flick of a military movement. Gravity works in perfect union. Mud squelched boots press hard. Cover it again. No longer seen. Maybe never seen. Not by anyone.

Conundrum? Is that what it is called? Whatever can be an answer - if there is a question - even if there is a quest - someone gives 50-50 odds of a coin flick revolution that is more than heads-or-tails. Somewhere every-night-every-day may not be heads-or-tails. Not today. Not tonight. Here only heads. Only tails. Only up. Only down. Only here. Only now.

*train moves a straight line  
landscape travels  
between green and red*

## collecting memories

*lip kiss*  
*moves onto memory trail*  
*fulltime collector*

“which slide of photo memory have you developed from? what  
rumpled edge gave up its ghost? why recollected? you are a fragment,  
a lost part of a torn page, seen as a forlorn bit of a journey, a short-  
lived pleasure, a distant hope. view now indistinct, hazy repressed  
scraps. sudden surge to restore failed attempts. rubbish rustles in  
bomb darkened alleys. no restoration compares to an original.”

“Don’t wansht to compares. Jush shee what shelike pullsed-  
out shtraight. Shood makes shome yushe ofsit, whatshoever  
shmiggleshmaggleshtate shesin nows. Anyways, theys mines, not  
yours. Giss ‘em back. Theys mine. Only mines.”

*smangled mesmory*  
*feelsas sif isfor reals*  
*buts scenes2 fadesway*

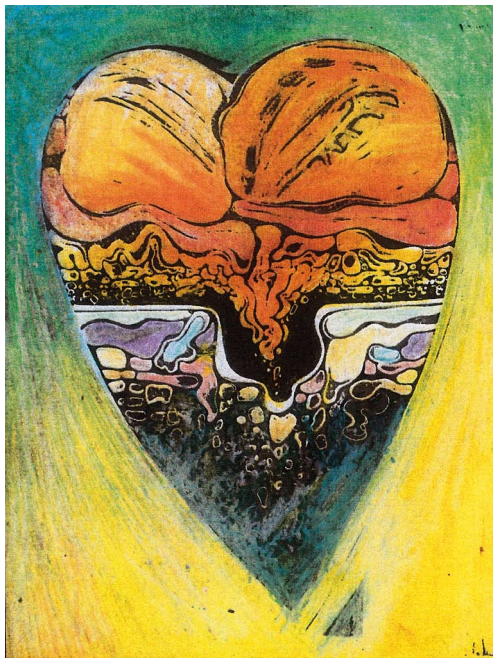


## conception is?

*tints of light  
crumble darkness  
one brushstroke  
completes a jigsaw  
painted on a small canvas*

what is it like, i mean *really* like, that moment when they meet,  
speeding into darkness, in a desired collision of equal unequals, a  
journey undertaken by millions who penetrate an eternal wasteland.  
what is it like to be part of an event with a sensibility for a known yet  
unknown future? what is it like, i mean, *really* like when they meet?

*flighted arrow  
so near to a bullseye  
just these two  
closing in  
on each other*



## **‘conshie’**

**Conscientious Objector** (CO for short).

*still exists*

*blurred imitation*

*of an earlier time*

In 1955 register as a Conscientious Objector. Military National Service is a requirement no post-graduate course can override. Being a Conscious Objector and a student at the Royal College of Art has a common feature; most CO ‘cases’ are rejected by tribunals. The Royal College of Art, for better reasons, reject most called up for a three day, work-related interview.

*camouflaged corncrake*

*Wellington boots*

*squelch through mud*

Large Council Chamber of Fulham’s Town Hall is where the Tribunal is convened, a space transformed as if by a fish-eye lens. Three-man tribunal team is high, high, above. They lean forward, faces expanded into fairground mirror caricatures.

*auditorium court*

*air grows thick*

*with subversive techniques*

This group is severe - a double dose of prison. 18 months. Cripples in wheelchairs fail.

*1950’s chair*

*order each applicant*

*not to sit*

They question, examine, half listen. Neck aches. A friend waits. They make notes, look over half-glasses, mumble to each other.

*gingerbread man*

*next to two others*

*cross currents for eyes*



*"No, I'm not exactly a pacifist, but don't relish dying in a war of your choosing, for someone else's economic, imperialist needs."* Not a great start. Out of control leg muscles.

*white shirt creases  
in a display of sweat  
answers drip*

"If a German soldier is about to rape your sister would you or would you not try to protect her?"

Try to image a sister *"Yes, I would."*

"How would our Country survive if everybody chased around, cherry-picking what they will or will not obey? We'd be engulfed. Our enemies obey without question?"

*caught in a web  
3 chameleons watch  
upside down legs quake*

*"I'm torn. Not all Germans are bad. Not all British are good."*

"Like who?"

Look up at them deadpan. Heads at the same height, they nod in unison, like a triptych of joined toys.

*high noon sun  
face into it  
unperturbed*

*"Like Mahler, Benjamin, Schubert, Rilke, Schönberg, Klee, Goethe, Beethoven, Benjamin, Mann, Wittgenstein, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Einstein, Freud, Brahms, Plank, Meitner, Leibniz, Hegel, Engels, Marx..."* Falter at the last two. Even nearly entered Kafka into the arena. If I haven't blown it by now...

"Mann? Did you say Mann? What do you know about Mann?"

*"I've read his Essays, Death in Venice, Dr Faustus, Joseph and His Brothers, Mario and the Magician, The Magic Mountain..."*

"What's storyline?"

*"Of what?"*

“The Magic Mountain. What is it *really* about? What do you feel about Aschenbach?”

Begin to realize why Holocaust was such an easy game.

*washing line*  
*tuberculosis*  
*hung out to dry*

Lunchtime break. Diminished triad sits close to us in ‘the’ Jo Jo’s Café. Talk different talk, as do we. Back, my case, strongly felt, fails. In a public gallery are those sufficiently adept to plagiarize success. Others are crippled by religion, muscular waste or both.

*Abraham face*  
*it remains a template*  
*beyond reason*

Am angry at my naivety. They control 100% of playing field they design, a series of mud raised lumps with mobile goalposts. Do not relish 2 consecutive blocks of 9 months of incarceration. Above them a strop of black clouds cover a ceiling. Beneath them minor artists have painted lesser-known allegories.

*nightstock and bats*  
*stop a ratatat of echoes*  
*utter darkness scares*

“Not over yet. Appeal. Read this. Tells you what to do” trembles a pianissimo quaver in an ancient Quaker voice.

*headache            left*  
*on an irreverent alter*  
*open legs hang limp*

Choices: Coal miner. Forestry Commission Worker. Hospital Dogsbody. Do all three, last where everyone lives to die. Punishment is an additional 2 months, which adds a calendar year to an already delayed start point.

*squeezed inside red  
an adolescent berry  
nettle rash stings*

In bed at last. Sleep expands into me, filling lapping emotions with half images. Have won. Have lost.

*sink into feathers  
with a dream comes sharpened bones  
of an ugly state*

Some time after it was all over a postman delivers a card: ON HER MAJESTY'S SERVICE, to 28 Parsons Green Lane from H/1(E)CA, The Regional Controller, Ministry of Labour and National Service, HANWAY HOUSE, RED LION SQUARE. W.C.1. NATIONAL SERVICE ACTS. It is a Certificate of Registration in Register of Conscientious Objectors from R.O. London SW, Case No L28773, dated 24 AUG 1959, certifying that Stanley Pelter by order of the competent Tribunal is: - \*(a) registered unconditionally in a Register of Conscientious Objectors. Signature? Pass. A tick. It Orders Me To KEEP THIS CARD SAFELY. I obey.

*upside down no more  
suburban roundabout swing  
slows into stasis*

**KEEP THIS CARD SAFELY**  
**NATIONAL SERVICE ACTS**

**Certificate of Registration in Register of Conscientious Objectors**

R.O. London SW Case No L28773 Date 24 AUG 1959

Holder's Name PELTER Stanley

Home Address 28 Parsons Green Lane London SW6

Date of Birth 25-1-1926

Holder's Signature Stanley Pelter

This is to certify that the above person by order of the competent Tribunal is:—

\*Delete alternatives before issue

\* (a) registered unconditionally in the Register of Conscientious Objectors.

\* (b) ~~registered conditionally in the Register of Conscientious Objectors until~~ (date).

\* (c) ~~registered in the Register of Conscientious Objectors as a person liable or prospectively liable to be called up for military service but to be employed only in non-combatant duties.~~

(Regional Controller, Ministry of Labour and National Service, London SW6 Region.)

**READ THE OTHER SIDE**

† I removed on.....(date) to the following address:—

† I have changed my name to.....

† Complete as necessary. Signature .....

## Councillor

*V2 rocket<sup>1</sup>  
razor sharp face  
in a cracked mirror*

Ward map folded. Put away. Surgery closed. Cross against where each visitor lives. Knows how far they walk for help. He, a beneficiary of Cinema concentration camp images, is elected to represent them. Fathers' family only live one they know. Like theirs, his is dysfunctional. Explosive rubble throws them apart. An active Socialist is a sure-fire, blank-cheque recipe for Local Election success.

*light divided  
before a shy man  
trawls of shadow*

Low mobility fails to stop him quoting Lenin, Tressall<sup>2</sup>, Trotsky, Marx. Other than The Daily Worker<sup>3</sup>, never see him reading. In other circumstances he could have been a Minister in Clement Attlee's revolutionary Post Second World War Labour Party government. On this huge Council Housing Estate, where a bathroom or running hot water is everyone's Holy Grail, he helps solve problems of often illiterate, always poor people. "*It's for big boys to change big things. It is our job to bring back hope. How has Bevin<sup>5</sup>, may he rot in hell, got to be one of the big boys*"?

Upstairs, face down on an out-of-date metal frame bed, fail to resolve unfolding mathematical problems, can swallow titbits of economic history, remain locked out of ancient Canterbury Tales, try to translate low-pitched confessionals into comprehension. Face-to-face, his neutral tone soothes. Can hear his draw-them-in smile.

*questions asked  
meeting voices  
buried in sand*

Using our small ration allowance, a supply of weak tea is offered. Slabs of sculptured cakes, rough-hewn biscuits are presented on

worn-out plates while he gently forages. Diminishing hair combed scalp tight, wearing least worn-out clothes, he streams positives to touch many concerns. He is unpaid Moses, Solomon, Maimonedes, applying Socialist Atheist Laws inside a small cubic room disguised as a pathway to a golden mountaintop. Upstairs, still bump against shadowy subjects; Attlee's difficulties, proposed reforms, Surgery issues, Local Government, War Minister, Communist Revolution. None school homework.

Council Meetings are held in a building with an exterior of spatially balanced proportions. It will become a niggardly County Education Department HQ, separating homebuyers from house-renters, Grammar School from everywhere else. He rides a number 157 Bus through this Labour Party voting Council Housing Estate to a place where they do not.

Neatly folds Ward map. Put away for a month. A savaged head continues its convoluted journey.

*see beyond a canvas  
of jerry-built houses<sup>6</sup>  
aerial perspective*

<sup>1</sup> V2 - Second World War, first rocket bomb, designed by German scientists.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Tressall *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist*  
(I wonder how many people realize the significance of the great success of *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist* – 2s 6d. I have just come across a review of it in the *Shoreditch and Bethnal Green and East London Worker*, which shows the way the workers regard it: "This is not a new book. It first appeared in 1914. It is a novel dealing with the workers' lives by a worker who died before it was published. To the writer's knowledge, a copy of the first edition went round every house in a large Yorkshire mining village. Here is set down the lives and struggles of workers...If we had our way we would have the book issued in a penny edition and sent broadcast round the houses, for if you never had patience to read a book in your life, you can read this. Tressall was a house painter and a sign-writer who died – God knows how! But he was more than this. He was a great genius who could cut out and display a slice of life...It is a book in a million. When the working-class is in power, only then will Tressall have his due. In the meantime, buy this book – and then lend it out."

**Times Literary Supplement – 05.01.1922)**

<sup>3</sup> Daily Worker – The British Communist Party Newspaper

<sup>4</sup> Clement Attlee Prime Minister of the revolutionary Labour Government, elected at the end of World War 2.

<sup>5</sup> Bevin was Attlee's Foreign Minister, disliked for his intransigence.

<sup>6</sup> 'Jerry Built' equates to something like 'cheap materials, quick to build, repetitive, unimaginative, few amenities'.

## death by a thousand accretions

*dutch landscape  
flatter than flatlands  
fir tree - its shallow roots*

### august 23

visit. locked into. into an edge of ageing wood. he is ill in many strange ways of possible. into silent journey. unfathomable which way other possibles. medical wheat sorted from home-brewed chaff. difficult journey from old-age childhood to older this old-age. includes cures for blooded shades of cantankerous. she separates. family secrets reveal. dysfunctions divert into tearduct culture. a well cracks. departure. angers sad of old. think not to return. never. no never more.

*naked both  
beneath unchristian bedroom of  
shadows literal are*

### december 25

*"Be with me today. This morning also with her."*

*"Yes. Love to."*

Going to church. Yes. Friend from schooldays. Down wide streets into side streets along thin streets into alley. Through snow. Turn left. Turn more turns. Turns turn. Grey snow. Everything grey covered. Even darker than grey. He works best at night.

*"How much further?"*

*"One minute" thin-covered friend replies. Church is a wrecked shed. Tumbledown. Wet inside. Outside falls from peeling paint ceiling. Ancient woman. Hump holds downs a graded face. Remove outer coats. No pews. Too few chairs. "Thank you for coming. You are welcome". We smile. An old man whispers back a smile. Pressing hands he mutters a fast prayer. "God it is we today celebrate. You understand?" Bronchial cough from inside this complete congregation. In a rural accent this English guest is again welcomed. English Carol. Sung in Japanese. Off-key chant. Nostalgically familiar. Apology from vicar. "Unfortunately,*

otherwise engaged. Video service has left to us". *Vapor message. Flat  
toned. Soporific. Finally, it is over. Holding my hand, am invited "next  
year to come again". Nod suggestively. "Yes" says Buddhist friend".  
Windswept snow flagellates pulsating skin. Injured beliefs cling as if  
choreographed. Disintegrating lips say, "and you thought it couldn't  
get any worse?" "Did I?"*

*no longer can trust  
her crumpled mobile phone voice  
remains a template*

**december 17**

Woke up in any wandering memory time, sleepily disordered.  
Wondered about disengaged calendar. Wonder about today.

"Happy Birthday"

"Thought you'd forgotten," returns a rough edged voice.

"You haven't had my card?"

"No". Manages to shackle back a retained wound.

"Nor book?"

"No."

"They were posted ten... Yes, 10 days ago."

"Not had anything. Not from anybody."

Still cantankerous. Still indecently insecure. Always a good sign.

"They'll come. Happy birthday. Me? With grandchild. Makes me feel  
old. Speaking to you makes me feel young." Silence of an invisible  
non-smile. Too late to usurp his own circumference. "Hope he doesn't  
die without reconciliation" said without moving lips. Close telephone  
window.

*head of pictures full  
happy remnants of lipstick  
on her envelope*

**december 25**

Subj:

**A merry Christmas**

Date:

25/12/2005 13.54.34 GMT Standard Time

Dear Stanley

A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year.

I will to post office go to send fee. Sorry to Delay to send! please remain my membership. I believe you get it soon. It is bitter cold this winter. We had have much snow. So. Have to shovel snow to get out from house!

I wish a merry Christmas you with a new happy year.

Love and Peace

I Y

**Boohschutter**

**23 november – 21 december**

Je sluit niet alleen een jaar af, maar ook een intensieve periode uit je leven. Dit kan betekenen dat je afscheid moet nemen van iemand, maar dat wil niet zeggen dat het contact helemaal verbroken wordt. Het is wel even wennen aan deze nieuwe situatie, maar je maakt een veelbelovend begin. Je zult merken dat je onafhankelijkheid groter wordt, en dat geeft je veel voldoening.

*tension of taut skin  
fingers outstretch arms  
to a remembered past*

**Sagittarius**

**23 november – 21 december**

You not only close a year, but also an intensive period of your life. This could mean that you have to take leave of someone, but that doesn't imply contact will be broken off completely. It's quite something to get used to this new situation, but you make a promising start. You'll see that your independence is growing and this gives much satisfaction.

**december 23**

Better bell him for Hanukkah – just in case. 'Can't you ever get the right day? What's wrong with you? I'm tired. Goodbye'.



**december 24**

*Telephone call from Tokyo, where it is*

**december 25**

*"I'm getting ready to meet her. Yes, she's a Buddhist. Going with a Christian friend to a church service. Tokyo? Unrecognisable. Thick snow. Wonder wonderland. No, it is not a holiday. Here's hoping this evening leads to something. Jeez, but it's cold."*

**Steenbok****22 december – 20 januari**

Er knaagt een soort onrust aan je die je niet direct kuut plaatsen. Laat het rusten, want later deze week wordt duidelijk wat het is. Halverwege de week krijg je een fijn nieuwtje te horen wat voor jou nét het duwtje in de goede richting is. Vol vertrouwen ga je het nieuwe jaar in.

**Capricorn****22 december – 20 january**

A kind of agitation, which you can't analyse, continues to rankle. Let it be and drop it for a moment because later this week it will become clear. Halfway through this week you get a nice message, which gives you a right direction push. Full of confidence you step into new year.

*today has no time  
tomorrows ½ mast rainbow  
traces a lifeline*

**december 27**

"it was 7 o'clock. I went down to make him a cup of tea. When I got back he was dead."

**december 30**

"Funeral will be January 2 at 9.30 am. Haarlem Crematorium. There are two. His is fresh one. Coffin is at home, in our living room. It is open, if you want to see him."

"**What!**"

"That's how she wants it. Do you want to see him?"

“No. **No**. Will you give me a lift? Thanks. I’ll be in the lobby at 7.45 am. *No, I really do not want to see*. It will be 6 days.”

“Yes. The change is noticeable.”

*mattress of torn clouds  
into a sudden sunlight  
body mo d u l a t e s*

Room. Mafia-Godfather-gold-lavishly-decorated-open-coffin. Flicking blue blemishes are brushed. Machismo laid to rest. Ellipses of fuzzy silence crowd into his unresolved rivalries. Rooted angers smother unspoken words of tensile strength. Closed emotions inside straight-laced voices. Him in open coffin is too weird a juxtaposition.

Leave him his secret.

“Will you want to say anything?”

### **january 1**

Only flight out

east coast snowfall

fills a quiet whiteness

as preparations are made for a silence that will outlast him

*from snow to sunset*

*an aeroplane is prepared*

*last ever breath of...*

Descent pock-marked with clumps, white covered. Will touch down same time as depart time. In-between read emptily. Stare into an endless outside. Imagine bringing home what passes for feelings. Can I slide through this metal shell, bounce on bubbles of insubstantial weight?

More temptations.

*above puffy lengths of cloud*

*into abrupt sunlight*

*details of wings*

*from an aeroplane window*

*layers stillness*

**Through a mass of sky, image skull of a**

Bertholletia excelsa tree. It has lived a thousand years, already fed a thousand thousand Brazil nuts. Here, within touching distance, it is transfigured, a different, but still recognisable shape.

**january 2**

*born into this moment      the box we do not want      for ourselves*

Audience: shut eyes, dark veils. Participants: close of disbelief. Some denial in. Some relief in. Always guilt for. Always trauma about. Except him, a stateless stranger. Change closed. Screwed tight. No last chance to balance. Some tears. Some pent up confusions hiss closer. Not a day to replicate. New denials creep into new escapades. From somewhere a Cassandra whisper floats through incongruous Dutch lightness of space suspended above us: "His destination is a manacled liberation - a tethered libation for those he leaves". "What?" Two of us look up, look behind. Through glass screens watch shadows race ice-coloured hills to a low sun line. Funeral wins over Frans Hal, wins over a shortest new year.

*grey mist                      from a new chimney      an old coil of smoke*

**january 20**

"Don't let what I've got to say in any way put you off coming."

"No"

"We're splitting"

"What!"

"I know. Tell you about it when...Would you like to meet...?"

*Nod down the telephone.*

"Meet you in Tesco Supermarket café at 5.15?"

*south east coast wind  
in this sea change weather  
clouds chase down shadows*

**january 21**

Their water-tank leaks. Toilets cannot be flushed. No bath. Give cards.

Give presents. Lots of kisses, TV for children, gymnastics, drawing, lengths of bickering, introduce chess.

### **Waterman**

#### **21 januari – 19 februari**

Je komt een aantal keren voor een principekwestie te staan deze week. Ook al heb je ne neiging om over je grens heen te gaan om de ander te helpen, doe het maar niet. Die ander is zelfstandig genoeg en jij moet nu vooral aan jezelf denken. Je hebt al genoeg stress en kunt er nu echt niets anders bij hebben. Plan een dag waarop je lekker kunt relaxen.

### **Aquarius**

#### **21 january – 19 february**

A few times during this week you'll be facing fundamental decisions. Even though you always tend to pass your limits to help others, don't do it this time. The other person is independent enough. You should look after yourself. There is enough stress for you. You really can't carry an extra burden. Reserve a day to relax.

#### **january 21**

Folkestone Seafront. Unexpected. Pre-Birthday sunny day. Chew whelks as gulls screech a ferocious appetite. Some swoop close. Criss-cross fishing boats. Flagstones edged with spongy moss. Boats. Nets. Special sounds of surf waves beaching.

*vibrant language  
into sudden notices  
story lines reshape*

### **ITISANOFFENCETOREMOVEQUAYEDGESAFETYCHAINS**

Jumping into the harbour is prohibited. Offenders will be prosecuted.

*Noswimmingallowed.*

### **BOBS SUPREME SEAFOOD**

(beware swooping seagulls! Stolen food will not be replaced)

**an über chic Advert for 'shoegasm'**

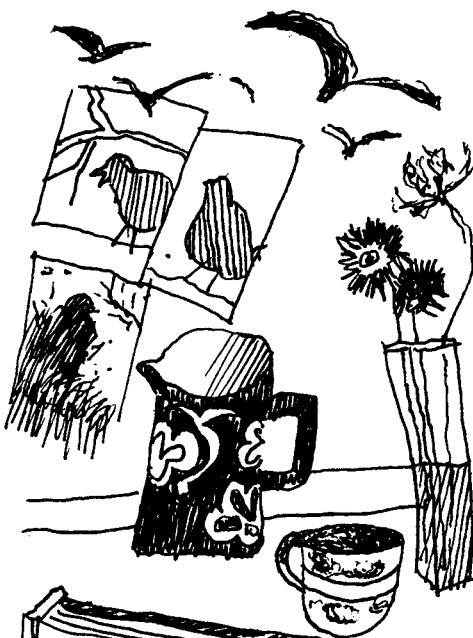
**january 22**

back to London. Pre-Birthday birthday dinner.

**january 23**

*birthday. waited all these years. there were moments when... good times  
slipslide through less efficient arteries. astrology ambiguously hint this  
will be a year to savour. already, already, it begins.*

*new growth sways  
wispy tree with deep roots  
is vulnerable*



# DIARY NOTEBOOK

January 22nd

Tomorrow's my birthday

i am really worried about her stupid emails.

Blimey, is she a control freak, neurotic, a bit of a dictatorial loose cannon - or what?

Hustler just dentist or library on the exhibition of graphic art this evening.



distorted nude young grandchildren cannot keep a secret

Why am i mentioning my birthday today? it's not today.

Labour Party Committee meeting this evening. What a <sup>chore!</sup> / <sup>bone!</sup> Remember V. Blatny!!! TAKE.

12.15. meet ~~at~~ / ~~Take~~ to lunch - suggest mushroom

bake, ~~the~~ lager, garlic brew, 5a.100

Finish redesigning form for ever Finish that story - again

Find recipe - buy ingredients

— COOK + **DONE!**

(x so to



## diary of a truant

*repetitive toy*

*now now now now now*

*a key turns left*

6 Up. Bleary. Mum long gone. No alarm. They still wait their time. Cold water wash. “*Hot water tap*”, I am told, “*is years away*”. Cryptic note in dead coke fire. “*Sieve*.” Half fill dented pail with reusable bits. Scan headlines of yesterdays ‘Daily Worker’. Ash scattered on back garden earth. Hands cleaned with carbolic soap. Water cold.

6.30 Dawn preparing. Prepare breakfast for Dad who is preparing a cutthroat razor for soaped face.

7 Snatch at homework. Burn toast.

8 Wait for bus 1.

8.50 Walk last half-mile.

9 Walk fast past iron school gates. Walk full length of redbrick, pre-war architecture. Past shops. Past owner occupied houses. Never done this. Walk heartbeat into foreground of drumbeat sounds. Where shall I go? Can I get away with it?

9.20 Walk. Sign points to Croydon. Bus stops at Croydon. How far? ‘Near to Centre of London’, I write. Seen on Pathé Pictorial News. Burning to shreds. Foraging flames swirl dirt-dusted rolls of rising smoke. Black smoke. Acrid smoke. I am still walking, wondering whether Croydon is like others.

10.0 Walk. Talk in a no beginning, no end way, hawking a satchel full of closed books to a sign. ‘Cornucopydon’ – turn right. Croydon, straight on. Walk straight ahead. Aware of a heart beat beat beating.

10.10 Stop. Stare. No blue sky. Slowly walk past flats packed with semi-naked women playing sea borne lutes, singing in an atonal scale invented to lure in any young truant. An interior shouts. “Lure me. Lure me”. Know few words that let them know of a desire to be their willing victim. “I’m here. Here”.

11 Get a jumpy feeling.

11.30 Sit in a smoky, fried food filled café sipping hot tea. Would like a fry-up, but not over bothered. Watch fish leap out of hot oil pans, slice into strips in mid air before falling onto strong men's chipped plates.

11.31

*first time miss  
after half a days trudge  
talk is in colours*

12 Sits opposite me. School patterned frock edges forward until knees touch. Don't look. Fear heat will deflower her. Stretch over. Her left fingers exchange glances with mine. Mutter "they don't need to be women. I don't need to be lured into disguised buildings. My future is with a schoolgirl".

12.30 Feel an intemperate tear. Looking into a tree-free landscape. A 'best ever' day is emerging. "Get on with it. It's a diary not a bloody novel", I write. "Hang in there. I'm trying to record... After all, it is a goodly unusual day, isn't it?"

12.45

*youthful dragonfly  
flits to another image  
unseen fire rages*

Satchels rub thighs. In step we walk. Holding hands we talk. With our names we lie. Tells me she is 14. Tell her a similar bit of nonsense. In a truant day pleasure siege. Neither, with intrepid insouciance, seems to care about anything ruinous. We want to transform until a collapse.

1pm "I've got nowhere."

*"I have"*

Behind some defaced lavatory, in a defaced park, by far side of a green-grassed copse, aflame with screaming hormones, we lay ourselves down. Deep inside crumpled music, twisting through unfamiliar shapes entwined, breathing wets until, lifted above visions of a thin frock raised in tune with finger prurience, articulated arms tumble into sweet parts of our shape as each other's grain is eaten, while sounds of lutes rise with a timpani crescendo that outdoes even great Venus at her most fluid.



*colour of her eyes  
lightest of light blues  
our garden spreads red*

2pm First delicious wounds, a bloodied calendar, our fulsome wet hair truant day becomes one of a hot storm thrown skyward.

2.45pm Holding hands, we float past her school, past mine, past silent lutes, past semi-naked wives who meet after men leave, before men return, to lure in with siren songs, into a warmth with no beginning, with no end.

3pm Shyly arrange to meet again in one week, same place same time. Already know I won't turn up. Fear, not truancy, is what I am about. I know, and accept, that eureka situations cannot be stopped. They will find a way out. For me, for now, safer retained in bedtime conclusions.

*early saffron crocus  
massive storm turns around it  
before settlement*

4.30pm Twist yesterday's Daily Worker, backbone of evening fires, into tight faggots. Outside it is dark. Low wattage bulb is turned on, curtains pulled. Prepare weakened vegetables, same as yesterday. Wonder about homework. It will have to be done. Wonder why my school doesn't teach diary writing like her school. Going to stop.

*wet evening  
reflects a false image  
in retrospect  
little is different  
for U and i*

÷ by 3<sup>1</sup>

*steep climb*  
*to a roughcast pinnacle*  
*path divides 3 times*

Void of a dingy Council house too small front room. After a held in breath says he will buy a Will Form from W. H. SMITH. Front is blank. Back is covered with working-class language. With a thin stick of ragged pencil he writes her wishes.

*“Lightly mind”.*

*“Say, ‘after all expenses I want to divide my money’...”* I write.

*“By three”.*

“That’s it? Done. That wasn’t so difficult?”

*“Yes it was.”*

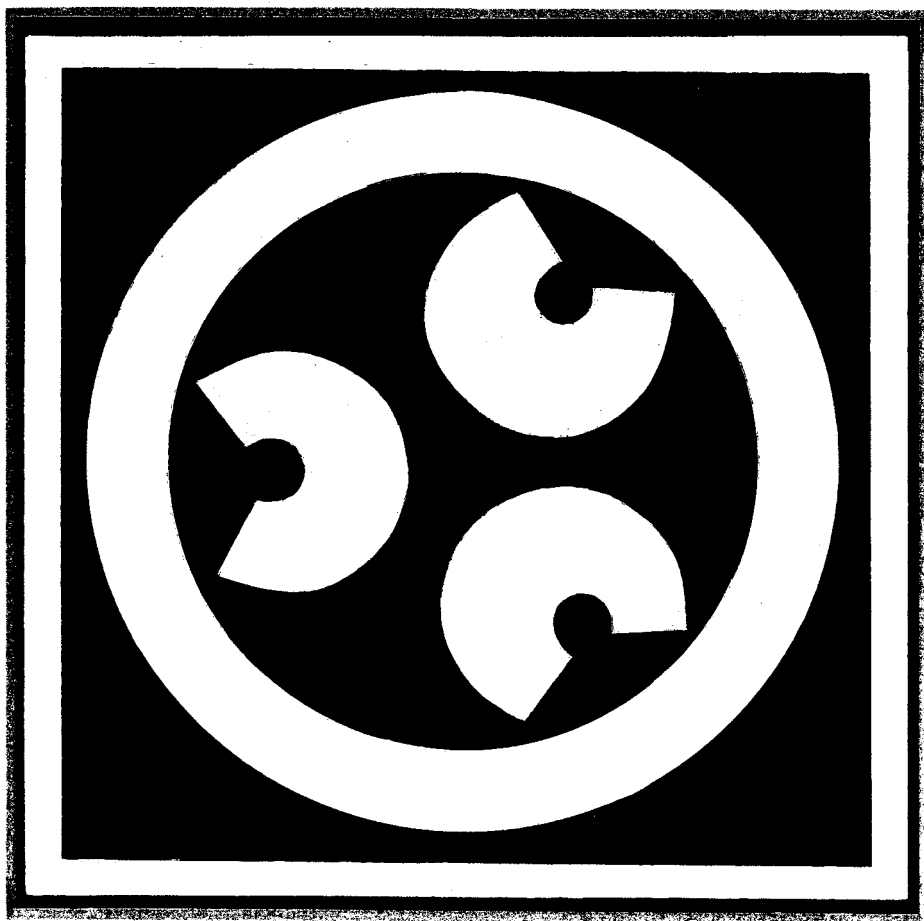
Later she goes over my thin writing with a scratchy ink pen. Slowly. Rubs out pencil underwriting. Methodically. Makes closure with a carefully placed but erratic signature.

The divided three, as one, pays for less than one third of her funeral.

*light enough money*  
*for someone who has just died*  
*subsidised earth*

<sup>1</sup> This trips up reality, which has it as: ‘I GIVE AND BEQUEATH my son, Stanley Pelter, all my china and glass, my pianoforte, and any linen and furniture (except my television set) that he would like to have; to my son, Andrew Pelter, my television set and any of the remaining furniture or linen he would like to have. To my grandchildren any other property which remains after Stanley and Andrew have chosen what they wish to have, and any money which remains, to be divided equally between them.’

I should like to have the same kind of funeral and tombstone as my husband, Harry Pelter, had. *Dora Pelter, 314 Middleton Road, Carshalton’*  
(There were 3 brothers, but that’s a different haibun altogether)



## **drink or maybe drugs**

*full vodka bottle ~ next to them a syringe ~ wrapped in sunlight*

secretary. car number plate abbreviates my name ~ she never travels outside queendom ~ exposed to advertising ~ daughter aged 12 ~ him aged 13 ~ deny they drink too much ~ “and no” if you are asking “have we had full wind thrown skirt blown ever so trousers down sex” ~ never? ~ police say they were found in unusual poses ~ “incapable of looking after themselves sir madam ~ “a group of girls was seen drinking ~ yes ~outside them painted gates ~ they were in a bad way” ~

*another drunk night ~ sheen of moonlight ~ traces wild lengths*

there are twirls in a skipping rope that circles faster ~ cuts across each pulse of a blemished sun ~ it is repetitive – as are their jumps ~ as is a rhyming chant patterned to time beats ~ lots of poems are not brought to their attention ~ one teacher says she cannot name more than three poets ~ they say she is joking ~ say reading ‘abowt diffadils’ ‘ye owl an’ pussycat’ or ‘oedipussy rex’ with no chasers is what makes them drug up ~ “if you are not careful” ~ befuddled parents hear ~ “next step will be them brain-busting ones” ~ her mum his dad sleep with noses touching their bedroom wall ~ schoolgirls know it will soon be another bestselling day ~ do not dream whatever they say ~ i do want that number plate that abbreviates my name ~ in one sentence answer question ~ is your queenship ever get so exposed to drink adverts you wet yourself inside? ~ answer ~ answer ~ answer

*magic rune ~ tealeaves talk babytalk ~ to a soft toy*

## drunk

*handbag jumble*

*old photograph of me*

*inebriate reborn*

“Been drunk once in my life. I mean rip-roaring blotto. Obliterated, like haven’t a clue how ended up slumped on our front doorstep, head cock-eyed to a small area of ground”.

*“You must remember **something**. Where had you been?”*

“Wembley Stadium, with friends. Billy Graham, the evangelist. It’s a laugh. See how he persuades them.”

“Was it a laugh? Did he persuade anybody?”

“Yes. Yes. Yes. And more.” Place is packed with a pulsing of arms raised, eyes closed, hand waving, hymn singing, pumped-up pack of Christo’s. Clap. Acclaim. Cheer very sincere every inducement bellowed by Billy-the-Hero-Kid. He shoves good spirits into sinners. And that is us all”.

*“Did he succeed?”*

“From where we were sitting only us are not having hysterical rushes of blood, a splattering of emotions. We are leftover. Trance states, blood rhythms, reinforce faith that moves mountains. Hysteria removes us residual dust, frees up an evening for heavyweight drinking”.

*“And that’s your excuse?”*

“Yes. An evening of extremes. Slumped on a front doorstep, distanced into an amnesiac night, a hullabaloo of a steamed-up sky. Is that so bad?”

*“Some balance. But no one was hurt, no one destroyed”.*

*drunk as a coot*

*later remember*

*a glide of shadows*

**easT**

**wesT**

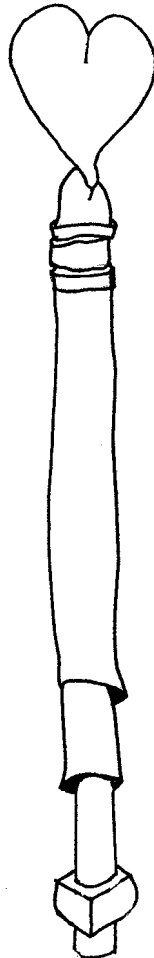
IN HER COSMOS

**easT**

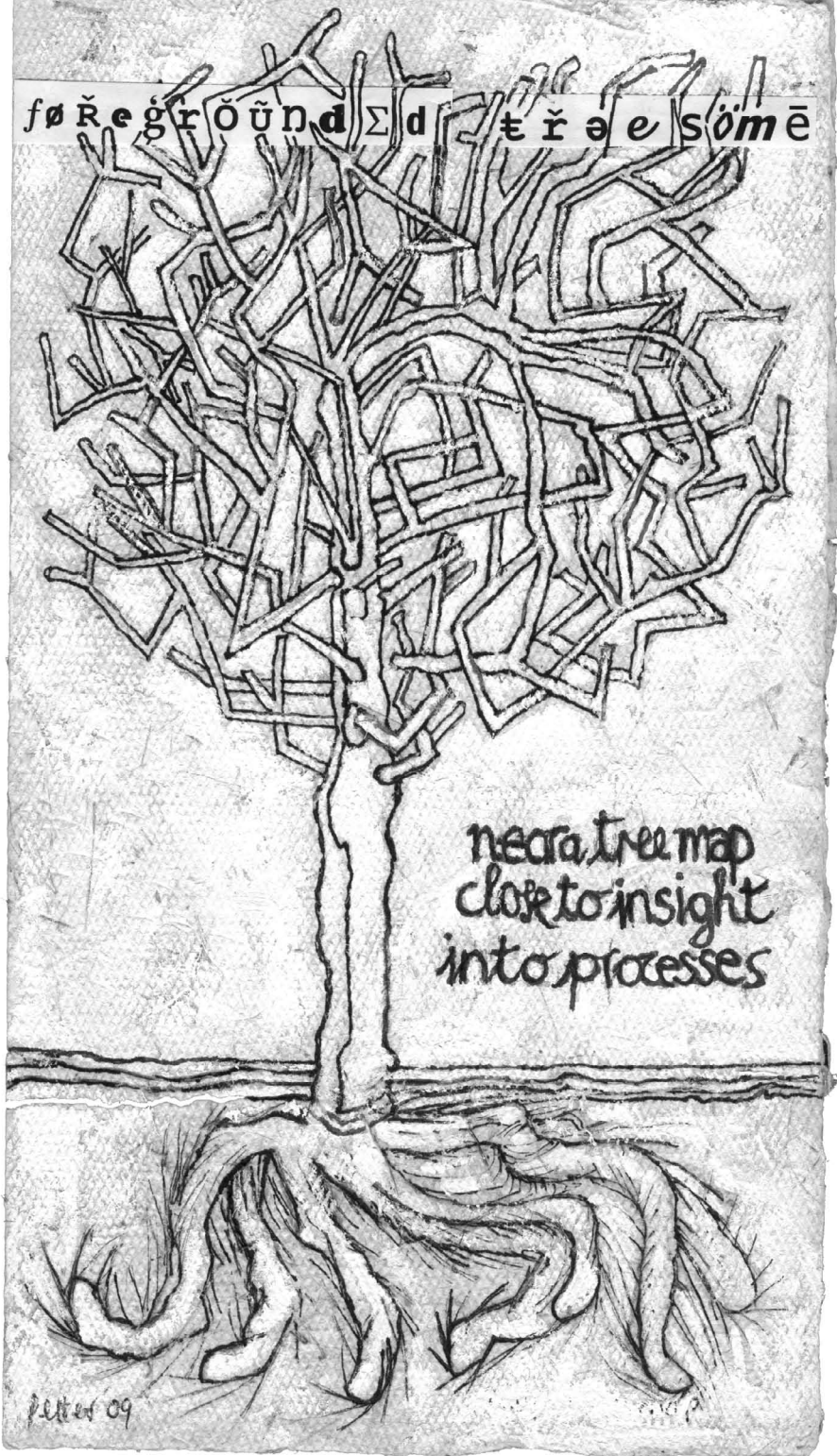
**West**

POINT IN THE SAME DIRECTION

*sugar heart wand  
when most needed  
can never eat one*



fø ð e g r ö ũ n d | Σ d | t r æ e s ö m ē



neera tree map  
close to insight  
into processes

petter 09

## Freedom Option

*above a cloud duvet  
847 turns east  
again i drive home*

You go to Singapore for two weeks. To visit our son. Too hot too humid too far for me. Two weeks of indulgence. Her in her way. Me in mine. Can start smoking again. But do not. If, from landlocked Middle England, I want to search out tough cliffs, wild grass-darkened sand dunes, slightly dangerous coastal paths, I can. But do not. To sleep rough inside a National Park is an option. Not taken. Can do anything, go anywhere, perform acts teetering on dangerous brinks, shout, play music loud, walk naked in a shielded garden, go for snappy walks where no man has gone before. But do not. Anyone can visit. They do not. Can visit anyone. Do not. What did I do when you went to Singapore for two weeks to visit our son?

*freedom option  
never is it  
All and Everything<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>All and Everything George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff Routledge and Regan Paul



## Fucking dentist

*tacky stare  
from a dentists eyes  
complex filling*

Wisdom tooth. Doesn't matter about anyfuckingthing else. Just this cock-eyed, red-raw gum. Doc says tooth has to go. Only just come. Now it's got to fucking go.

"So where's the dentist then?"

"Hospital. Appointment's made. Don't miss it!"

What's a dentist doing in a fucking hospital? What the fuck am I doing standing on this fucking chair, trousers around me ankles, her staring at me fucking cold, waist-down-body? Stupid cow. My tooth is up here, hole head. Up. Up. What's she doing now? Should tell someone about this control-freak-machine. Who'd give a tossing monkey? Fucking arsehole. She gets paid for doing this? Easy money. Old face is still. Plain fucking sucking lips. White, cold pressed coat does nothing to make her look even half way fucking decent. Why can't she keep her fucking unblinking fucking eyes above me cock, her hand somewhere other than me balls while she stares me out?

Fucking prickly hell! I love swearing like this. Invisible. Her flat dentist face is slyly deadpan. I look ahead, an indifferent surface. "I'd do lots to her poxy, middle-class fuckeasy flatbody if only this fucking wisdom tooth didn't hurt so fucking much", I seamlessly mutter. Stare ahead, one of my unblinking views indifferent to the fucking dentist.

*winter rose quivers  
on her shelf an awkward shape  
viewed from this angle*

## granddadmā

*moon axis  
puts a tide to flight  
two lean bodies*

They come, their rags full of themselves.

Morning petrifies into fossilised stillness. Air hangs in exploded landlines of cold breath. Nothing moves. No sounds.

*“Granddad! You’s e been pointin’ at zat moon for ages yer daft old shmo”*

Ma mutters in a personally literate language.

“So what. Moon moves. Earth moves. Seems likely they are tired balls by now. Way out of line, but...” his unusual reply.

*einstein’s time moves  
stretched body skin wrinkles  
into a lampshade*

It is Friday evening. Forget fence repairs. Someone helps granddad’s arm down. He is aimed at an open door. One look back at a rotating scimitar shape before night is left outside. Granddad, escapee in exile, sprays; says he is trying to retrieve a smell of burning wax, blessed spices, atmosphere of his shtetl<sup>1</sup>. Dad started it. Mum, granddad soon followed; no Queen Sabbath, no dressing up in best clothes, no prayers, no mother priestess lighting candles, no song of tribute to wife, no Kiddush cup, no Kiddush, no Habdala to mark separation of Sabbath from other days. But supper is still spread; cabbage soup with chopped beet or dumplings in chicken soup, gefilte fish, very hot red horseradish, potato pancakes, two challas loaves of bread (because we love their sweet dough taste, their braided crust), matzos, olives, halvah. Never wine. *“Being here is good fortune enough”* dad singsongs in an unsuitable voice. A light bulb bangs. Munching, everyone lowers food-spiked forks. They wait for a replacement. With light returns splashes of conversation, long sight of messed-up cooking, vegetable expressions, animal meanings. Finished, they go their different and separate ways.

*family spread  
once a week  
that special meal*

Table talk defines pillow talk. Flat tunes domesticate. Broken semitones slide. Granddad catches some before they fall into discord. Holding children's hands, they theirs, his eyes sparkle. Dancing blindfold, in different size circles, make most of them happy. Suppose this is his Marc Chagall-like prayer into an ancient future.

But not all desire this harvested wheat field of loneliness. Dad, supported, stares at his distant curved moon. Walks away. Minor key tones deepen into poignant songs. He knows about being targeted. Hides plaintive notes as best he can before turning away.

*loner more alone  
inside night blind eyes  
his search for light*

**“But you told me you never knew your granddad or grandma”**

“ I know. So maybe I lied, maybe I...It doesn't much matter, doesn't much matter at all”

**“But why say....”**

“Why say what? I told you it doesn't matter”

Scooped voices abruptly end. From a bed that dips, gravel tide snores grumble up an F Major scale. granddadma dead. We live in aftermath whirls of their age-old cocktail. Fossils begin to unravel time-corrupted secrets.

*more eye moon stares  
from a repeat tide  
new rituals*

<sup>1</sup> *shtetl*: small towns, villages in Eastern Europe. Here, before World War 2, the culture of the Ashkenazim Jews flourished. Life was hard and insulated. Bloodbaths were common, as was death from starvation.

## Halloween Night

*not one plum remains  
tough hysterectomy  
deep inside*

Southwell Minster. Anne Frank<sup>1</sup> Exhibition. German Jewish Refugees tell tales. In this Mannerist Age of Christian reconciliation, survival stories of Ruth, of Ester, of Jews morphed into blocks of soap or skinned into a lampshade craft. Drive home along shapely curved country roads lit by headlights.

*grape and pear shadows  
collude into strange twin shapes  
a brave danse macabre*

Line of wheelchairs move into unfamiliar shapes. Those who push seem to smile. Carers and cared are disguised as witches, ghouls or other sanitised creatures of a wet Halloween night.

It has already been a surreal evening. This extra spectacle adds a dimension somewhere between Salvador Dali and Goya.

*satanic face  
distorted children  
wave cardboard moons*

Suspended everyday everynight reality in so many ways in such a short time increase bursts of unease.

Glad to be driving along a double width straight road. Lit in a familiar way, everynight moonlit shadows are cast. Beyond are familiar everynight stars. Everynight hum of electricity. Images creep past. Almost walking pace speed limit.

*distant line of stars  
cosmos looks familiar  
in a disguised curve*

<sup>1</sup> does anyone NOT know of Anne Frank?

## ***her sharp faced voice***

prepares precooked anger  
claims she is shy  
but how to know

*her sharp faced voice. stubborn mix of cubist vorticism<sup>1</sup>, anti-fauve colour, amateur actor flamboyant. cutting blade angled, it pierces fractured surface water where curvaceous fish defragment into an edge of somewhere else. an everyday form, rarely seen but always there or thereabouts, builds into sniping structures. all but one are poised, ready to pounce.*

where storm water meets  
tribes of frightened fish collide  
cracked images sink

*malfunctioning primary thrust reflects fissures. easy to predict. rushes of water inside angry blood begin another outpouring of vitriol. she calls others “the worst liar, the most dishonest person i have ever met, a blackmailer.” beyond her sharp-faced raucous-cawing are silent surges of embarrassed disbelief. sharp implements stab others. this harsh face stands awkwardly on a sandbank waiting to again centre-stage. it will. it always does. there is always, always, always him ready to take her place.*

secret practice run  
raucous overt emotions  
burst as a bombshell

<sup>1</sup> vorticism: a primarily English art movement that started prior to World War 1. Essentially, it extended into depth the Futurists acceleration of successive images seen simultaneously across a shallow plain, like Marcel Duchamp's 'Nude Descending a Staircase'. It created an inrushing perspective – a vortex.

here he make you

here he make you this

put big to day on went the  
day

OW away OO in

## hints of harvest

*cool moon*

*bats circle*

*black blue dusk*

toward beige

wheat toward

zero white

white journey

opens ways

ways to forward

fugitive path

path rambler

opens echo

pulse echoes

route pulse

route incubator

incubator fails

fails to issue

issue a trace

trace

that

fails

fails

fails

*sycamore leaf*

*echo fails to issue*

*a further response*

## Home and Hospital 4 J I + journey into deathland<sup>1</sup>

### 1

**Home and Hospital for Jewish Incurables** is a name to savour. Alive before hosannas of good deeds became a glint in Left Wing Socialist eyes, it is a living expression of philanthropy, a statement of pride for a tribe whose most sick are close to death. Answer confuses frost with any foregone conclusions. Worked there one year.

*length of silence  
bleached walls darken to grey  
as daylight fades*

Inside this civilised ghetto connections are never far away. My, his dad, recalls 1936 East End of London routing of Fascists, relive Spanish Civil War, share depression of Stalin revelations. I visit. He visits. Both dads have short-term leases on neighbouring beds. Sit on opposite sides, talking as if nothing can be heard across beds so close.

*mental graffiti  
spills over two narrow beds  
body outline fades*

“Arnold<sup>2</sup>, vy you couldn’t vait ‘til I vas dead to rite such a plays? Now everyones know our biznesses and u make ov me public Mr. a nobody. **Now** Iyam veak. Not den.”

“Dad. Family is just a starting point. You have to start somewhere. Anyway, that’s my job. I write Plays.” Knows he is not believed. His father’s lips calibrate on a different scale to my togetherness with those night leg-spread Spanish semi-nurses dancing to a Mediterranean moon.

“It’s true, dad”.

“But how you make me look?”

I hold dad’s hand. Head to one side, his eyes are shut as if asleep. But he isn’t. He looks old. But he isn’t. I look over at Arnold. He looks back without seeing. Dad opens eyes, turns face to me.



“Sure you get a job with Art?”

“Yes.

Sure”

“He played same game”

“What?”

“Game. I played. He played. We all played”

He squeezes my hand. To hear, I lower. Arnold says goodbye. Walks a broken line from a room where beds settle close to each other. Know there will be change.

*sit close to him  
as shadow eyes close  
mauve shadows stretch*

## 2

“what’sitlike?”

“Difficult to say, mein youngest boychikel. I’m still a bit verduzt. Empty. No. more a nothingness. No more of feeling. None. No thoughts. No sights. No ‘maybe’ into ‘what if’. No pulsing. No futter und mameh, wife or bruder. No light or dark. no Yes. no No”

“but is it other side of...? what if...?”

“Nope. Difrent. Y not C 4 yrself? We’ll gt U bak”.

“difficile?”

“Easy as eating chicken knaydlach soup. So?”

“ok! I’m almost ready”

“Right! Eyes shut. ‘I’s sht. Lift ofF...NOWwww.”

“help! how did it...? you’re right - can’t feel. it’s so everything allgonothing. nothing. full of empty. you are not around. you are not about so I think I’ll slip back over if U don’t mind.”

“It’s your time of day into night, son. Besides, I don’t have a mind to mind anymore. **That**, I can tell U, is a blessing.”

*midnight clock  
starts another long silence  
stretched shadows fail*

*"i've gotta go now"*

*"Hve animated darks. GdNight. Giv luv to mum"*

*"thanks! will do. goodbye grandma granddad dad. goodbye Mr Wesker, goodbye. Goodbye maybe immoral Ave Maria, goodbye Angela, Pauline, Jill, goodbye everybody."*

*"Goodnight, you insecure little lovey. Thanks a million". Pauline's glow eye kisses are still big lips. Still talks about empathy days, delirious nights. "Glad you loved, right when we lovingly needed you. Memorial kisses from us 3 young shadows."*

*"goodbye phantoms all...this time, a forever 'goodbye'."*

*storm in a glass moon -  
groups of crystal move around  
as ghost shapes waver*

<sup>1</sup> Two haibun appeared in Volume 2 - **&Ynot? - Home and Hospital 4 J I** and **journey into deathland**, with hints of a third, **three died young**. A full version of the third appears in this volume. Here they are cut, pasted, modified and collaged to make a new entity.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold Wesker - His trilogy of plays, *Chicken Soup with Barley*, *Roots*, *I'm talking about Jerusalem* were written in 1959, 1960, first performed in 1960.

## **i almost hate that ginger moggie**

*overnight lightning*  
*arranges her orange breath*  
*images fracture*

almost hate that ginger moggie. it lives next door. not that one. this one, with a large garden. why does it, all day everyday, tear at mine? it hides under car, sunbathes in wild hedge deep shade. everywhere is soiled, bulbs unhinged. some kid shot away an eye. when both feet are stamped it moves away. but slowly. this battle-scarred, patchy ginger female cat reorders cultivated pleasures. always settles just out of reach.

*feline shadow      moves*  
*over a ginger time scale*  
*a lost lust for life*

What is his problem? I'm a pet, a pleasure to be pleased. Domesticated? Yes. I use his earth as a toilet. Yes. Until they invent something better, Yes, that is what I do.

*animal voice*  
*tries to top passion*  
*of a top up scream*

What if I stalk him; leap at his throat; don't let go; bring him to ground; let him see red rage as I feed my wild ones? Should I savage him here, finish him now? If I creep under his car, will he leave me alone, let me sleep?

*three offspring*  
*they hang onto stretched teats*  
*for life or death*

## i lived a golden Age

Really fortunate  
That is what I've been  
Lived through 1 World War  
Just 1  
i lived a golden Age

If you know what i mean

No *arbeit macht frei*  
No cramped train  
No tramped road  
No skill to kill  
No torn upending

No life in Berlin, Vienna, Birkenau,  
The Reichsbahn<sup>1</sup>  
Or *Vernichtung DurcArbeit* <sup>2</sup>,  
Or Dachau, Treblinka  
Or Einsatzgruppen<sup>3</sup>  
Majdanek, Wannsee, Belzec, Chelmo  
or Sobibor. No 'special treatment',  
'resettlement', 'finished', 'moved East',  
'major cleansing action', 'made free',  
'appropriate treatment', 'migration',  
'wander off'. No sardine can freight train  
No 'solution'

heather, bracken, bog myrtle  
harden into charcoal  
while summit of Beinn Tarsuinn  
is lost forever in creeping mist

*dim marshlight  
plays a drum of skulls  
inside battered heads  
masses of pain  
dwindles into grey*

*black mud  
squelches into dawn  
blood-laced knickers  
ride sleek horizon  
of a deeper deepness*

Or smell of smoke  
Or wail of baby meat  
Or dead-leaf forest  
Or trail of god forsaken  
Or permanent erasure

*rats snuffle  
before they tread  
on blinded mice  
red-stained teeth  
of a sabre-toothed cat*

*rainbow trout  
hide below water torrents  
muddied earth settles*

slips inside a coffin-size secret  
i lived                      a golden Age

*over dead leaves  
when frayed clouds darken*

Really fortunate

That is what I've been

Pushed unknowing

Beyond so many cages

If you know what I mean

*red-flamed tongue  
rydberg molecule is child  
of 2 strange atoms*

Dragged through bonding

Pulled through bars

From a womb of another time

Really fortunate

That is what I have been

<sup>1</sup> german railway system without which the holocaust would not have been so possible

<sup>2</sup> 'destruction through work'

<sup>3</sup> the mobile battalions established to murder Jews in Soviet territory

## i read old fashioned books – so, how does it work again?

*old hardback book  
musical score  
improves it*

Shortish book is 107 years old. **THE STORY OF MUSIC**<sup>1</sup>. dedicated to *ARTHUR AND MILDRED*. Quaint, eccentric writing. Reads as if bits are sheered from other bits. Truncated writing, style removed from soft terseness.

1 ‘*Tschaiköwsky, with his weird, wild tearings... commands the attention mainly because all is so mightily fantastical, but this extravagant, imaginative music does not loiter about the soul*’.

2 ‘*Wagner was not a composer of the calibre of Beethoven; for where the master realised the highest spiritual beauty with nobility, the other can only be said to have aspired thereto*’.

Is this a short overture for an onslaught? No. Just a spare observation *en passant*. Others lead to a cultured maze whose twists open up, whose turns turn aside.

*cliff path history  
crumbles into music shapes  
cherry blossom thrives*

Notation speeds up a slow development. New instruments invented, existing ones improved. Over hundreds of years, scenery moves: Inventive *Guido* reconstructs the scale, disposing notes on four lines that will become a stave of 11, then 10. *Franco* determines relative lengths of notes, a vital advance on the preceding non-regulated method, unrecognised as a limit. Tenth century? First primitive organs. Without their improvement what would Bach have missed? Doesn't bear feeling about. Then comes liberating *Marchettus*, who battles contemporary parameters of harmony. This musical concord is less than half the picture - resolution of appropriate balances between consonance and dissonance; harmony combined with a combination of opposite notes. Light. Dark. In 1502, *Petrucchi's*



invented music publishing, as influential as a website, as email is today. Other mini-giants, dissatisfied with the status quo, add pioneering dots. The taken-for-granted moves from stasis of what is to the next evolutionary tiptoe.

*short ladder*  
*overlaps a rainbow curve*  
*e x t e n d s i n t o l o n g*

But there is more. The **BIG** ones. Those who discard handcuff shapes. Innocent, arrogant, or because they can, their extended grammar is differently applied. New instrument combinations are used to more precisely describe other musical structures, expressions that dissolve a variety of candyfloss.

*inside a dark twig  
lark melodies rise high  
voice of black ravens*

Who to start? Palestrina? He's a big first BIG boy. *'Grasps the doctrines without adopting mannerisms. Takes the principal melody from the tenor part...gave it to the highest pitch voice – treble or soprano'*. Wonder modification. Melody, previously less significant *'set musical art upon the wings of tune - as well as science'*. Monteverde gives melody even greater freedom, *'invents fresh combinations of harmony disregarding old rules...first to use the chord of the dominant seventh without first preparing the seventh (or discord) of that chord'*. Who next? Scarlatti, who improves the Aria? Maybe.

*cloud lifts  
rays of a baroque sun storm  
craft new sounds*

BACH. Yes. Greatest compositions unpublished in his lifetime. Died virtually unrecognised, except as an organist. Choral music is elevated to such a high level that earlier generations would not have understood, let alone accepted. Raises *Passion* music form, content, structures, adding double choruses, harmonious chorales, exquisite solos with the most delicate instrumental accompaniment ever before composed. He also, for the first time, involves the congregation in singing the chorales. The *Wohlkemperte Clavier* disregards broadly accepted fingering principles, developing new technical parts of music. Shapes of his orchestral style and instrumentation are as different from contemporaries as it is advanced. HE is a giant.

*behind a large mound  
an unnoticed explosion  
mountain growth*

*Good time to raise a magician's old-fashioned glass, the one that changed water into sand brown wine. A toast. To sceptics, to dissenters everywhere. I'll drink to that. Name one BIG invention? What? Zilch thinking. Quick. Drainpipe. Flush valve. One. Drainpipe. Not*



*bad. A man of my time, it was easy to see through walls, but not of pulling them down. Stop. What about now? Are you for real? Post Copernicus, Galileo, Freud, Benjamin, Einstein, Oppenheimer, Dawkins, Newton, Darwin, Žižek? Who? Would love to live now. Gottcha, you Romantic.*

The New Book skirts ancient processes, with no soft landing.

YET. Preface:

*'I have purposely avoided detailed reference to living composers of every school – save perhaps the Russian...the last word in Music worth hearing has been spoken for many a long period – and this by the masters dealt with in my very small space.'*

HOW COULD HE?

*string quartet grows tall  
falling leaves may not know  
smells of hard earth*

## I was there

## Was I there?

*was i there?  
difficult to remember  
if i was there*

Bomb dropped on Russian Square. Seem to remember that name.  
'Russian Square'. Not now certain. Remember remembering that name.

*I was there. Was I there?*

Bob Dylan somewhere playing something to thousands of somebody's.  
Filmed black&white girls wave and scream. Hold hair over throbbing heads.

*I was there. Was I there?*

Sit on shoulders of a giant. Giant voices hit leaves of trees in Victoria Park London. Stones from mad-eyed Fascists hit some heads of us.

*I was there. Was I there?*

*spaces fade  
try to make a pattern fix  
into an aide memoire*

Ancient sound. Sometimes heard in heathland. Only during half an hour between sunset and nightfall. Oracle call like that of a distant motorbike.

*I was there. Was I there?*

*churring*. Nearly invisible. Nearly hear a nightjar. Just once nearly in sight of a nightjar. Throw a white handkerchief into the air. Over and over.

*I was there. Was I there?*

Sometimes they are cheated into seeing a white handkerchief as white patches on male wings. *Was I there* when ghostly shapes flash across dusk dew light?

*I was there?*

Hawk-like long sharp wings. Gape of a beak snaps up a ghostly nocturnal moth. Then another. Perhaps another. I thought you knew this.

*I was there. Was I there?*

“I thought you knew their other name was ‘the goatsucker’. In the legend...” “What legend?” “Nightjars use their wide-open mouths to suckle milk?” *You were there?* “No” *I was there.*

“You know they nest on ground.” “Yes” “How did they get such camouflage? Makes you sense purpose of a master doesn’t it?” “No” *I am here. Am I there?*

*nightjar just appears  
we may just have seen it  
or just flakes of bark*

Remember taking her somewhere after receiving some certificate or other. Remember wearing David Hockney’s gold lamé jacket over mine. See her laugh. *She was there. Was I there?*

Inside another postcard with a picture of a chickadee. Saw one when there. Called ‘cheerful’. Can it be? Remember a hoarse call, like it had a cold. *I was there. Was I there?*

When met I am traumatised. Am churling chirping churring inside. Lines of spots wobble all over film space. Remember not trusting in thrust. *I was there. Was I there?*

*I was there*                      *YES? NO?*  
*most of YES*      *most of More NO*  
*I was there.*                      *Was I?*

## interview

*post breakfast  
cats prepare mouse games  
alternative dawn*

Interview Day is almost a religious rite. Chairman decides who looks at artwork, rechecks application forms, confirms what cannot be said, who asks what in which order, ensures sherry is available for post-interview analysis. Seating arrangements are solidified, amorphous signals double-marked. Candidates trouble toilets, renew lipstick, straighten ties, brush away dandruff, rehearse answers to imagined questions.

*fumbled nerves  
before secret tears disperse  
clever styles researched*

They come. They go. Notes are made in mirror boxes for later crosschecking, Stand up. Stretch. Chairman mentions where he would be if outside this choreographed pattern. Final applicant.

*art college history  
duvet intuition entwines  
with another mindset*

Committee face a stretch of latticed windows. Applicant sits on an everyday, centred chair. Light behind makes shadowed sculptures of contrasting shapes. Manicured face fronts Whitby jet<sup>1</sup> coloured hair. Pre-Raphaelite length, waves edge in broken lines of sunrays. Thin wrists mirror mouth excitement.

*question seven -  
photogenic face  
smiles answers*

And those answers are flower bouquets, arabesques of air trembling fingers. Hypnotic dazzles blend half heard responses. Room's

misbalance sorts itself. Tide sucks every speck of head action from an already unusual process. Seductress performs on a high wire with no safety net.

*sudden change to gold  
of sunflower yellow  
afternoon game unfolds*

Inside a room filled with art works, eyes closed, what Benito Mussolini<sup>2</sup> breathlessly said to Clare Sheridan (as he locked the bedroom door) “*Vous êtes une femme pour qui on pourrait avoir une grande passion*” is repeated.

*day of hieroglyphs -  
Principal enters her smile  
before she knows it*

Soft bass, soprano piccolo questions some place else. She, the chosen one, curves into a closeness that disperses mass into wings of glitter particles.

*in a moonlit head  
fragments of sunshine  
gold medal moment*

There is glow in both directions. Rites complete, intermingled, there is a flying high above colours that spread across lower levels of canvas disguised as an interview.

*wonder seachange  
sensual illustration  
completes today's mission*

<sup>1</sup> Whitby Jet – a black stone mined near the Yorkshire seaside resort of Whitby

<sup>2</sup> Mussolini – Italian Dictator who fought alongside Hitler in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War

## it is a day like many others

*grey sky twists to smoke  
fills with wails  
of new born dead*

2 air raid warnings. Asleep in an earth-covered shelter. Midday. Third wailing siren into a finished sun. Weeds rampage. Fill pavement cracks. All summer spaces. Lush leaves with earth-encased roots boil. “Noowtrishus” she says.

Tastes awful. Time to converge, like an L.S.Lowry painting. Time to play. Waiting, we mimic cricket or, minus ball, even enough flesh to make two teams, play fantasy football.

“Don’t do it fer real, mind”

“why not?”

“Yer mite ferget ter rmemba whot’s whot”

So many repeat performances. We should, by now, know.

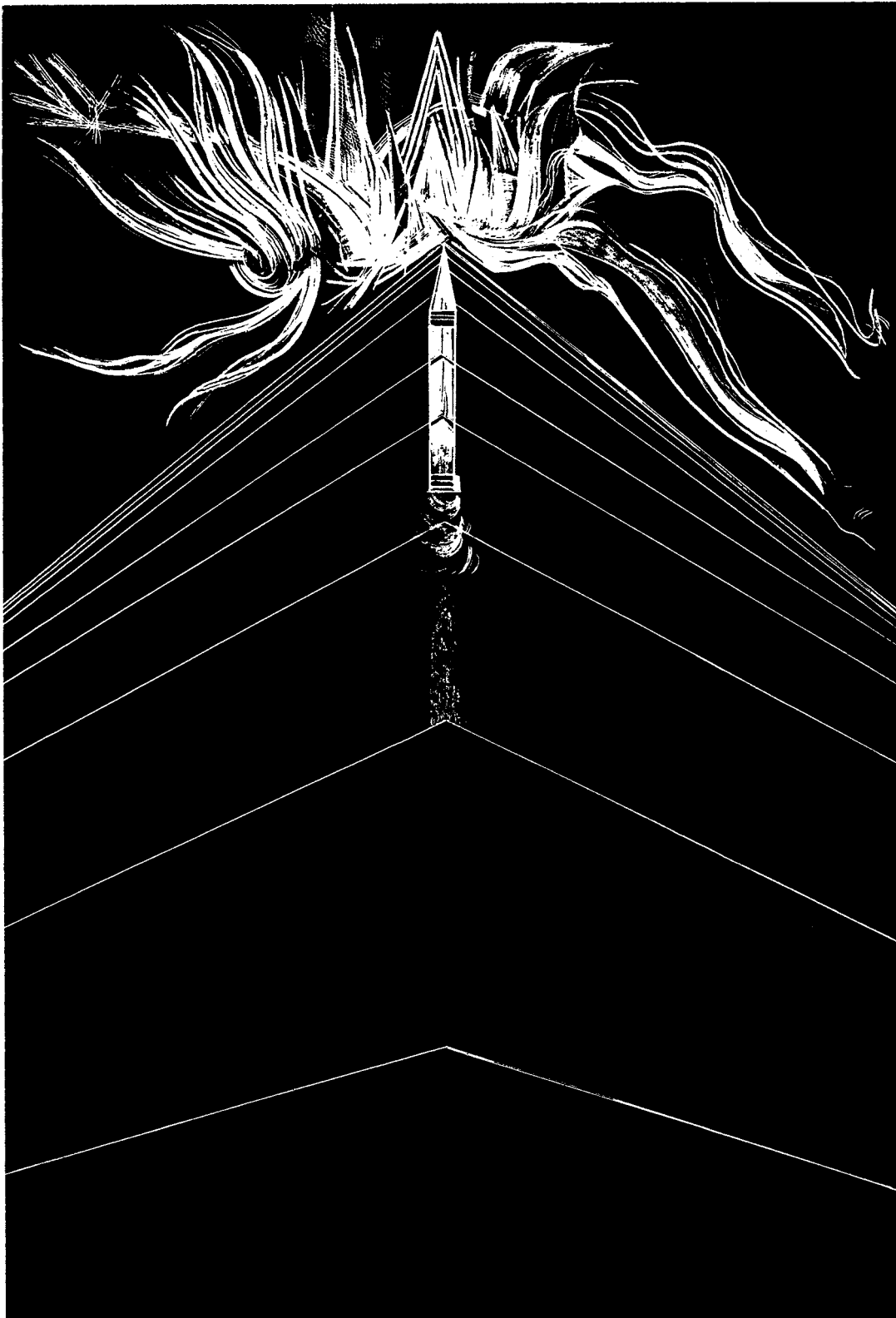
I am as good as other 8 year olds. Most are older. Many aggressive. Mirror games do not last long before stage is set for main action. With few cosmetic disguises it is a day no better or worse than yesterday was or tomorrow will be.

Curtain raiser is a distant drone. Maybe more than one. Scrambled spitfires. Decree for arm-wave cheering. Daily equation: *good fights evil; dark defaces light; human battles inhuman; piloted fighter planes can triumph over pilotless death tubes*. Not musical, but that is it. All together. Louder.

*sunbathed explosion  
beside fragmented buildings  
a body breaks down*

Today, slide-rule simplicity succumbs to a future of physics, mathematics, engineering. For an audience waxing on adrenalin rushes, litmus paper is never neutral. Dice-throw risks are always Present tense. Stakes are high, odds short, we its hot prize. Audience is central to plot. Narrative is limited.

“Listen” Pitch combined with tone is everything. “Not close”



Emptiness of drone is sudden, moment unpredictable. Hear it cutting through somebody's lifeline. No one moves. No one makes any sound. Whatever position when silence starts is how it remains until end game. That is how every play is instructed.

*inexpressible cry  
over midday spaces  
that silence*

New drone. Awesome. Appearance of finned shapes. Future speeds across a high sun flat sky. Neither thin buildings nor we are prepared. Wasp spitfires buzz elliptically. Gunfire sting hits targets. Aerial explosion. Boiling metal rains to earth.

Louder drone. Coded 'Red For Danger'. Mothers scurry, use aprons as umbrellas. We peep from under safety zone. It drops down straight line of an extended ruler. Pilots veer off at this stage of a rocket's career. Fall from hot sun, blue sky is fast, drop heavy. Shock waves pulse through flesh. Bodies bend. Bodies melt. Bodies incinerate. Road shapes corrupt.

*her shadow  
on his bedroom wall  
all that is left*

Air raid shelters shatter into spiked pieces of shrapnelled bones. Spiky crater reshapes houses into jigsaw puzzles whose small square rooms are impossible to recreate.

"Oy, getta move on. Yu will belate ferskoowell. Sandwich."

"Got it. Bye."

Morning Assembly.

"Today we say special prayers for....."

*rubble of houses  
simultaneous  
flesh to funeral*



## loss

*age old key  
lost in a lit attic  
wrapped toys hide*

Lose so much. For as long as fading is memory I have lost things; objects, thoughts, senses, ideas, words. Lose tickets, clothes, ability to dream. Even changes are lost. Soon after, names of anything lost sight of is gone. Lose watch, time of day, train times, even bits of time itself. At first some are found. Lose them again inside loss of light. Walk into a room to find or collect something or other. Whatever it is immediately is lost to me. Walk out, wondering. Lose street names, rows of houses, this town, that town, hair, skin, a couple of people, sometimes crowds of people. Even lose notes of a piano sonata. Sometimes become a loss to myself. Asleep, I chase women but lose them, especially those dressed in black. Left with photographs to find people in close up.

So much is lost. So soon it is viewed as appropriate. Now I accept authenticity of loss, materialising into an essential part of each day, even inside shadows.

*wind blown  
distance between trees grow  
as leaves lose strength*

Losses vary in impact. Like losing car keys and house keys simultaneously. Like when I was lost in fog, but found a pen that had drawn an open door through which I was blown. On a small table, coffee, tea, milk, cheese, eggs, jam, fruit, butter, bread. Eyes made to close. All lost. Table, coffee, everything lost. Fade into lost today.

*lose a Cheshire cat*

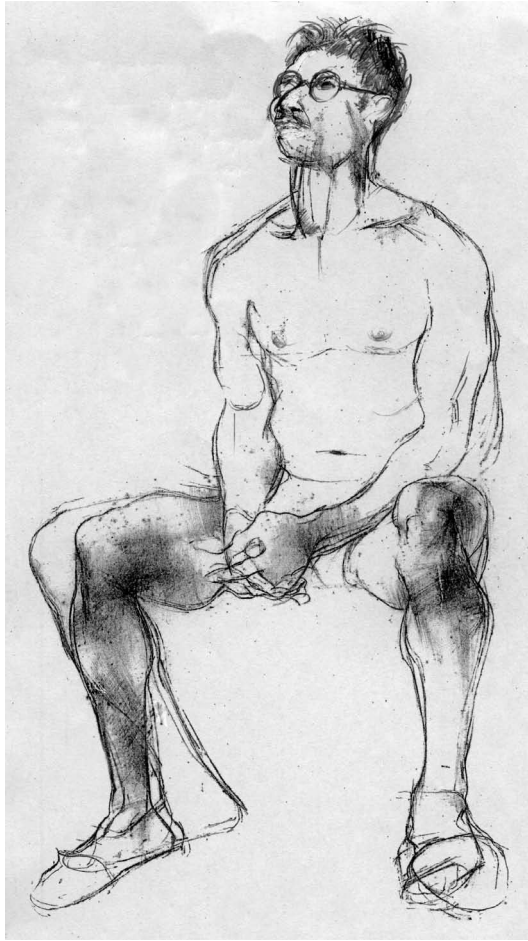
*one with a very large smile*

*lose even that*

Lose, lose, lose so much. Even desire for that far off country. No idea what happened to it. Getting better at having no idea what happens to anything lost. Have lived in many cities. Lost bits of each. Messy, but not disastrous. Survived. Replacements exist, these being integral parts of loss mechanics. Comes night, comes stars. There are millions all lost in scabrous cloud. Don't let me lose you. Don't lose me.

*grooms a lost feather  
young doves make circles  
around body space*

## model model



*room squashed  
with complicated shadows  
naked body nude*

‘Ready for tonight?’

‘Yes’.

‘Go back late. Remember his pebble drive. Got to do something about you. It’s no good sleeping on the floor, especially when the kiln is off. Alright for Thursday?’

‘Yes’.

Thursday evenings, model. Not always nude. Costumes are flamboyant, like Picasso's Harlequins. Young women have Pre-Raphaelite frizzed or ruler straight, neck length black hair, wear  $\frac{3}{4}$  length black dresses, black patterned stockings, cheap fashion shoes shaped to a powerhouse of all that is feminine. Males wear jeans, corduroy jackets, paint or clay spattered shirts. Distantly friendly. Their sculptures, drawings, paintings, stained glass windows and illustrations are awesome to one three years younger. Asked by lumpy girl to be their paid model. Smiles when we pass. Not intimate.

*skein of drawing -  
beyond a dirty window  
layers of cloud build*

During first rest break study their approaches to this initial stage. Some precisely plan, carefully measure. Some establish relationships between objects in space around my body. Others, tentative, establish proportions, general shapes. Two sculptors, fast, vigorous, use thick sticks of homemade charcoal. Fingers massage media that quickly cover large sheets of paper. Forms emerge from masses of dark, like Michelangelo's unmanicured slaves hauling out of carved rock prisons. At developmental stage break, still nude, move around saying "great, brilliant." Some smile at my bare enthusiasm. Some, so involved in immediate problem-solving, do not respond. Mostly, they want me back on a sheet-covered podium, not breathing. One looks at my nakedness.

"Left arm slightly higher". "Sit back. Your feet aren't quite inside our chalk marks". "Lower your head. Little more. Stop. Twist your chest slightly".

*swell of root  
willing sacrificial lamb  
upholds a breath*

Evening closes. Half of all drawings are 'fixed' with aerosol sprays, hidden in folders or torn up. Other half are studying what they have done or waiting for fixative to dry. Decisive choices have been made, mistakes binned. From virgin paper to even a half way



successful drawing is outside comfort zone for longer than ever seems possible. Learn that from them. Yet they pay me.

From a podium stance a variety of approaches are inhaled. Prefer that of sculptors. Scalpel sharp marks inundate paper.

An incisive ‘blizzard’ is one method of achieving intensity while retaining freshness. Sam’s work is a bit like Rodin. Sid, a future Royal Academician, is more Degas.

‘Sam, you could get a job at Madame Tussauds’

‘You’ve years yet. Plenty of time to get to grips with it’ he replies enigmatically, not upset. Sid’s girlfriend is a look-alike, thin, with sculpted features, large eyelids, bone-china skin, black black hair. They wear unique black black clothes, black black shoes. Togetherness blossoms under a rainbow umbrella of mystique that sees them float even closer.

*untidy ocean  
cusp of a gigantic wave  
reshapes land based marks*

“Come back tonight” she says every Thursday. Hang around. She lives in a self-contained Annexe that faces Wimbledon Common. Sparkly eyes, tantalising, lumpy, her approach to everything is robust. Always she finishes eating first. Always watches me eat. Never speaks. Try not to look at her yet appear involved. Tells me when, where to undress. Never same time. Not always bedroom. Sometimes undresses me, back to her. Long mirror gives another perspective. Swamped inside softly fleshly bumps, she plays with me in any way her fantasies direct. Watching mirror watching her is a turn on. No point in not playing along as her losing control of both our controls works to mutual benefit. ‘Touch here, there.’ Holds finger. ‘Better. Not so hard. Faster. Stop. Your t’. After an unleashed scrabble of outsideinside flesh, an abstract scream, a flagging, a sagging, a time for sweat to river-run-around-three-dimensional flesh rolls, she releases us. Yes, it is abuse. Rape? I consent. Ask me back again again again. Who in their right mind...an exemplar learning curve...Wonder about metabolism that leaves a luxuriant body *so* debilitating, so wet. But that’s a side issue.

*night manoeuvre  
foetal shape held tight  
as feathers settle*

Next thursday evening again model for them. She stares at my nakedness as pose is set. Her face, too, sets, as if she has never invited anyone into her demands. Mind is set into drawing. Pose is studied from where they will be drawing. Walk around staged structure to familiarise themselves with spatial relationships. Only after this do marks emerge.

Soon she will leave College. Will haemoglobin to a dull flow until first rest break. For now, ambition is to be number 1 model model.

*nude locust lands*  
*changes dapple*      *skin into*  
*obedient breath*

## **mother's milk a shade sour?**

*beyond hot rubble  
an iron stove melts  
flesh opens to change*

No matter how bad inside, smile at sounds outside. She loves us. Yes, she does. But, with blind self-interest, growling eyes in shadows of a half-selfish side of light, we are not appreciative. She, in a black dress, most hidden by an unwashed apron, prepares ulcerating food. In our game of Family Monopoly no hands touch 'clean-and-pass-go' or collect a prize.

Indelicately, it agglutinates into flesh-burning acids. Pressured by beef spluttering onto a fat layered grate of an open fire, poverty food ends effete side of inedible. Dishevelled meals are mimed eating, a memorial to something more real. Hidden duodenums, victims of culinary disdain, fattened with resentment, explode. From this pickled household no one's future nurtures a cooking maestro. One outcome is to melt into eel arms of any half way responsive woman able to notch up any half-way less seared meals. Her long-term plan?

*another storm starts  
new sound inside fires  
of a cook machine*

"Cook it yourselves". Aged 3, 7, 10, World War 2 hell is unleashed. What are we supposed to do? New problems. They know what will happen to us if, if if... This gaseous game is a tunnel we claw through, eventually emerging a far side of black. Yes, disfigured. Yes, but still alive to cook another day.

*untamed wind howls  
through bomb reshaped earth  
chaos of roots*



## nights make a difference

*incomplete home in a burst of moonglow more explosions*

Yesterday night started in a bright glare of an evening punctuated with darts of rain. In olden days nights flared like ceremonial firework displays that punctured frost-cold darks. Nowadays nights are altogether more tucked-in affairs. Then they flashed, they leapt, cowered in life, rampant in death. Wild winter days sucked in maelstroms of gambles that turn bullets into a game of chance. Small children, used to shock waves of distortions, die in bed with home-knitted socks to warm them.

*nowhere to hide too frightened to wear a disguise*

At night, every road is a commotion.

*"How much?"*

*"£2 a buzz"*

*"5"*

Not a skunk of guilt.

*"Careful!"*

*"Here's American dollars. Where's the stuff?"*

*"Quick. Take them. Careful. Remember, it's Shabbos."*

*"Not for me, it isn't."*

Walk away. Elated. Tonight will be a bang. Calm down. Slow breathing. I love nights when holidays crowd in. Touch a street tree. These days they are short. Snap off a leaf. Chew it. With an inside scream smile a chlorophyll smile. I do.

*head gasket before an explosion leaves explored*

## **not knowing names of them**

*fragrant rose  
whose name is lost  
in circles of sleep  
only wheat fields know  
what time of year it is*

Think I once asked mum if she knew her mother's mother. Not sure she said she did or did not. Same with her mother's father and her father's mother and father. Know I never asked dad. He never mentioned them. Never mentioned his mother or father. Never mentioned his eldest sister who died when he was a baby. Never told us name of a brother who died maybe in World War 1. Never said anything about an older brother who emigrated to America until he (cannot remember his name) turned up at our Council Estate house dressed richly smooth, vibrant. By this time dad was rough fading. Knew about his sister. Knew about her tailor husband. Knew they brought him up with her many sons. Yes, I'm sure he never mentioned anything about being young in London's East End. Few photographs. There is one of him sitting at a small table in a small room. Anonymous portraits inscribed for only a celestial moment. Unknowns. Names expunged. Who looks like who? None look promising. Have to be satisfied transporting their genes into tomorrow. That's it. That's what's left - a cracked mirror that buries fictional images. There is no more.

*single image  
of a papoose look-alike  
inside that photograph  
one lost memory  
turns to ashen silver*

## old fashioned – but what if?

*old fashioned moon  
cleans an otherwise black sky  
paint glazes canvas*

Even then it was old-fashioned. Building inelegant. Good light. Garden littered with clay-modelled, plaster cast sculptures of life figures half hidden by large leaves. College Principal plagiarises a great age of flower painting. Follows well-trodden technical path. Same route for Ezra Pound look-alike buddy who rides majestic horses, who rages when a nosebleed fragments a shared drawing, who lives with Miss Compliant Shaw who, too, rides majestic horses. Once a week she floats among us. Teaches under-drawing. Teaches glaze techniques of those long ago Masters. She, too, manufactures facsimiles. “It is”, she once confided, “a step-by-step... If the pattern is followed results are more or less... You can miss out a layer or two of coloured glaze but...” Not hot at finishing sentences is Miss Compliant Shaw. All three sell. Prices to us frayed brush nibblers are stratospheric. “Not true”, librarian reorganises. “Now, if talking originals”... “They are originals”. “Yeeesss. But...noooo”. “But...”

*pinkish white blossom  
same sharp pictorial space  
two hundred years back*

Course is regular, is regulated. No way of knowing it is old-fashioned. First two years’ list is long: art history, (which follows a sequential, old-fashioned route), life-drawing, illustration, hand-drawn lettering, stone carving, painting, one essay a week, homework where drawing is King, Queen, Sun, Stars, Moon, Light, Dark, 2D, 3D.

*same shape daffodil  
crimped trumpet  
not in full display*

Library books? Poor colour reproductions: pre-Renaissance, Renaissance, Watteau, Tiepolo, Poussin, Bosschaert, Rubens,

Velasquez, Burra, El Greco, Guercino, Canaletto, Picasso, Soutine, Moore, Spencer, Hepworth, Ravillious, Matisse, Nash, Nevinson, Collins, Rodin, Sutherland, Dobson, Gaudier-Brzeska, Gill. No Klee, Chagall, Pollock, Arp, Brancusi, Ernst, Braque, Corbusier, Malevitch, Ozenfant, Kandinsky, Leger, Mondrian, Magritte, Brancusi. No Duchamp. No Bellmer. No Gorky. Few slides. Most books are old. Most well used.

But

It is open for business until 10pm, has tools, workshops materials, jazz band, many spread open wings. It is friendly. When outside is a wind enraged snow blizzard or a maelstrom, inside is cosy. A lame caretaker whose wife, he reveals, “when on holiday, went to Rome for 3 days and nights with a coach full of Rugby players”, opens early. Daily, a contemporary Wedgwood splits a hot breakfast, buys mugs of tea, divides sandwiches, says “I share myself with you”. She wants to build a pottery factory in Africa. A Quaker, she exudes a glow low ego against which everything is measured. Always I am found wanting, always ready to be ceramically reshaped.

*perfumed clay*  
*rusty gates open*  
*onto apple blossom*

## ones that got away

### **Bronze medal**

Goes to as many as do silver and gold medals. Worthless piece of metal around whose neck it hangs.

*Chelsea flower show  
after all these years  
still only third prize*

### **Silver medal**

winner is glitter painted breasts. Throws glitzy tantrum. Pushes someone's arse out of her way. Waxey smile at no consolation second level podium. Final second-class medal on final first class day. Blames him. Gets it wrong.

*fixture face  
shouts at softest of soft winds  
for a fall of leaves*

**Number 1. Top of class. Magisterial winner. Gold medal.** Pride of place. Into stride with time to spare. Chases down final 100 metres. Foregone conclusion. Ms Gold Medal Winner. He says: "let's go do it." They go do it. "I luxuriate", she says to television, ex-sports hero reporter of bronze medal questions.

Hurts to read it. Editor's knife strikes from a ripped open angle. Flash photographs trash smiles of winner galaxy. She is, by overwhelming public accord, top of a cream pile-up.

*female athlete  
celebrates success  
with another first*

## only sometimes wonder

*slightest wind purrs  
from a chaffinch  
a snippet glance*

don't think about it much anymore (what with being older). only sometimes wonder. stare back at photographic stillness. scrutinise veins, arteries, valves for clues. only sometimes wonder why there are none of his or how hers escaped. only sometimes wonder about what happened. wonder how their small canvas became covered with muddled shapes cracked like a Byzantine wall-painting. only sometimes wonder why i never asked, why they never told, why nothing is said of noises heard.

*light begins to fold  
one way or another  
he is not bothered*

sometimes wake inside a resonance, even fall over a shadow person. memories of, some say, golden days as if sound-drained films had returned. same broken movements. sometimes cuddle inside an envelope cinema seat. watch grainy tenements pitch out of vision. fidget into a splice of sleeplessness. only sometimes wonder how such fractures connect bloodstained escapades to me. stare at this ancestral hill. know why he is thin.

*first day of blossom  
photograph of daffodils  
with rusted yellows*

already way over a hundred years into long ago days lost. wonder (but only sometimes) why one captured image is all that remains to... stare hard at... goes back only a short way from... invisibly present? that never mentioned mythic giant, that very first figure of figures who...? too young. too small. sometimes wonder about that, too. yes, far too small to be our giant... spewing flames beyond margins of distant streaks of...lemon yellow empathy for this...improves survival

techniques of...only sometimes wonder about that. impossible to even imagine groping along its tortuous path before his, his, his father which is art...beyond even that. can only guess about such a distance. cannot see beyond ridged rocks closed even to seismic sight. only sometimes wonder why it is full of spaces in which to become lost even ever after. sometimes wonder if there ever was a first point. if there was, only sometimes wonder whether such an occasional visitor could be our nocturnal figure, ancestral icon who...sometimes, when awake, vaguely appears, but...sometimes more a floating two-dimensions of...only sometimes wonder if he is not what he seems to...only sometimes wonder if he is part ancestral or part tributary spreading across every artery thickness. every capillary is tube in motion. every blood pumping valve is noise, every cell hyperactive. too difficult to imagine. no longer can waking time be wasted. wait for a better turn of cards.

*into backwater*

*river rushes to...*

*one puff turns each page*

do not think about it much anymore (what with being older).  
sometimes wonder what. only sometimes if.

*stare at their image*

*now only sometimes wonder*

*what cut came before*

## **piano duet – what a device!**

Every art school seems to have one. Rehearse on Wednesday evenings. Motley groups of talkative listeners, enthusiastic dancers. Saturday is gig night.

*dress rehearsal*

*in games of musical chairs*

*thrush and woodlark compete*

“Is that you? I’m sick. Can you do my turn, brain?”

*“No problem. Have a great time.”*

He is never sick. Some of his bedmates are slow to leave sexuenndo songs.

We share College piano. Play alternative weeks. Sometimes I share his evenings. Sometimes he mine, a device that extracts above average results. In this we are similar. In others we differ. For instance, no amount of playing on cold evenings excites a sweat out of him. Mine flows.

“I don’t sweat. Not ever.” On hot evenings he comes into his own; is cool, with coloured clothes shaped tightly around gym-tuned muscles. For me each interval cannot come quickly enough. Strip, quick towel massage, change of tie-dyed vest, braces loosened, glasses dried before part two. His playing is casual as, multi-tasking, he eyes potential bedding plants.

“I can’t read music. Not a note.” He repeats with pride. “How long you’ve been learning?”

*“Don’t anymore”*

“But how long before...?”

*“Seven years”*

He wears out records to get a handle on each piece of music. Then his improvisations seem without end. I play score music over again, take deep inhalations of underlying rhythm structures before going public.



*we doh ray me doo  
into top curves of night skies  
more musical beds*

We seldom overlap. There is little jealousy. I am in awe at his devices, his fluency. Once, inside a drugged haze of magic mirrors, he said “Man, your bass creations are just the best. Don’t know how you do those right hand overlays”. Not true. *His* left hand, too, is strong; a rhythmic bass, magnet for a schizoid right hand that pioneers like it will never end. He plays as if having sex shaped like those endless variations of Ukiyo-e shunga prints. He loves each *how* of it, each *feel* of it. Neither of us intuits a *why*. It is adventurous innovation, development, unusual applications of structural devices. It is a slog to make it as easy as she, she, she kisses me into believing. For me it is about process, style, influences. Know when to start a solo run, am soon inside his evolutions of diversity. Let in clarinet, banjo, trombone, trumpet, double bass as they overlap, juxtapose, contrast, integrate. Yes, I do enjoy Trad. Jazz, Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, John Lee Hooker, Leadbelly, Howlin’ Wolf, ‘Lightning’ Hopkins. Prefer Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Dvorak, Brahms, Mendelssohn.

“Did you hit?” he asks every other Monday.

“Yes.” Try to sound casual. After all, it is not a difficult outcome of an evening-long, designer drug. Still it surprises. Never ask him because it pinpoints another difference; I am not selective.

Most evenings go to plan but, increasingly, piano variations-on-a-theme are our underlying motif. He seems to be experiencing something similar, but smiles more.

“Do you ever still play in tandem?”

‘Cycling over a Spanish mountain he is killed by bandits’.

*single woodlark sings  
in thin light of dusk  
first tear of many*

police event of

gone of  
maybe left tooth of  
feels an event of

Dentist. Just finished with. Numb side left  
of. NHS. Back to room to pay cost of. Wall  
of paintings of brightly chalk coloured of.  
Familiar figures by children of lines of line  
arms of. Line legs stumpy stilts of. Round-  
eyed children see world of. Seen in mirror  
as scene of goblins of pathos our image of.  
Tut tut tuts of sympathy looks of hold onto  
fat jaws of painless presence of.

She?

Next event to. Am excluded from? Yes, am  
excluded from.

Reason? Good reason.

Will meet later to.

Flurry of noise of sirens of cars of police  
of her drunken limbs in flailing of flashing  
of heat of breasts sweaving of kicking of  
floppy male slobber of mouth of gashed

bloody nose of. Beacon lights revolve  
around. Blue of throbbing light up face of  
big eyes of. Us holding hot cups of hot of.  
Open mouths soft of. Not of thinking of  
drinking of sinking into spoiling uniforms. Of  
men who interrupt lives of bombs of. Cause  
of bomb decay into sudden of sound of  
safety of. Of another of us rushing from Exit  
into angles sharp of. Quick. Watch watch.  
Back off. Time to reheat back of. Time to  
reconnect to. To call with no time for. "Is  
everything of ok?" "No. Not this time".

"You won't believe this." I will say. Of course  
she will, will she?

*neutral spectator*  
*no siren noise of     disturbs*  
*point no return of*

## Private Gallery

*life drawing exhibition  
at the PRIVATE VIEW  
downward glances*

Meet up. Head towards Annely Juda Gallery. His Exhibition. Evening of Private View. Slip in for early preview. Just two of us move inside identifiable variations on a theme. Here are no life drawings. Why should there be in a show the outcome of 'drawing in a printing machine'?

*computer tool  
machine qualities replace  
hand strokes of brushes*

*Upper space of landscape prints crowds. Entourage of smart fashion moves onto every polished bit of noisy floor. Clusters of recognition huddles. We two seem underdressed. Every print is sold or retained before this evening. Some collect because it sows or renews ancient thrills. For others it flatters home decorations, is a good investment. Colours are of friends, relatives, intimates. Flattened to walls, colours are of friends, relatives, intimates.*

*change of direction  
collage landscapes transmute  
into new spaces*

*Suddenly, but for me, but for landscape prints, is an empty room. He has moved downstairs where are full-length portraits that seem less important than the manner of their creation.*



## really sort of american flag

*island flagpole  
something strange  
about that flag*

It is a simple morning. Out of season. Small fishing boats move through lazy waters. Few of us look pleased. In a clear middle distance are octagonal orange spaces through which ginger plaited hair is just about seen. Undiluted rainbows disperse grey clouds that grumble a bit. They take forever to drift from neutral into a complementary colour escape route.

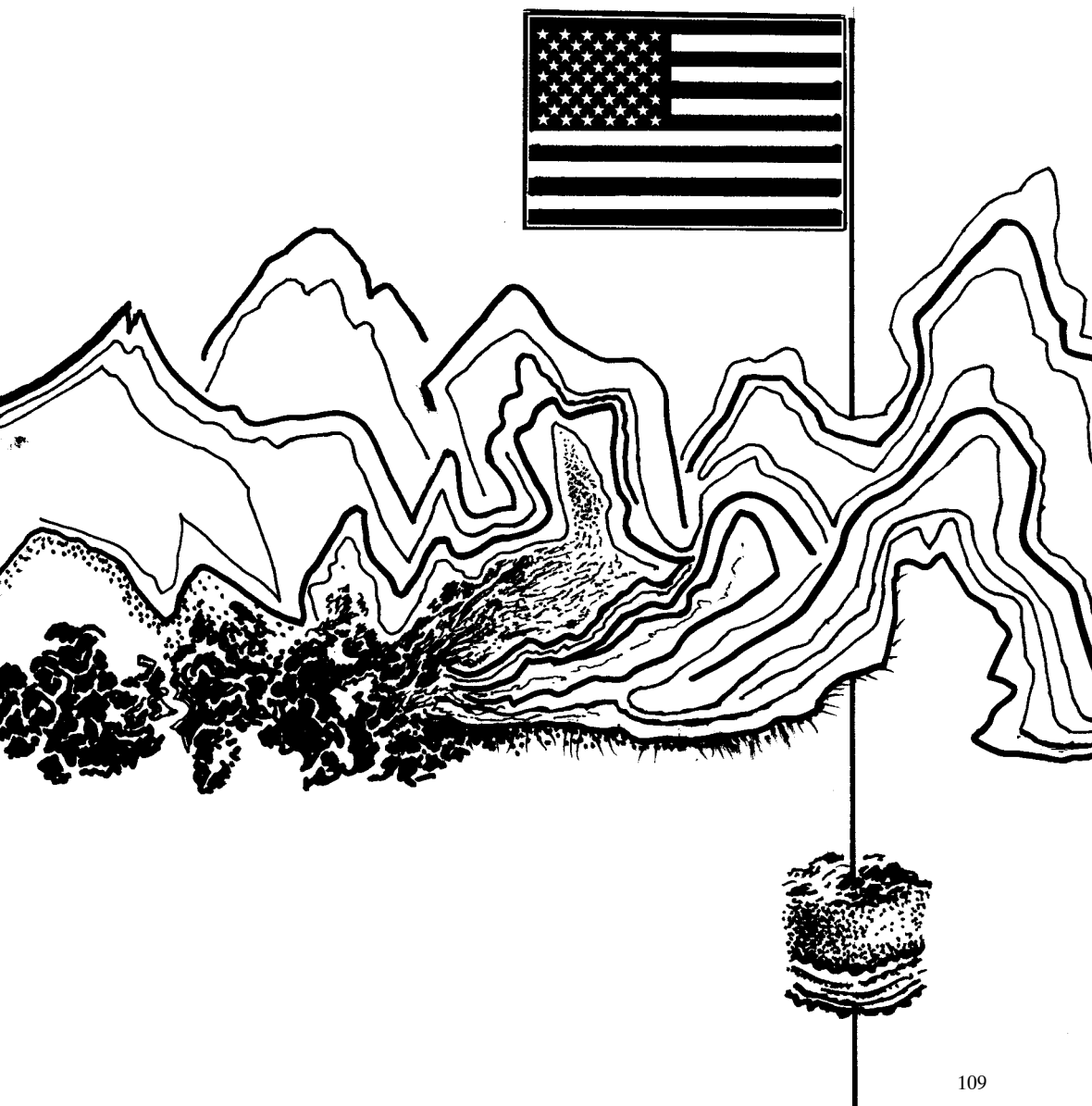
*another leaf fall  
shapes of transparent children  
cry into colours*

“Safe as houses, it is” you said. Even though none are in sight, I think I know what you mean. Once, an unchallenged guru claimed insight into characteristic signs, advised investing more than really could be afforded because it is “as safe as houses”. Makes me really reconsider this half plane of a soporific landscape. *“It is drifting into slow motion. Really”*. “Are we really drifting, or is it really an operational sleeping pill?” *“I really don’t know what, in middle-distance hell, you are talking about”*. Not really sure what I am talking about. From over there, behind that marigold field, it really made sense.

*half full hedge of leaves  
gang of busy young sparrows  
half reveal in sound*

One grey-washed bit of landscape floats by. Another firms inside an illumination of just thick enough oil paint. For a trick time moment it juxtaposes with that of his watch, metamorphosing into neon lit, rugged Catacol Bay pub sitting rooms. There is loudness from a table of soprano pitched American high school girls. **“That’s our flag.” “No, it’s not” “It is. Look at it.” “I can see it. Really I can, behind that line drawn landscape.” “What is that it’s passing through?” “I really don’t...**

**yes, what is it?"** A screech "Why is it there?" A silence is breached by an unconcerned contralto. *"That is self evident. To really help it seem foreground. But why is our flag, metaphor for all that is good, righteous, exuberant, exporter of all that is worthwhile, not waving really grandly? It has gone dysfunctional on us."*





Those wearing glasses  
remove them, group into a cluster, wrap arms around  
their neighbour's body. Looking inward, they think about  
their situation really long, really hard. Really no time at all  
passes before they agree there is something really strange  
about their flag, something they really cannot nail to any  
mast, fat or thin.

*mountain linescape  
sort of american flag  
flies understated*



## relic life and what?

*beyond concourse  
it delves inside a red apple  
there is but one cure*

This day an illness begins. The pain is something terrible, Difficult to describe. It is bad. Hurts like I'd opened some hell door, let loose our Society twin demons. Who has lodged inside my lungs to celebrate. Death, I now believed, is not an introductory card from our Grim Reaper, but reptilian tongues of these mixed sex little devils led by he-who-is-to-be-feared-by- suffering-mankind. Even if recovered, and that seems unlikely, I will be scarred for life. Can hear Mrs Doctor, who prolongs gaps between knowing problems and coming up with answers, saying "*It is pleurisy. There was nothing for it but to see what happens, to let it runs its course, which, Yes, may have a serious outcome*". What a waste of time and money. Antibiotic reality is still hovering in that shadow space of what-is-there-but-not, developing inside a hesitant hinterland of around the nearly perceptible. After three sweaty weeks of wheezing, coughing, thinking about that Doctors' salary, the point of making a Will with so little to bequeath, temporary survival was assured. OK, lungs are scarred but still wearable. Then I forget about it. Things change. Now exterior belies interior, where so much anonymity floats before catapulted into vision.

*rhododendron collapse  
recovery after   long bouts  
of sunburnt rain*

## road rage

*shopping mall opens  
at precisely 8 am  
car park ice layers*

Sunday morning. Top of winter cold. Roads float in ice. Windscreens impenetrable. Tyres sculpture onto tarmac. Some make it. Church feels a weary pain of emptiness.

Beyond a list of repeats, decisions are slow to assert. Inside, a warm womb organises. Wait. Wait. Wait, like all of them.

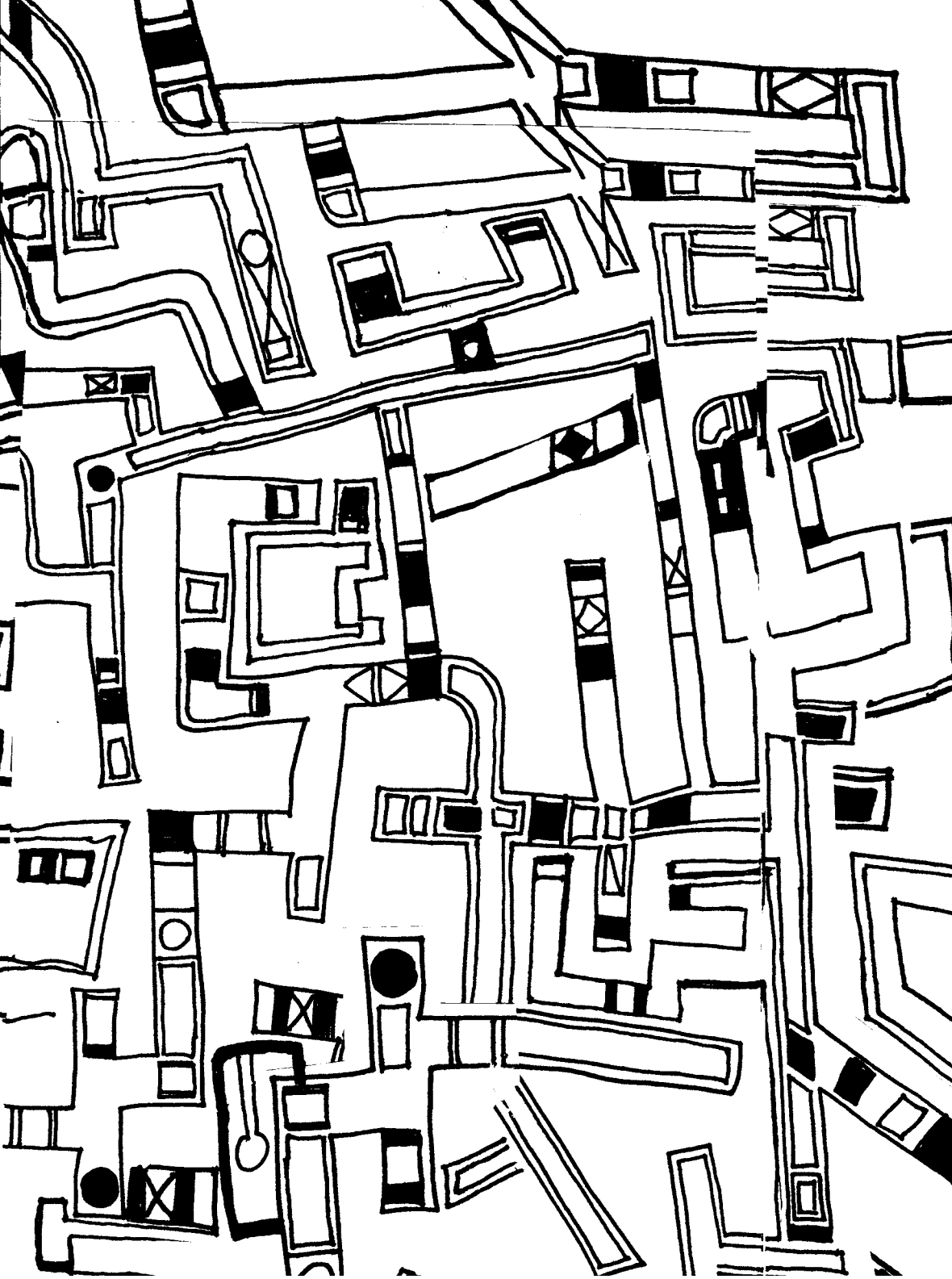
*delay departure  
warmth of designed food displays  
a mouth comfort*

Cross out shopping list items. Trolleys pass. Eyes fix. Regimented aisles parade. Signs direct to a masquerade of market stalls, designed patterns, aromas, tins of soup, bars of chocolate, lamb shanks, cakes. Baskets of tinned food spread.

Outside, everyone is corralled into a small, rectangular section of car park. Ahead are row after row of cars. Beyond that are roads. Not as we have ever seen them. These crisscross ground to sky. Flat, frontal view. Hypnotised by a reconfiguring roadscape, frightened children, nonplussed adults are tearful. Packed trolleys gripped, they stare at an array of cul-de-sacs, black signs, white signals, painted lineal shapes, blocked-in circles, rectangles, squares. They shift, trying to rhythm a more homely structure. Everything fits, but nothing fits *us*. No one can puzzle out what these patterns need. There has to be at least one need.

We begin to noise. At first a kind of low drone. Slowly a change into more high-pitched whines before releasing into full-throated howls, like of which none has ever before experienced. Hard ice melts until this vertical map begins to lay back flat, until road formations again pitch into everyday levels of sensor belief.

*zig zag journey  
too many unravel  
across tough signs*



## salt of the earth

*saw a daffodil  
unfurl before it explodes  
reason blows away*

*You're a right difficult bastard. You know that, don't you?*  
Maybe. No. Just am what I...

*You're difficult. Can't understan' yer clever-dick writin*  
Don't feel it. Just am what I am. That's all there is to it.  
*You're difficult.*  
If you say so.

Wish I knew.	Don't.
<i>For heaven's sake</i>	<i>why not?</i>
Why	for heaven's sake?
<i>Because once, a long time ago, in a musical accent, an abnormal teacher singsang a song to a room of nearly sweetness, to nearly light: "difficult peepul arrre thee sss-alt of thhe urrth, wun grreatt resapee mix of animull, vegeetabull, minurralls. They stand up to peepull oo wood uthrrwyse trrie tooo gveltt urway with murda, an' sucherlike." Do you remember that radio game, 'animal, vegetable or mineral?'</i>	

What? Yes. What's that to do with anything? Do ya really think I'm  
a 'Salt Of The Earth' person?

*Yes. But a difficult bugger. Some say 2 go together.*

It's a symptom. Can you feel jiggling air? I can taste it.

What? You're still bein' difficult, ain't cha? Yer know blurdy well too  
much salt's no good for much.

Maybe. Maybe not.

**Under a lumbering sky, rawness rumbles, then grows.**

*ceramic bird bath  
in not Yes not No flurries  
raven shapes sharp up*

## salute to an image reforming actor

### 1

*more a salute  
to a reversed symbol  
accurate mimicry  
of irregular pattern  
falls into place*

Fixed in everyday picturesque-speak, “tossing-off” is an hormonal target, an initiation performed in solitary confinement. It is a secret beyond others. Blending Fantasy with Action, it appears from unexpected parts to Shock, to Delight. Repetition increases desire. Church Hell horror tales of “*immanent blindness*” are no barrier. Just must keep it Private. Especially from Mum.

*lips close  
into thin lines  
swallows hard  
at an outburst  
of pleasurable dreams*

Parallel to disembodied images, discovery presses a need to continue with this wet underground Nirvana harvest of Christmas stocking adult images. Newsreels of pictures race those already distilled. These disappear in flicks of film. Nothing has sameness.

*only half there  
filtered light  
flickers a silhouette  
only he wants to know  
where is his other half*

## 2

**Once-upon-that-forever-time**, inside secret Darknesses, in a Cave Bedroom forever his, through an Image-Reforming mirror, a One-Person play rehearses, then begins. Grist for image-makers, delicate tendrils hide. Lips stretch, eyelids distort, neck slumps into chicken skin. Spreads of stomach suck towards rib bones before vacuumed into bags of fluff-filled spaces. Here, amateur stage acting powers over fears. Wildest pains are cauterised.

*headandmirror    with a strong Nazi salute    they are more than one*



Stare at reflected Nazi salute. Strength in stiff-arm, pointing fingers. Watch mirror's renunciation. Dressed within that suppliant Salute he tries to perfect click of heels. Hitler's moustache is drawn, imaginary jackboots manufactured. 2 people out of 1. Tries on a British Army Salute for size. Pattern too soft. No Wagnerian Steel. Not sufficiently confusing or complex.

*day of Pretence      far too Sad, too Profound      to Comprehend*

*this is **the** day  
to wear black -  
shop window atoms  
freeze into an ultra fast  
Rydberg molecule*

But, as usual with tomorrow-will-be-forever-Honey, his best-is-yet-to-come. **Once-upon-a-time**, dad at work, mum inside a friend's talk, brothers' who-knows-where, experience re-enacts.

*nearly naked      he clicks his heels      backward joke misfires*

Unclothed + Salute. Body minus clothes. Black glove + Salute. Black socks + Salute. Black pencil-drawn moustache. Upright head. One leg stiff. Power Salute. Unexpected, reflection throws a deep-rooted '**Heil Hitler**' back at a circumcised renegade.

*where seas clash  
dominant fish collide -  
bones protrude  
into an ancient tale  
of mistaken identity*

## **school ties**

*mass produced black  
colourless colour ties me  
to a Grammar school*

It is black. No shine. No sheen. Won a Scholarship to wear it. There is a uniform. Black tie is a family contribution, token of intent, symbolic clap toward belonging. If they insist on more I must leave. *They?* Show they know buttered bread will land as they want it. Being so soon after that War-beyond-Wars, we benefit in ways later students cannot. Daily, ill teachers, plagued with night-commandeering disturbances, re-enact survivors guilt. We do not know from where they are coming; they do not know why we fail to appreciate our position. They are determined to meccano-build us clods of clay into semi-Leader shapes. Wiping away gravy stains, I say, "*They really do know what they're doing*". "Pardon me" "*Black tie. Funereal. Every time we sort knot out in front of a back-to-front mirror image we remember what it is all about, why we are here*". "I prefer multi-colour-striped-house-tie".  
*"Howjergedit?"*

*heavy cloud day  
colour possibilities  
hard to catch*

Not many of us go to Grammar School. At Cinema saw Jessie Owens with Joe Louis. They are Americans. Gandhi, an Indian, is on Pathé Pictorial News. Here, we are more than just another minority. Swots. All except Michael Tinner. He tries, but breathes inside a sliding skin. Numbers jumble into incoherent codes. Language is gobbledegook. He is like those concentration camp relics we see between lovemush movies. Hollow face exaggerates genetically unkind ears. Flat feet, bony knees provide no indication of a richly bearded, broad shouldered, rabbinic career. When taunted into "*where is god?*" he shows an early photograph of himself standing tall on a heavily ornate chair. There is no payback in even whacking him as he might break into contagious diseases. A push sends him





sprawling. Irreligious, his Special kind of Invisible Unity of Oneness plant needs water to be juggled.

*pink inside red blossom  
already a lush green field  
is covered in spots*

School ‘games’ are our Achilles heel, his because he is so bad at them, ours because he is an Auschwitz survivor look-alike. It sends a collective message of dread. We split between defending, then protecting, while wishing him somewhere, anywhere, else. Unintelligently, I am above averagely good at Grammar School ‘games’. Search thesaurus for excuses to bypass ‘essential’ practice. Rugby is there to be hated. I do. “*Your build, boy. A natural scrum half. You’re fast – you can go a long way in this game.*” Most times it

gets me flattened by giant fullbacks. Run *towards* them, not away. Always made school team that, once a season, battled against staff. In this arena, try to practice what they preach. *“When this signal is given, when we tell you to pass quickly, when the scrum breaks, get that ball to A B C D or E”*. General aim is not to kick staff arse, but to kick arse of Mr P.E scrum half counterpart. Whacks with a plimsoll as, naked, we run through hot showers into cold. Tingling with pain, run out to meet small towels. Want to kick this muscular midget’s balls into touch. Again it doesn’t happen.

*sunlight illusion*  
*on a multi-tasking field*  
*signs again collect*

A good athlete, but prefer to laze on green fields, to read, to drift. Grammar school flourishes inside ‘string’ symmetry that punishes lolling about on field edges instead of striving, for failing to transform Michael into some distant something that resembles a humanoid sporting acolyte.

*layered perspective*  
*mix of eros and ego*  
*fails colour tie test*

Part of a crinkly brain is in touch with that sweet smell of a multi-coloured House tie. Another part sees it dangling out of reach from beneath a high cloud. Present achievements hint I am due 1 if not 2 tie upgrades. *“but you have got to put more effort into helping those less able”* I am told. *“Why do I have to do it with such base material, bereft of any scientific nous?”* I ask.

*uncomposed body*  
*lost inside an actors mask*  
*scrumpy start-up point*

I try. So does he. Binoculars abound. Practice start after failing start. Make him run, head up. *“keep your feet in front of each other in a straight line. Straight!”* Talk non-athletic talk. Accept I am not a training Midas, can never Greek God him.

I fail to 'win' a House tie or shiny 'School' tie. *"How can you not see you have messed up? We know he will never be an athlete."* Near to screaming tears, I say. *"What is the point if this isn't?" "The point is to turn you into a team-player, to respect those wiser in School theology, in order to get you to..." "STOP. I get it. Must learn to love, REALLY LOVE my black tie. I do. I love it"*. Every morning, mirror-reflect on why this weird non-colour of a colour, this funereal colour wins a tie selection scholarship.

*sit on a fields edge  
rub Aladdin's magic lamp  
with a creased black tie*

## secret Secrets

*Mountain boulders reveal faint impression of a dangerous and rugged path.<sup>1</sup>*

*wild wind  
another mythic tale  
turns into sound*

**Supper:** plate of leftover rice, 2 Scotch oatmeal biscuits, small community of midges rotating at head height. marmite is spread thinly on medium thick, pumpkin seed, toasted bread with thin coverings of duck pâté. Run for cover.

*shell seed movement  
slides silent bits of evening  
earth crackles*

**Outside:** Early clouds spread flat. Through dirt-ridged windows torchlight blanches moonshine. Dusk, no longer yellow, fails to uncover invisible trails.

**Event 1:** Blunt instruments. Mason's hammer angled. Sandstone breaks. Figures become letters with rugged edges. Result: hybrid styles, unstable fonts with diverse meanings. Blood trickles down a carved upright. Chisel misfires. New hardwood shaft buries deep. Somewhere in an extending forest, over sandy soil, a layer of dead twigs cover worn leaves. They make an astronomy of dissidence, a secret of Secrets.

**Low Key  
Epiphany:** Desert water is not to be measured.

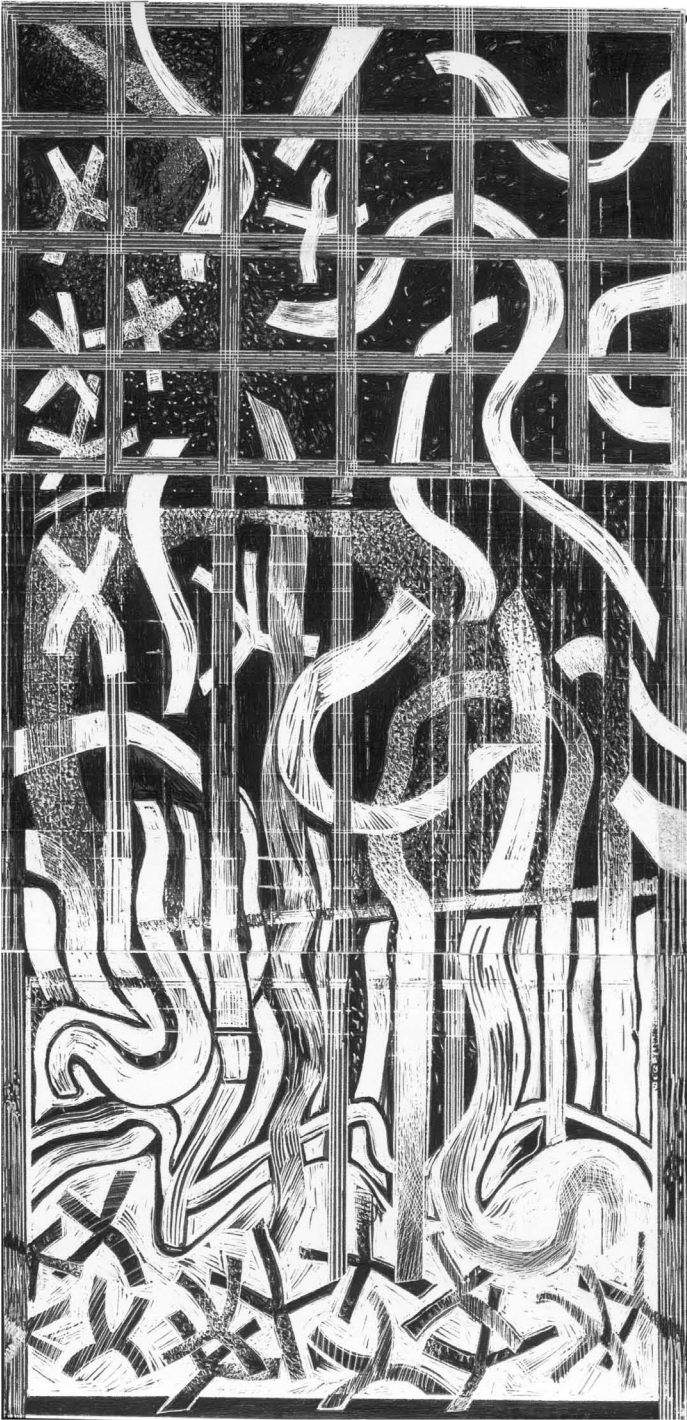
*important Meeting  
not glory hallelujah  
followed by Amen*

## Event 2:

Round Table meeting. Set on a simple stage toned shadows sharpen. Disconnected mirror, size of a table set for a fantasy supper, floats free. Wherever vapours settle is a Big beginning. Audience is there to pick up carved hints. First is granddaddy Abe with sage, quaintly fallible look, followed by diamond stone-cut Medium Moses, hanging onto a dishevelled Decalogue, '*the ten words or utterances*'. Next, studying, sits Freud, cerebral irrationalist innovator who, from within his hide-all beard, looks seriously sanguine. He is as intolerant as prophetic Ezra. Both bait heresiarchs. Over there, unabashedly gaudy, is Joseph, intellectual dreamer/seer. He squats. Herr Heine, in casual dress, indolently turns pages of *Buch der Leiden*, then begins a long stare at that radical molecule Karl Marx, whose indented brow lines fail to move even when animated. Curious to learn whether others know why he is here he misreads a pupil, Leon Trotsky, who married Revolution to Jews with appalling results. Next to him, Maimonides holds a reed placard, hand inscribed: *there are two complementary ways of perceiving truth, Reason and Revelation*. Relaxed, calculating stars, is Albie Einstein who, combining intuition, reason, innovative mathematical formulations, changed every way our Last Suppers are eaten. Opposite, Spinoza's gentle eyes admire. 300 years and a million tears earlier, he is '*convinced of causal dependence of all phenomena*'.

*no place to hide  
jugglers collect exercise balls  
before they join in*

Squashed into a next vast chair, dissolved as one ball of body, is every-of-them-who-ever-was: Proust, Heller, Baal-Shem, Bohr, Herzl, Kafka, Bellow, Malamud, Roth&Roth, Miller&Miller, Berleman,



FirstBookofKings, Book of Job, Oppenheimer, Ehrenfest, Isserlis, Copeland, Meitner, Rosenberg, Wittgenstein, Adorno, Benjamin, Mahler, Mendelssohn, Schönberg, Isaiah, Yahweh, more of warning Prophets than any tribe can cope with, TwentiethCenturyFox, Bernstein, Celan, Buber, Jolson, Rodgers, Luxenborg, Marxbros. Schnabel, Chagall, MetroGolderwynMayer, Schenk, Born. Chaplin, Koestler, Aleichem, Spark, Menuhin, a First Sabbath wail. A full shopping bag striving to quail, even chutzpah its way in.

*ripe group who self choose  
create a sob of secrets  
loud synagogue laugh*

Next to this group of noisy sojourners, looking like Abe before him, Hertzl after, like millions inbetween, small, as are many here, slightly raised from his seat in a way that disconcerts, floats a JudeograecoJesu who knows he is but a link in one long chain of small-town prodigies.

*redrawn Tree of Life  
one line is all that's needed  
to change space*

With only a single quantum innovation posited to his name, his eyes uplift as if aware of appalling outcomes. Wants too much from commingling ideas with action. A small adjustment will do it. Comes down to earth. Silently argues with each of them. Sensing a move away from his path, there is, he feels, redemption with a return to angelic poses. Wrong. At this imaginary table's centre floats a tiny zero century chair whose atoms vibrate inside uncertain edges. Vaporous audience wait for a mountain discourse to begin.

*physicist feels hot  
senses relativity  
within discussions*

Einstein looks at his space timepiece. Equations erupt. “*What’s Cosmotic time by your space?*” he asks, using a problem question to avoid speech. Others, not wanting to dispatch time empty-handed, look at his Space expanding away from their racing wrists. Each, with obvious difficulty, creates new, revealing forms of signification.

*between breaths  
a short space of time  
hordes of stars between*

I hear. Marx moves. He wants to swap with anti-Mobocratic Moses to face Freud, Benjamin, Trotsky. Prophets derange humid air with a criss-cross of anger. Someone has proof their Books were written long after Events. Ezra, humiliated, head drooping, hangs up his boxing gloves. “*Do they not know Prophet’s tools are alchemical formulae of tripartite existence? Here is no place to lay pearls before swine*”. They keep their big surprise up prophetic sleeves. Only Moses, dropping his snake stick while struggling with misshapen stones, seems indifferent to Revelations of atheist or excommunicate Jews. More aware of a Florentine whose sculptures Freud studied for three weeks. Ignores Marx, who returns to a disanointed chair.

*funeral cortège  
phenomenal language  
shines a bright light*



### Event 3:

In good-god-old-gold-mine-time do we need a Brecht, Miller, Fierstein, Wesker, or this postmodernist fantasy meeting with a gothic clan of Pinter pauses, uncertainties, clandestine innuendoes. Mr *Slightly more than Insubstantial* begins to emerge from shadows, scratching his crotch. Time for me to sign up. In auditorium darkness, can now name my now less ghostly neighbour. **“Leopold Dedalus Bloom. Why do you wear clothes, speak such same speak as your speakeasy, lubricating mentor?”** He nods a reply of silent disagreement that coalesces as a lip sick red spectral powder rising toward a *mirror image яаяя* of their primal roundtable. For some time disappointment is prime number.

### Coda:

**Through windows, pale light of moonglow round  
reveals impressions of an endangered Way.**

*garment of dark glow  
another clever disguise  
nails a rugged Path*

<sup>1</sup> ‘The Hill Rocks’ Han Yu (T’ang Dynasty) Translated by Soame Jenyns

## Service of a mixed kind

*funeral service  
natural contortion  
of her life*

Nearly made 102. Nearly 2 weeks dead. She, we believe, lies nearby. Her last event takes place in a side room of a small chapel. Congregation are few, 7 of them Jewish. From Southern Ireland, a grandson. His memorial is a soft roll burr of mid-America. In St. Paul, Minnesota, timed to coincide, 3 more grandchildren make offerings. No one looks a straight face at her lily-topped coffin, a petite finale. Ageing son's poem soliloquy balances emotion with sensible detachment. Jews murmur to a hymn, unclear how to retain an outsider status. Inside a silencing sonata, curtains surround her final secret as it disappears through narrowing space.

*inside green  
of an acacia leaf  
a bulge of veins*

Make our way to a village pub. Meet in circular talk. Discuss album-collected photos. Look inside picture frames. See into her twenties. Admire fixtures of yet another long time ago. Talk over wartime songs: *white cliffs of dover. lily marlene. underneath the arches. we'll meet again.* Time to go.

*in a back room  
of b/w photographs  
such a grand swirl of skirts*

## 72?

## “You don’t look it”

“don’t feel it”

*mobile trunk                      to no overt cause                      an elephant sways*

Horizon is scraped with palette-knife streaks of light yellow, broken patterns of tentative rain shaped clouds, like it is an understated snakeskin. Dormant early morning branches are black etched with scratches of an uncoordinated chorale.

## 72 today

“Happy Birthday”

*“thanks”*

“You don’t look it”

*“thanks”*

Third time. Must be an age thing. Or is something up? Off key rendering of ‘*happy birthday to you*’ disconnects before fading into a distant acceptance.

*drawn cloud birthday                      email smile                      colours it in*

Yesterday, a dutiful daughter wished me “happy birthday”. Wonder if sister will remember,

“*Happy birthday*” from inside another distance. Son is flying from Tokyo to South Korea. We spoke yesterday.

“*Happy birthday. Are you feeling better?*” Doesn’t mention how young I look. “*Hope you haven’t opened my parcel yet.*”

“No. Definitely saving it”

Another daughter fits in present wrapping between any numbers of concerns.

Sudden picture from sudden image. Swift swell of orange sky.

*cusp of tomorrow                      night of anticipation                      slipstreams into sleep*

## 73 yes, another birthday

73 today. Don't look it.

Feel it.

*hand lost in thought          again celebrate          a confused smile*

Today fizzes. Another birthday. No time to come to terms with breaking one barrier before it flips into an unreliable memory of another. *'Time is relative'* she says. *'But this carries yesterday too fast into tomorrow'*. He says back.

Those wasted seconds. Want them back. Do I? Do I mean 'wasted'? Think so. Not so sure. Will they slow down, speed up, contain other bits? One day - NOT. Next – **birth day**.

*"There's plenty more where those come from"*. She says. *"Stop looking for escapades to escape such an inescapable. Mirror, Mirror on another damp wall"*. He says back.

Daffodils live into their yellow potential. Multitudes of camellias in starkly white flower. In January? In this part of England? Climate change exudes renewed abundance. Usually mellifluent hedgehogs go haywire. Skew-whiff temperatures. Sun day. Birth day of diehard January. I Will Do Love. I Will.

*ice interned wind          shocks birthday into shape          lips warm up*

7.30pm. **The Temperance Seven**; Golden Anniversary. Foot-tapping-hand-clapping-retrospection. *'dinah, nobody finer in carolina; hardhearted hannah'* who, for at least fifty years, pours water on a drowning man; *'You're driving.'* She says.

Home again. Late again. TV Weather again. *'Night turns into freeze. Ice masks lowland flatlands. Snow is deep freeze into ice day. Gale warnings sever tomorrow. Road travel just awful. No trains. No aeroplanes. Wednesday intensifies'*. He says back.

*big 33          even bigger 73          assures no success*

## single day diary

*sleep blar eyes blink*  
*transparent skirt of evening*  
*feels some slight heat*

- 6.0 Wakey wake up
- 7.0 And again
- 7.20 Decide to clean teeth before breakfast. Don't decide not to shave
- 7.30 Put on same clothes as yesterday
- 8.0 Supermarket – as it opens. Beat school traffic
- 9.0 Photocopy black white colour illustrations
- 9.10 Wander to open market. Not time for Bank to open. Not really necessary. Why does it open at 9.30? Shops open at 9.00
- 9.30 Join queue for Bank
- 11.00 Turn on computer. Emails checked. Delete many
- 12.30 Stop for a body stretch. Stop for lunch

*skin creases*  
*into crazy hairlines*  
*friend no longer waits*

- 1.45 Still watching TV soap. Acting appalling, as is dialogue, story line, punch line
- 2.15 Back to computer. Can't start anything new. Compress existing material
- 3.40 Beta-blocker 'zonk' effect kicks in. Couch catches me
- 5.10 Up. Dress all over again. Decide not to clean teeth again

*eyesight spreads*  
*into a day part*  
*storm clouds rumble*

- 7.15 Dinner. Out of eye corner watch rain-filled clouds speed out of sight. Watch sparrows feed, pigeons mate, thrush mouth filled with a neat row of hanging worms. Think about chasing away an audacious squirrel. Do not, but have seriously dark

- thoughts about it. Carry on eating
- 8.00 Watch another 'TV Soap'
- 9.00 Turn off television. Read a book. Heavy going. Not a good choice. Mark bits that might, in another context, be useful
- 11.00 Deathly thought pushes me back to computer
- 12.10 So to bed. Not a particularly good space in which to sleep.  
Eyes flounder

*diary shuts*

*day closes down*

*but not concerns*

## *sonata*

mist eases

below a windbreak hawthorn

an alphorn grips air

*forest walk. struggle. climb over mutilated  
trees. snap detached branches. crunch  
muddied twigs. from inside leaves, lighter  
than sun dried sounds, hear a minor key  
drift of sad adagio notes grow more sad.*

town based lovers

lips dedicate

to piccolo thrills

## stealing

*open skylight  
gust of wind  
fast in fast out*

Steals. Like it has been going on forever. Not true. Only seems like it. Only 8. Starts with toys. Item qualifies if a hand can envelope. Pencils, rubber bands, minute note pads - all fair game. Favourite is rubbers. Love their shapes, what they do. Make mistakes on purpose just to again feel elasticity. Learn not to rub out mistakes but to evolve marks not otherwise achievable. Rubs blank paper just to change from soft solid to a roughness. If he knew how, if he knew their role in fantasy play, he would have stolen those other rubbers. He is savvy enough to know they can be sold on, unless stolen from him by older boys.

*steals a new smile  
safe route signalled  
by pear blossom*

Returned to an everyday pulse, he keeps a putty rubber warm with rubbing. With it everything can reform, everything change. Soon graduates to book-hiding satchels. Pilfers stuff from stolen books. When run ragged, even though bruised, he sometimes returns them. Not often. Knows Store Police watch behind two-way mirrors. Perversely, imagining capture, he loves going through anticipatory sweats. What is of no interest is stealing books that write about causes, effects, likely outcomes of friends or enemies stealing, of his stealing.

*anticipates  
a stolen scent  
sweat shapes of fear*



## strive boy, strive

*democratic school  
indistinguishable  
except for blazers*

Others need only complete. *The Great 11 + Examination Steeplechase* runs every year. Same time, same place. There *has* to be more. At street corners, in sounds of chimneys sucking up relinquished coal smoke, in tyres of buses traveling from here to them to back again, he, Mr. Evans, exhorts me to **strive**.

Striving is not an inborn instinct. Not Nature or Nurture, it takes new practices for it to materialize. Even once a day is not easy. It is difficult. VERY difficult.

*growth spurt  
new images emerge  
in swathes of heat*

**“STRIVE, BOY, STRIVE,”** he orders again.

**“I will Mister Evans”**

**“i will mr evans, SIR”**

**“I will Mr Evans SIR Yes Sir Mister Evans Sir I will I will I will I Sir Mr Sir Evans...SIR”**

**“good.”**

*reach up  
as a school door half opens  
welsh man notices*

How I strive. I *really* strive. Engraved on fractured forehead, sung in a flowing lilt from a mining valley hymn sheet, are his words: **“Adjusting gawky cogs into a well-oiled Elysian process is a goal of war-torn salvation. Accept it joyously. Aspirations fill this place with crosscurrents of rainbows beyond adolescent dreams. Your part, boy, is to Strive, STRIVE, then strive again.”**

Forgot that a uniform is a shooting star out of my sight.

*in front of a front door  
a star spangled cliff path unfolds  
again lights flash*

***“Strive, boy, strive. That”*** he repeats, ***“is escape route numero uno off that interminable Council Housing Estate of yours”***, shouts this Welsh evangelical war survivor who, sometimes with closed eyes, for most of a lesson, recites poetry in Welsh. Without understanding a word, we are captivated, fascinated, scared. Shapes his lips make, buzz he is giving himself, draws us closer to his magnet. Sometimes, he translates one or two. Even with meaning, they remain strangled English, not entirely aggressive but encircled by auras of acidity. He can, when most besotted, literally entrance himself, usually when reciting William Shakespeare Sonnets, a John Donne or Dylan Thomas poem. This is during a supposedly everyday lesson. It remains an experience in which nobody dare intrude, let alone understand. Wonder what his wife, if he has one, makes of all this.

*word weave conjurer  
an evolution appears  
beyond brain control*

Although disquieting, using many styles, applying any number of devices, he propounds virtues of paradox, (not always what it seems or to be resolved as if it is a right), values of discontinuity, effects of appropriate blasphemy as part of a small group relationship with what is less understood, if not downright misunderstood, skills that can transform literal information or experience into organic, even symbolic extensions. Amazed, watch him construct literary edifices, employing, then integrating, a mix of disparate elements into completions. Under his tongue, changing soft to boom, moving speech into music, language becomes an evolutionary experience, a way to enhance four boring school bus rides a day. Know he, sitting on an edge of a secondhand desk nodding a crisply polished shoe at us, is not a performing conjurer. Yet, as he performs Dylan Thomas, a rational explanation is not close.

*TWENTY-FOUR years remind the tears of my eyes.  
(Bury the dead for fear that they walk to the grave in labour.)  
In the groin of the natural doorway crouched like a tailor  
Sewing a shroud for a journey  
By the light of the meat-eating sun.  
Dressed to die, the sensual strut begun,  
With my red veins full of money,  
In the final direction of the elementary town  
I advance for as long as forever is.<sup>1</sup>*

Would not everybody melt inside those sounds, that accent, this shut-eye sensitivity of living inside words?

Half my school cultural duo, he explodes passion beliefs over my sprawling gods, determined to show an achievement from his survival. Seem to be involved in his latest mountain path climb to eternal salvation via this explosive language. Whatever is a critical mass of energy needed to rest archetypal Gaelic ghosts, he will find it.

**“i will mr evans sir, i will, SIR, mister Evans sir, strive Sir”**  
I reply, determined to join this incendiary scrum run.

*early riser  
substantial breakfast  
slow cooked to last*

Out of sight is Shangri-la. Poverty becomes a pernickety ghost of its former self. Girls kiss, desire, sometimes love. Sheen from cosmological miasma emanates from an invention of irrational musical notes, showers cerebral grace with an innovative glow. Unpredictable images burst through pupa skin. From jetties just too pristine, foetal newness floats away. Settles too soon. A beginning is nearly imminent.

*top half of late sun  
drifts above a red school bus  
gift hotter than before*

Here, Mr Evans, Sir, is molten armour inside a steel casing of

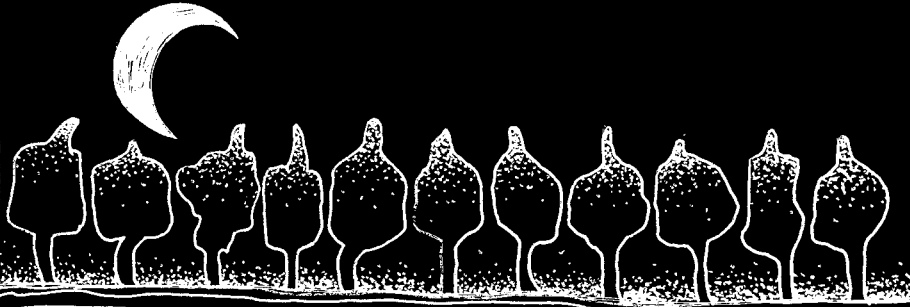
effort that will, Mr. Evans, Sir, lead ever forward, over rainbows of aspirations, Mr. Evans, Sir.

**“i will SIR mr evans sir for you Sir i will strive sir will mr evans, will SIR *strive strive Strive.*”**

*in a room of words  
foreign language understood  
flames flare high*

<sup>1</sup> Twenty-four years *Dylan Thomas Collected Poems 1934-1952 J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd*

## surrogate city



my village has a transgressive personality.  
I know. that's why I love it so much.  
and me. and me. and me. and me.  
We are pulled towards the **fire**.

thrush chorus  
a night for place and power  
attacks the dawn spread

Page 09

## teaching light from long

“I know what you’re saying, but it is not a good thing. Not right. It’s wrong. Everyday you do something wrong, something silly. Now this from your teacher. He’s upset.”

*bedroom window view  
of sun polished red apples  
cat licks open sores*

Only last bit makes a sweat. Uncomfortable, she sits behind him. Looks down to peel old potatoes.

“It says you were rude to your Maths teacher. Why do you play jokes on him? Wants it to stop. Wants an apology. If you don’t you’re out. Is that what you want? Is it? Don’t you like him?”

“No, I don’t want to leave. Yes, I like him. He’s OK. He’s nice”

“Why do it, then? To show off how funny you are? That’s not good. Do you understand me? Not good. Did you say **nice**?”

*“I said, OK. He’s bald. It makes me laugh. He’s good but he’s so bald. It’s...it’s sort of hypnotic. I can’t stop laughing.”*

“And that’s a reason for not good poems like this? You should be ashamed. You’ve got to learn light from long”

*“He is **really** bald. It’s shiny. Sticks up. He does something to make it shine. Can’t see equations because of his bald head. No one else is bald, are they? Everyone laughs. Did you say light from long?”*

“It’s not funny. Not for me, not for him. It isn’t. Thought you’d know that by now, what with everything that’s been going on. This is not rlight from rlong.”

I look at his face. It is sad, though his eyes don’t look sad. I don’t say anything. Not a thing.

*river flow  
a large group  
of minnows shine*

## **that's the way she wants it**

**deadend night**  
**casket open**  
**the way she wants it**

*like a cinematic news reel images speed-flick a detached voice*  
“can’t hack it. meet me tomorrow after you close up”  
i look at this film. in semi-sleep it seems real. maybe. maybe this reel  
is a red signal. maybe a dust storm in a teacup hollow. maybe  
“goodbye.” “*goodbye.*” “**goodbye**”

**goodbye said**  
**goodbye years taken over**  
**when not so sad**

“casket lid closed please”  
even then it is a close call  
“that close?”  
“that close”  
less light sucks away at bone hues in shade like it is an end.  
“replace well-water please”  
“it is already blood clean”  
“replace?”  
“reeeeplace”

*for now flesh warmth is available. inferior muscles ache*  
“so does pressing into earth” *she replies to my unspoken*  
“does that still matter?”  
“it matters”  
*last soft “oy” trickles away like it is supposed to at this determined*  
*moment. scurrying flesh pass his tensions into a void*  
“he has gone forever. no more to suck reds from my blush”  
*coffin lid open. skin more diminished. that's the way she wants it*

**aroma of water**  
**presses back grey hair**  
**colours exchange**

## THE DICTIONARY IN MY LIFE

*landscape of meaning  
inside an astute reader  
both king and queen reign*

Once Upon it would be a Long Long Time ago, *somewhere* a Grammar School awards a Prize to *someone* for *something*. ‘*Somewhere*’ is middleclass Surrey. ‘*Someone*’ is me. ‘*For something*’ was ‘*as recognition that his record while he was a member of the School was worthy of praise*’. What else!

Are there more impressive Prize ladders than this? Not if level of usage is a measure. Even better than ‘correct spelling’ is that double-decker words, double-checked for reduction of flabby interpretation, are surrounded by planets of exciting sounds or unfamiliar shapes, imbibed ap’-rop-ō’ of nothing. This is no dull eks-plan-ă-shun (*L. explanatio*). It is an Editor’s ploy. Distance between brain, eyes, bits of alphabet, meaning, derivation, stress marks, is short. Horizon is not. Whether read as a lineal short story or a bag-full-of-rubbery-sweet-word-goodies, it is so effective that thin post-War paper and binding glue collapses with such an effort to keep up.

*another torn page  
broken dictionary spine  
cracks language code*

There are newer ones, but not much imagination in contemporary dik’-shun-er-i (*MedL. dictionarius*). Too keen on relevance. Shamelessly attuned to times, to not wanting to alienate. Diminished is difference, difficulty, dimensions.

*eyes open wide  
that adrenalin moment  
when nothing else matters*

Reckon the guy<sup>1</sup> whose point was writers should aim for more than what audiences asks for got it about right for my dictionary. It



landammann  
 KRIE GSPIEL  
 soldiership  
 portcullis  
 pshent  
 old-clothesman  
 quadriga  
 thuggee  
 rayah  
 parthian  
 V bomb  
 zillah  
 jaghir  
 MIRZA  
 man  
 waddy  
 wallah  
 urim  
 medicine  
 suttee  
 widowhood  
 VIZIER  
 Empire Day  
 mulat  
 pusht  
 salib  
 spur-roy  
 War-Office  
 plunder  
 tribadis  
 seraskier  
 mousquetaire  
 tard  
 purdah  
 wartime  
 mangonel  
 talukdar  
 paven  
 Televisor

plays to strengths, to weaknesses, does it, so to spēk (*OE specan*), behind our backs. Deliberately obtuse? Experimental? Difficult? If so, great. Is it done in this elliptical way by design or through innocence of ignorance? One level is a lineal word 'story'. Another is where words are peripheral. Here encyclopaedic complexity fills every cranny. Problems, and puzzles are so indistinct they become safeguarded treasures. It purrs to go inside pages of FAMOUS NAMES IN LITERATURE: Beddoes, Clough, Drayton, Vega to connect with Corneille, Webster, Stendhal, Rabelais, Conrad, Thomas, Berkeley, Wycliffe, Boccaccio, Borrow. CHARACTERS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE; Flaming Tinman, Sir Giles Overreach, Biddlecombe, Flibbertigibbert, T'Knowhead's Bell. FAMOUS NAMES IN ART - Bonnat, Potter, Nattier, Dubois, Bouchardon, Charlet, Roerich. Famous Names? There are Great Names In Music, Well-Known Characters in Classical Mythology; Standard Measures and Equivalents (13700 fish = 1 last; 1 gramme = 15.432 grains), Common Abbrev/s (CR - Community of the Resurrection; O-U-L-T-C - Oxford University Lawn Tennis Club); FAMILIAR WORDS AND PHRASES ADOPTED FROM FOREIGN LANGUAGES *adscriptus glebae* (in a state of serfdom), *litera scripta manet* (the written word survives)]; ROMAN NUMERALS; GREEK AND RUSSIAN ALPHABETS; MATHEMATICAL SYMBOLS; STYLES OF ADDRESS FOR PERSONS OF RANK; PRĒ'FIKS, SUF'IKS, WORDS KOM'-UN-LI MISS-SPELTE, drawings of eel-pout, sour-gourd, misericord, faldstool, exomis. Many words, out of date, are lazily copied into 55 year later versions.

A trezh'-er trøve.

Laugh? You miss the point.

*remnant of empire*  
*from one ancient word*  
*an opus*

## the Grammar Premier addiction

*inside the room*

*flaps an army of shadows*

*fragments of light adjust*

**the Grammar** is a mixed bag of tricks; an eye, brain, door opener, rich with addictive smells of another side of a wide river. Then there is me failing to learn how to evolve from unaware pupa into tie-wearing butterfly. It is not just about not getting to grips with fandango ways of a new language - bank account, mortgage, insurance policy, stock exchange, business birthday sweetness - they know how to behave consensually. It is sunny. Playing fields are green. What's wrong with wanting to be left alone to read an addictive book?

*drug born day*

*heart misses a heart beat*

*as each sun burst clings*

Music teacher puts incompetents off music. Geography teacher is addicted to crude geological patterns. French teacher is addicted to *elections français*, which, he believes, will return a communist government. Welsh english teacher swallows us in vocal cadences, addictively tosses a coin. We wait for it to land our side up. Lethal P.E teacher addictively batters us through showers. Addictive art teacher pops you onto his bony knee. I addictively enclose inside economic history capsules. "With so much earthly heaven and hell who needs...?" "Pardon me. Don't understand. Thought this our playing field. No? Where is it? Say it again. Again. Again. Again. Say it again Stan".

*poppy seeds*

*grow with military pride*

*cortège precision*

## The guardian

*seed movement*

*wet nights pull them inside*

*swells of each other*

Lifts up his head. Moves to her right. In a thickening night, listens. Only rain pulses. Slight sound of feather-brush libretto of a girl's staccato breathing. First glimmer of a new rhythm nudges through a shroud of clouds. Nightlight is pain. Behind a wild hedgerow are silhouettes of two trees, their numerous branches a prophecy of another season. In this, they are leafless. She sits on wet debris that belongs to last year. A short flower-patterned dress clings. The guardian thinks she has not moved. He is mistaken. Her knees press together more tightly. Repeat pattern of a wrist pulse is audible, travels lengths of knotted muscles. Heart pumps too much red too fast through lungs, through veins. Sits down. Holds out arms. Sensitive fingers reach out. She cries. It is loud. She is a long way from dawn.

*wet eyes*

*of a throat throbbing frog*

*moonlit lips press*



## the time before

*path strangulates  
young willow trees  
show signs of rot*

on a meandering walk to collect a 'takeaway' suggest she does not let him die. his splintered children are hurting. he is blistered. bad experiences need resolution if not closure. mimicking faces of The Patriarch get in their way, impose limits onto mythical creeds that should be part of any solution. Instead, cotton reels roll away, threads snagging in a mist-layered midday. He should not die.

*raked sunlight  
splits into a furnace  
hindsight burns*

"What can I do? He needs my undying support. Always has. Makes me part of the problem, doesn't it?"

"Your children tear their insides to bits every time they picture him. You cannot let him die yet."

But he did.

*walks to a mirror  
shadows of failed reflections  
fracture inside glass*

## 13

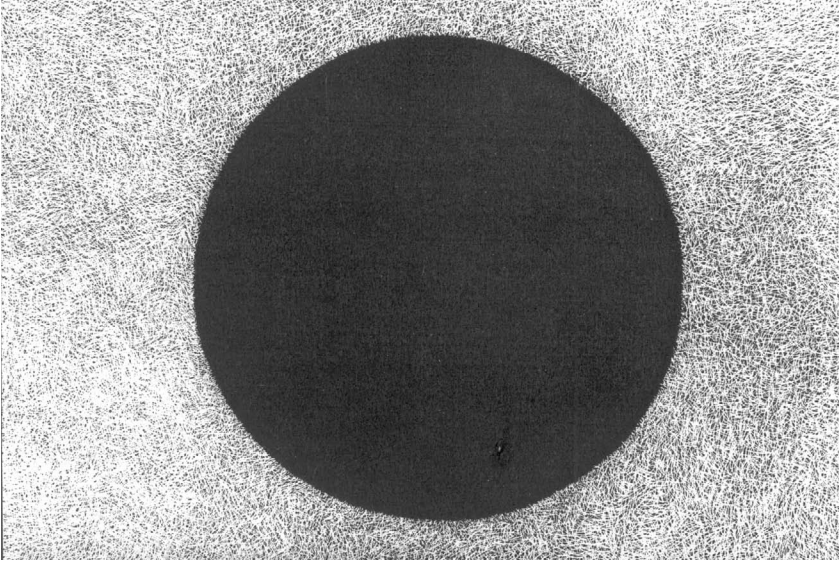
instead of Bar Mitzva i had U, Carmen.

*bordello event*

*ebullient Opera*

*welcomes manhood*

## this sun burns dark



*sun darkens  
coitus of thrushes  
inside weird nights*

this is not a sun to desire. not a ripe fruit sun. this sun is fire within dark. fire dark red that burns everything to ash. dark ash. this is no sun god. this sun is dark. so dark. inside its black heat is forever loss. outside is a taut ball of silence. epicurean lips wither. what is done is pitiless. somewhere another footstamping malechild crumbles into warrior dust. ashen space severs. day lists into night. what is left is soundings of waves. these homeless noises dribble from our cave. sink into a rock. alone. trial alone. this sun burns dark alone. i alone. alone. alone.

*dangerous wave  
corrupt daylight withers shade  
into a black sun*



### 3 different shaped jars

*branch language*

*reshapes 3 layers of snow*

*old walnut tree shadows*

On one of three shelves 3 different shaped jars touch. Outer two fill with anthropomorphic pasta shapes. Middle one supports floating herb spines. When cooking he looks up at them. Only ever selects one aspect at any one time. One day will be angled overlaps. Today any overlap is centre-stage. Another is negative space. Intermingling positive shapes go unnoticed. Yesterday was conscious of weight pressed into narrow depth. Before that wondered what effect irregular cylindrical shapes had on jars contents. Today aware bending diffracts shapes. Angles his head to re-angle them; arranges body to reconsider off-centre shapes. Tunes in to a menstrual cycle. On three consecutive days a month he shakes each bottle. Selects a different size problem. Three shapes stay uncooked.

Tomorrow he may eat some

just to see what happens

*repeat sculpture bits*

*reflect inside mirror eyes*

*pot boiler insights*



**tree of life + Einstein = at least  $mc^2$ .  
somewhere, on a pathway, we meet  $E=hf$**

*watch tock ticks tock  
correct questions formed  
win quanta cosmos*

Yes, it is true. Was an eleven-year-old shyster. Did it ever get much better? Rubbish disguises improved. Good for the ladies. What? When did I get interested in Time? Teens. Gradually. Sometimes it – Time - seems real. Mostly twists followed by turns. Mostly passes muster.

*starstruck  
plethora of actions  
inside a young crow*

Newton said, “Absolute, true and mathematical time, in and of itself and of its own nature, without reference to anything external, flows uniformly” That got me going. What a curious teenager. Did time ‘flow’? Did time slow? Where did space fit the jigsaw? Work on it. Complexity led to a simple statement:  $e=mc^2$ .

*indiscreet smile  
mathematic lessons  
measure near and far*

But you are right; even after nagging away at processes it remains more a matter of visual perception than mathematical or verbal, a vision picture of a continuum, an image of time running ‘fast’ or ‘slow’, depending on... you know.

*time slows star lines  
black holes expand  
into an equation*

Then I caught up with that ancient Tree Of Life mystery concept. You’ve not seen it? Contains such a lot in so little. Compressed space. Shows how formulating right questions is often more difficult

than answers. Yes, for me, it is a capacity for stubborn single-minded concentration on a problem imprisoned for months, sometimes years, until a full or even partial secret is surrendered.

*solar pulse*  
*head vibrations*  
*move into end game*

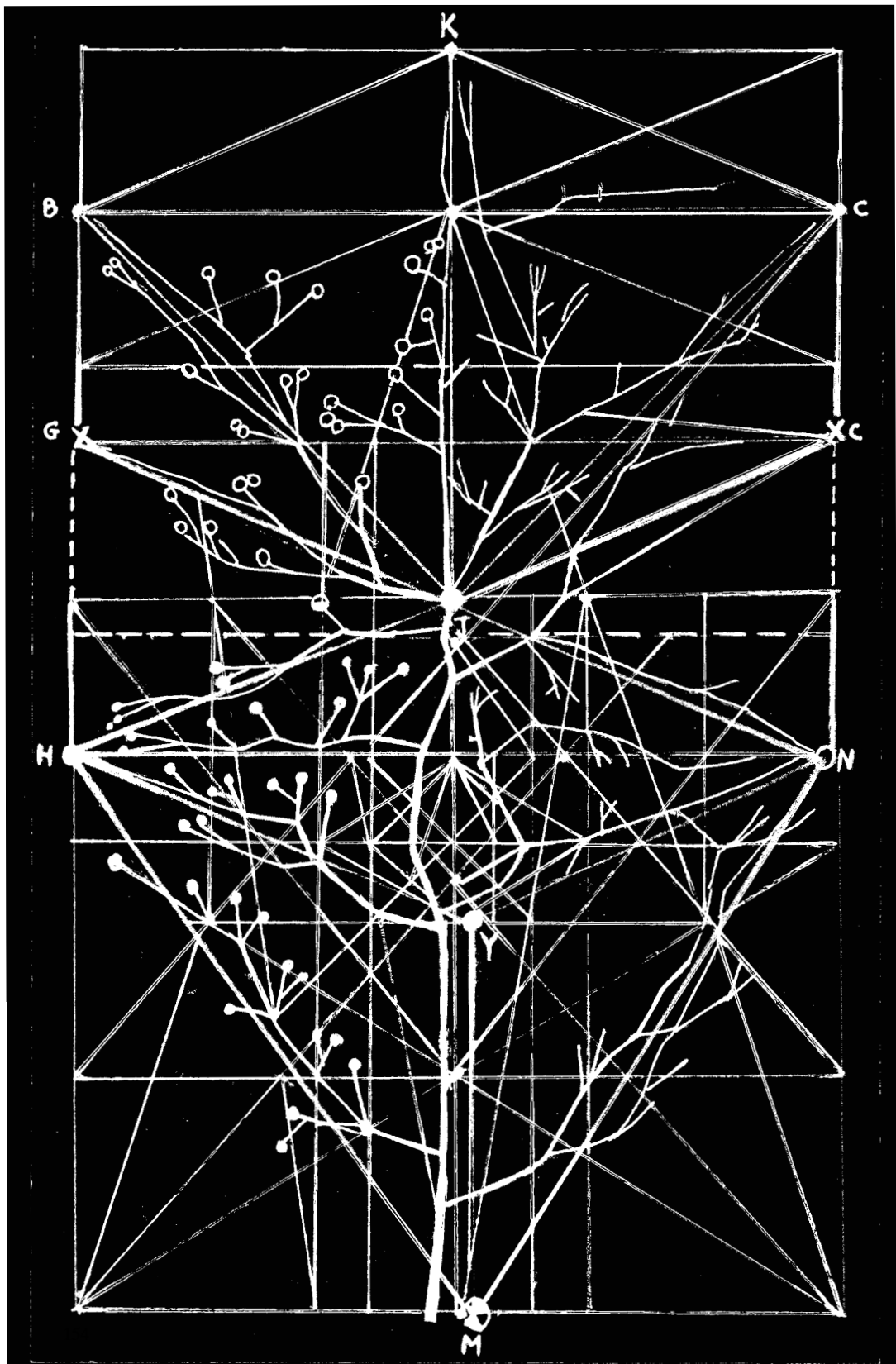
*How?* Did you say *how?*.....*um*.....*uh*.....*well*.....something like this: from reception of sense impressions memory pictures emerge; this is not yet 'thinking'. When these form series, each member of which calls forth another, this, too, is not yet thinking. When a picture turns up in many series, it becomes an ordering element because it connects unconnected series. Such an element becomes an instrument, a concept. This transition from free association, or 'dreaming', is characterized by the more or less dominating role the 'concept' plays.

*red wine spilt*  
*no connection yet                      between*  
*shirt stain and grapevine*

At this level, scientific creativity does not have a direct relationship between experiment and theory. Intuition and a free mind have a decisive role. No, it is far from indulging in arbitrary fantasies about the universe. 'Intuition' - a sense of how the universe should be - plays as important a role as the results of any axiomatic structure. Don't fret about it. It is my path from wonder to flexible solid, from inside to out.

*spectrum curve*  
*thrown in at the deep end*  
*reduced red transforms*

Yes, I was attacked. My work was attacked. Yes, it hurt. It helped to believe they were vilifiers, the living dead, self-sustainers who confuse Country with Cosmos, look through the wrong microscope lens not the right end of a telescope.



*dead dahlia*  
*images in the head*  
*more important*

Yes, they were anti-Semitic. Awake? No, despite Thursday evening sessions with a special educator.

*in the beginning*  
*was The Big Bang*  
*heard in 1927*<sup>1</sup>

The material problem? They are pugnacious little devils. With low person skills, inflated sense of self-worth, emotionally unstable, they try to control everybody's everything. Enclosing power, opposition is eliminated. If put on the back foot they will lie, lie, lie and continue to lie in an ever-louder voice. What? Smaller organisations? Acrimony is disproportionately more intense. Fight to perch on the high branch. Succeed. Are you close to their flame? *Run!* I did. No alternative, except an early Walter Benjamin death. No, prisoners are not taken. What was that? Yes, I know it is not mathematics or theoretical physics, but long marches of lying unawakes. Too dangerous to risk. Yes, I know I am instantly recognisable. I am also a product of the Apollonian mind, putting an intellectual name on bits of nature; as if Nature cared. Thin attempt to ward off night perils of an indifferent, often strong, often ugly Nature, except when churned into art. Everything I have done is a defence against its powers. Yet nothing emerged from me prevents one bolt of lightning. My guardian shadow is music, atonement for those powers beyond the safety of naming and claiming. I do enjoy playing chamber music with Max.<sup>2</sup> What a good pianist he is.

*hard surface of earth*  
*duet arpeggio*  
*slide thoughts into Bach*

Yes, you are correct. In a roundabout way, I predicted a reality for the Rydberg molecule, but only if a temperature, close to absolute zero of minus 273C, can be achieved. It happened, as so often, by way

of a serial development. In 1924 Satyendra Nath Bose, the Indian physicist, sent me theoretical calculations about particles. From these I predicted that if a gas was cooled to a very low temperature its' atoms would all suddenly collapse into their lowest possible energy state so they would be almost frozen, behaving in an identical, predictable way. My friend, Enrico Fermi, in 1934, explained what is special about a Rydberg atom, but never imagined a Rydberg molecule could be formed. Bose's goal - my goal - of condensation by trapping alkali atoms was achieved. Surely, someone has realised that ultra cold physics might be used to form such strange molecules. Has it happened?<sup>3</sup> Anyway, that is serial development.

*blues eyes*  
*colour of conceptions*  
*lips granite grey*

Yes, I do wish someone who understood German was inside my mouth, close to my ear when I died. Those were big words, Yes, quite the most magical of my life. Yes, death words were big.

*speed of light scans*  
*space expanding*  
*Iris wilts and dies*

<sup>1</sup> In 1927 the Belgian abbé George Lemaître introduced the idea of 'The Big Bang (in the terminology of George Gamow) which took place some 10 billion years ago.

<sup>2</sup> *Max Planck 1858-1947* Introduced the quantum of action into physics in 1900.

<sup>3</sup> *Chris Greene* – Based on the 1924 prediction of Einstein, using ultra cold physics, was the first to predict that Rydberg molecules could exist. Vera Bendkowsky led the research that made the extremely short-lived molecule a reality, reported in 2009.

## 23½

*in a Registry Office  
shapes move closer  
until they merge  
warm fingers reach inside  
enlarged colours*

“I pronounce you man and wife. Wish you all the best that...”  
Sitting, she looks at him. He caresses her shoulder. Marriage rituals  
infused with tints for a bonding interweave. “*i love U*”, moist edging  
into radiance. “*and i U*” he says with similar hints. Invisible gravitas  
inside a low-key, feather-puffed ceremony.

*distant memory  
of a disturbed land  
again seas part*

They fled Czarist Russia.  
In the event not a bad result. Where they came from, smiles recycle,  
career moves free-fall. They bought trick tickets, (sold as a quick trip  
to America). Their aim now is to marry.

*below a spotted sky  
another one-sided moon  
is a new-found-land  
outside their downtown slum  
lies the arse of London*

“We now have choices”.  
“Yes. Choices that lean right, go wrong. We can but hope a blind  
dreamland of gold thread spreads into glitter, away from sabre-  
toothed Cossacks. A black cross is our new signature.” he said in  
archaic language. “A black cross”.

*weather forecast  
moves into a grimace  
of malevolence  
gales of sword led horses  
stampede through adder grass*

Future tribes of emanations find it difficult to sort out.

From Bialystok with, I assume, gratitude.

To?

**“23½ Wheeler Street.**

**Home”**

*“23½ is Home? Thank you, Salvationist Yahweh. Thank you”.*

*look into a river  
just in time to see  
groups of minnows spurt away  
inside sweatshops      overworked  
they die*

Names, occupations, from place escaped, change from mum to aunt to uncle. A **w** or **u** or **i** or **o** added or removed. “They lived in St. Petersburg’s Jews-only area” morphs into “It was Vilna”. “Bialystok”. No one survives to rekindle sources. Remains a cauldron of bitty disagreement. March 1, 1891, 21<sup>st</sup> of Adar, 5651, Aaron Glogasky and Fanny Lepefski leave a metaphor address in **London’s East End** to be married in the United Synagogue: *“Be thou my wife according to the law of Moses and of Israel. I faithfully promise I will be a true husband unto thee. I will honour and cherish thee; I will work for thee; I will protect and support thee, and will provide all that is necessary for thy due sustenance, even as it beseemeth a Jewish husband to do. I also take upon myself all such further obligations for thy maintenance during thy lifetime, as are prescribed by our religious statutes. And the said Bride has plighted her troth unto him, in affection and with sincerity, and has thus taken upon herself the fulfilment of all the duties incumbent upon a Jewish wife. This Covenant of Marriage was duly executed and witnessed this day according to the usage of Israel”*. Starting point of tributaries that lead into addictive socialism, atheism or redemptive religion. Emptiness, continuity stretches back through villages and towns. Back. Back. Back. Back to the present where she retains a blood-line of Matriarchs.



*heart shaped mushroom  
moves to face  
a moons safe night  
underneath powdered chins  
hints of a yellow star*

generations on no names or variations known to them  
breeding rooks final sight of neighbours eating neighbours  
lines rise lines fall on orbital curves fold in on themselves  
separate through nets whose irregular shaped spaces fold in  
ways that imprison call into question “never did we drink blood  
or play tricks on our universe”.

leave everything run burn this moment pass airless places.  
all melts back back back all the way back  
into that moment of a lawfilled flamefilled 1 god  
beginning.

*23½ wheeler street  
no beautiful violin  
hangs out to dry*

“She He engaged in Bialystok live at 23½ question-rattling address.  
On their own? Pre-marital sex? Pregnant? No?  
Married. East London Synagogue  
Parents? Where are they? 23¼? 23¾? Did they escape? Who is  
with them to celebrate? What do they eat? They, speaking several  
languages, marry before able to write their names in this one?

*with heartbeat timing  
thin birds migrate  
different paths to their flight*

## unquestion questions

*open end question*  
*in the end*  
*an end to questions*

go  
go where?  
there  
where?  
over here    over there it is  
it is what?  
it is not hot  
meaning?  
meaning    less  
less than what?  
yes what?  
yes i hear  
what do you hear?  
music I hear  
whose?  
your music    their music  
i don't sing  
then whose is it?  
his  
whose?  
don't know whose  
don't know?  
don't know what  
don't know  
this much  
not that much?  
this much    inclined  
that much to find?  
find?  
find what is hidden



how much?



## Vermeer and a stony beach

*soft sea  
laps colours  
a dutch house*

Opened letter. Stony beach (no doubt about it) waits into this special today. *"I am pleased to inform you your application has been successful. Congratulations."* County Art School. Zilch else place to go. It is a big deal. No doubt about it. Who else is accepted from this silage Council Estate? Two others. Trusted older one eye-scanned portfolio. Other is yet to arrive.

*with loud speed  
an unseen muscle races  
no doubt about it*

Am on a high. She never reacts to highs. Or lows. Seems like indifference. No. It is Stoical. That's more it. Yes. Maybe she doesn't understand or is more accepting. Read it again. No doubt about it, *I am in.*

It is not a hot day. Later, from a deckchair, still wearing her stained coat, she hands me a parcel. Corners torn. She is good at infrequent firsts, is my mum. **Vermeer**, illustrated with *very* inaccurate colour prints. Do not yet know that. Can taste that book.

*soft colours  
mistaken sometimes  
for butterflies*

Died at 44. Did not then, perhaps, seem young. Slow painter. 43 or 44 or 46 at most. Not all authenticated. But it is a Herculean achievement, what with his lifestyle, complex under-drawing, multi-glaze technique, spatial relationships, light. No doubt about it, his work does not sit comfortably in that exalted contemporary style.

*every sharpness  
speared at him  
some not accepted*

She wants to know about him. Watches a mouth slip into top speed gear. Moving into our distance, she begins to reshape various bits, begins to doze. Because she gave it, Vermeer will remain with me for all time. Like she once travelled from a cancerous Council Estate to a first Opera, entrance to a first ballet. Vermeer. Opera. Ballet. Pop, pop, pop goes conventional parameters. Here is Judy supporting Punch. No doubt about it.

*slow tide extends  
escape tunnel is wrapped  
inside a gift*

Know nothing about her underwear. Beyond an ageing face her flesh disappears. See hair coiled in buns, feet covered in special shoes. One thing my mum is good at is firsts. Vermeer and a stony beach (no doubt about it).

*paint side up  
canvas on a red carpet  
virginal closed*

## village spillage paper pillage

*Annual Fayre*

*stitched to a ruined last one*

*The New Year's event*

**“belated birthday wishes** to Toby who celebrated his 1<sup>st</sup> birthday on the 30<sup>th</sup> May – love from your little friends at The Happy Family Mother and Toddlers Group”. Toby’s mother reads it to him slowly in a loud voice. As expected, Toby cries.

**“A BIG Thank You** to all from Dry Doddlington who gave up a wet Bank Holiday Monday morning to serve food and drink on the pavilion and to cook and serve the BBQ at the wet car boot sale that raised £224.24p for repairs to the village hall windows and £127.49 to replace some of the church hymn books so thank you all especially Mick Marge Maeve Meryl and Marvin”.

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> August:** the Parish Council and Village Hall Committee are combining to organise this years Garden Fete. In the evening there is a 60’s disco & bar so dig out that 60’s gear. Superb Weather guaranteed. (Forget last Year!) Raffle. Licensed bar. Adults £3 Children (over 2 years) £2. Family ticket £8. Anyone interested in running a stall or entertaining please telephone 626379. (Unless you do, it won’t happen).

**Dry Doddlington Happy Family Toddlers Group** meet at the Village Hall every Thursday (during term time) 1pm till 3pm. We are friendly and welcome babies and children from all areas up to school age. We are currently preparing for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Toddle Waddle in aid of the Meningitis Trust, which is a sponsored walk around Cloypole on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November, wearing the ‘Monty the Duck’ masks we have been busy decorating. So do come and join us for some fun and let your mummy and daddy have a much-needed cuppa and chat.

*wind sweaves and twurns*

*as Tiny Tots blend everyway*

*mums and dads mingle*

**Wistburrough Pig Roast** from 7.30 pm Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June. Village Hall. Entertainer: Tony Blueruball – Excellent Country and Western musical entertainment. (Thanks for donated prizes) Bar applied for. Entrance fee £5.00 – No Ticket Needed. All Welcome. The one requirement is that you love eating pig, crackling and marshmallow. See you there!

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**5<sup>th</sup> Annual BEACH PARTY** at Cloypole Village Hall. Saturday June 20<sup>th</sup> 7pm until late. Beachwear Essential! Great Prize for most original costume - and the longest lasting surf dude or dudette. A D-I-Y BBQ. Bar/Disco. Live music. Remember, you heard it here first, second and third. So start designing originals.

*Village Event*

*lower key than Nottingham*

*closed vision required*

**Music in Quiet Places** at St Pete's Church. Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> July. A fantastic young chamber group. The Trillium Brass Quartet: [www.absolutemusicians.com/client\\_details/trilliumbrass.htm](http://www.absolutemusicians.com/client_details/trilliumbrass.htm) Book your place early. Only £9 (£8 Artszene members and concessions). A one-off brass-filled evening for all tastes.

*Parish Council*

*newsletter advertises*

*local warehouse goods*

Cloypole Parish Council News: An election for the new parish

council was not required because only 6 people put their names forward. There are three vacancies. If you would like to know what is involved, see last month's newsletter. Saturday 24 November: Public event to hear and discuss the forthcoming Housing Needs Survey. Hedgerows: Ensure hedges do not reduce the width of footpaths. Dog poo – take it home. After all, it is your dog! Community fund: The Council has a small fund for local voluntary groups. To apply for funds for a particular project write to me with details of your request. No guarantees!

**good neighbours scheme:** The Good Neighbours Scheme is a team of volunteers who offer help to people living in our 5 villages. They give support and friendship through regular visits, shopping, collecting prescriptions and small practical jobs. Monthly coffee mornings are held on 19<sup>th</sup> of each month.

**The Women's Institute:** On May 8<sup>th</sup> we were disappointed our speaker cancelled at the last minute. Thanks to Kathleen who stepped into the breach. We hope to have a speaker on **recycling** in the next few months. The next Painting Saturday is nearly upon us (9.00 am – 1.00 pm or thereabouts). Do come along and have a bit of creative fun. Absolutely no experience needed. Don't forget to give your bulb orders to Jane.

Newsletter, Wistburrough, Dry Dodlington, Festinon, Cloypole, Stubbyton Group of Parishes, November 2008:

Just to say a big **BIG THANK YOU** to every one who supported Stubbyton's Starters and Pudding Club event. The Hall looked lovely. Particular thanks to the cooks (and their assistants). Food balance was great. Loads of money was raised. Great.

**HALLOWEEN PARTY.** Everyone is invited. Suitable makeup for children under 8 only, please. There will be food galore, ghosts aplenty and a grand prize for the most original Trick.

*gang of mixed flowers*  
*another group of girl guides*  
*break through boundaries*



## Vixen

*beaten face  
stuck inside a rage of rocks  
thunder bawls*

In ample bibles who hasn't a good word to say about vixens?  
But, with face to sky, ballgames change.

*she bully  
her back-to-front mind  
a vocal fist*

In this one there is a bitch who can switch to witch in a soundbite.  
A lame fame-makeover juggles hysterical features with tricky intentions. Once, it is told, she killed a disjointed cat. Insists it was a communal decision.

*black cloud cracks  
snap shut decision  
shapes her shadow*

DNA make-up craves a following whose adoration knows no boundary. Compliments to anybody else, paid in her hearing, are clawed back into her incoherency.

*she-wolf plays with knives  
in a lively abattoir  
hors d'oeuvre of fresh blood*

In secret bedtimes it is believed she marinates stroke-time in dry-brain porn-time that marauds facial muscles. Some claim her retching mouth is an outcome of battles not yet won.

*christalnacht  
as glass hearts bleeds  
arteries explode*

## **well, happy again birthday again mum**

*impregnated ash  
another dash of time  
brings her back to me*

20 June 2006   **Football World Cup - England v Sweden**

*long after goodbyes  
happy again birthday mum  
football landscape lights*

You've retrieved me again  
*It's your birthday. I do get you at other times*  
Yes, I know. After so long you don't have to  
*I know. Can't stop it. You appear. Always at my best times*  
Do I really? Well I never. You sure? 108<sup>th</sup> birthday, you say?  
109<sup>th</sup>

You sure? It doesn't get any easier. What's that?  
*Modern TV. Don't worry, it's my problem*  
What are you doing?

Half time: England 1 Sweden 0 "Great goal by Joe Cole"

*she dozes  
that adrenalin moment  
of every match*

*Watching the football match*

It's important?

*Yes and no. If we win, or even draw, we play Ecuador; beaten by Germany,  
in the next round. Sounds more complicated than it is.*

Germany? Why are **they** allowed to play?

*It's their turn to host. Would be good if we meet them in the final. Even  
better if we beat them. I don't suppose you remember, but that match will  
be played in the rebuilt Stadium where Jesse Owen won 4 gold medals  
at the 1936 Olympic Games*

Now you mention it, Yes, I think I... Weren't you born...?

*football cathedral*  
*crowds surge*  
*towards the graveyard*

What are you doing now, with nothing on your top, standing in front  
of my mirror smacking your tummy?

*Smacking out Ecuador's National Anthem*

Truly?

*No, of course not. I'm trying something, that's all. How are you?*

Not good not bad. As I'm only on a short-stay retrieval ticket, maybe  
I can't really be good or bad. Feeling every year of old

*Shouldn't say this, but would I want to see you now?*

Perfectly understandable. I am definitely not a pretty sight

*We've scored. England has scored, and there's only 5 minutes left on the  
clock. We are going to win. We are going to win. We...*

By the way you leapt off the sofa it looks like you are screaming

*It's a great goal, a fantastic goal. At last, we are going to beat them*

It's a serious relationship you have with those moving pictures?

*They've scored. In the last minute, they've scored. Where's our defence  
gone? Can you believe it? They've got a spell on us*

You don't really believe that

*Course not. How **do** they do it, though?*

Play as good as...? Life is full of ups and downs. Death is no honey  
garden either. In fact, it's not a garden at all

*What is it?*

Black. White. Same amounts of each, I suppose. A place of retrieved  
birthday girls. Even that is failing. Return me. Now

*"Mechanism?"*

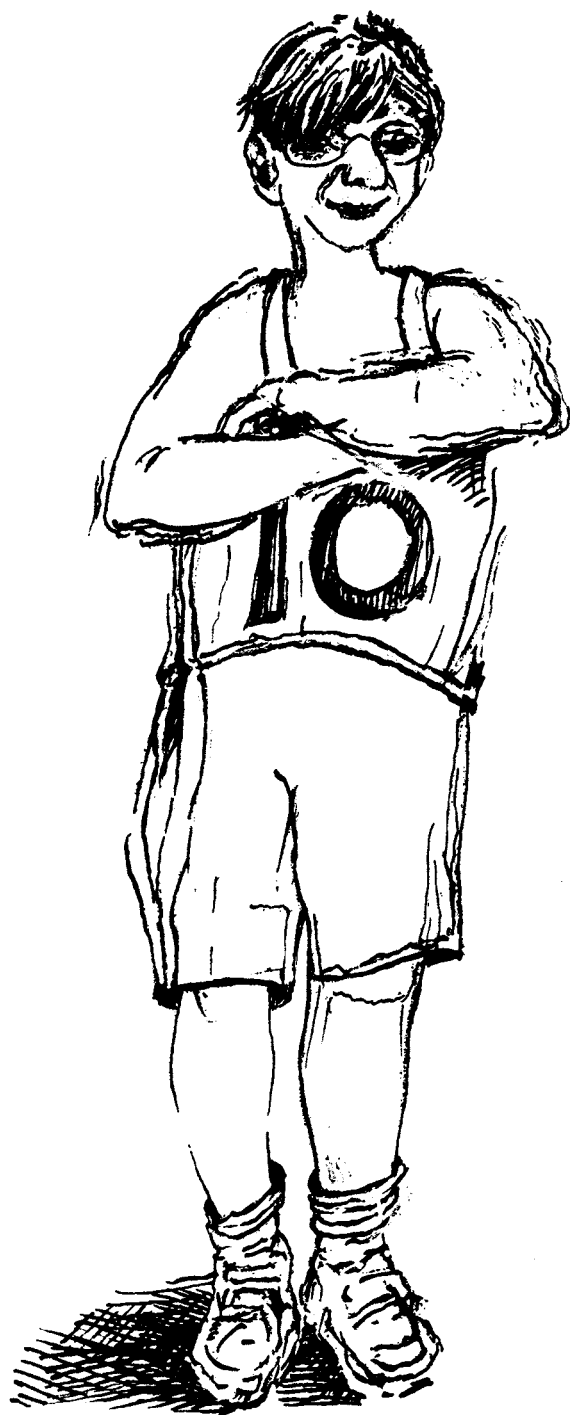
I don't know, but whatever it is, it works. So, jumpy jumpy to it

Before it does, *well, happy again birthday again mum*

**England 2 – Sweden 2**

**England will play Ecuador**

*ball retrieved*  
*from beyond their goalmouth*  
*both dress in black*







George Mann  
Publications

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