

stanley pelter

BOOK 6

an ABuNDaNCe of Gifts



An Abundance of Gifts

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

Vermeer and a stony beach



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Stanley Pelter

Preface

Rabbi Hanokh said: "The real exile of Israel in Egypt was that they had learned to endure it"

Tales of the Hasidim Later Masters 1970 Martin Buber

"Well, there's reasons for that and reasons for this
I can't think of any just now, but I know they exist"

My Wife's Home Town

Bob Dylan

"to the semi-colon, which in a world of simplified communications and simplistic binary judgements...reconciles us with the plurality of propositions and with the welcome nuances of the sentence and of complex realities".

The Quest for Meaning

Tariq Ramadan

How can you work for an audience? What do you imagine an audience would want? I have nobody to excite except myself.

Francis Bacon

When one crosses a landscape by automobile or express train it becomes fragmented; loses in descriptive value but gains in synthetic value. The view through the railroad car, in combination with the speed, has altered the habitual look of things...The compression of the modern picture, its variety, its breaking up of forms are the result of all this. It is certain that the evolution of the means of locomotion, and their speed have a great deal to do with the new ways of seeing.

Fernand Leger

Contemporary achievements in Painting

1914

Make voyages – Attempt them! There's nothing else.

Tennessee Williams

The one real object of education is to leave a man in the condition of continually asking questions.

Bishop Creighton

I'm not trying to prove I'm right but to find out whether.

Bertolt Brecht

Introduction

An Abundance of Gifts is my sixth collection of haibun. Gifts are literal and metaphorical. The black and white illustrations that extend interpretative possibilities are gifts drawn by John Parsons. The idiosyncratic, creative collaged and painted cover is a fifth such gift designed by Izzy Sharpe. This book, stock permitting, is a gift to members of both the British Haiku Society and others across the world who are linked to the genre.

An innovation in this volume is the series of **found prose and music haibun**. The choice and process of selection is what sets them apart. Change from the original also occurs as a result of the haiku - what they are and where placed. They are an equivalent to Marcel Duchamp's '*readymades*'. This extraordinary man asked questions of reality and its relation to possibility. His answer, visually developed, was: 'Possible reality (is obtained) *by slightly bending* physical and chemical laws'. The 'found, readymades' became art by virtue of his selection and of their being exhibited. Probably the best known is the male urinal, titled '*fountain*' first exhibited in New York 1917. Why do this in the haibun genre, and why this particular selection from the many books read and exhibitions visited? Partly because, among the hundreds of pages in a read novel, itself selected from any number available, these emerged as entities from which to generate haibun; and not just any old haibun, but those that close in on some of the unexpected places in which the hundreds of haibun that comprise the six collections seem to be heading. The selection is coloured by their propensity toward some kind of haibun vision and ethos. For some, it may be a distortion too far from contemporary parameters. For others it may be a stimulant to extend their own space.

Influences include Marcel Duchamp's *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*, *The New Man* by Maurice Nicholl, James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Walter Benjamin's *Illuminations*, *Gargantua and Pantagruel* by Francis Rabelais, the work of Samuel Beckett, Franz Kafka, Dylan Thomas, Angela Carter, Norman MacCaig, Hugh Macdiarmid. The work of visual artists, their approaches to and ways of problem-solving, have also been central: Piero della Francesca,

Magritte, Picasso, Léger, Kitaj, Mondrian, Klee, Hockney. All are thinkers, writers, artists who 'created' more than they 'finely crafted' (although they were, too, superb craftsmen).

Throughout, there has been an attempt to reach somewhere closer to a mythical primordial man, the neatness and wildness of both manicured, uncivilised Nature. It is a reduction while often making a complex construction of different parts coming together to 'architect' a more sensuous, homogeneous unit. It is a move from the everyday that is much of surface language and structures, to the more primitive but complex mystery of the preconscious that obeys laws outside those of 'civilised' man's behaviour.

One aim is to breach the gap that separates particulars from essentials. Success is when it includes but goes beyond ordered intellect into the vitality of the inchoate mass from which it emerged. This suggests that some challenge and are challenging, having more to do with states of mind than everyday exterior reality. Some are not easily digested events with recognised sequences of beginning, middle and end. There is a flux of evocations and possibilities that deal with a reality applied in more symbolic and metaphorical ways. *rumours, of course* is an example. Underwater swimming, eyes sometimes open, sometimes not, is as good a way to approach them as any, and as with visual arts, 'messages' may be multi-layered.

Some, beyond structures, deal contextually with applications of myths, fables, fairytales and the like. In a roundabout way this relates to my interest in the differences between contemporary Fine Artists and Graphic Designers. The latter has a clear message to be communicated quickly, efficiently, effectively. The Fine Artist is often exploring an idea, a possibility, a way of perceiving that affects forms, shapes, colours, lines, spaces. This also helps to highlight differences between work that is 'finely crafted' and that the outcome of applied creative processes. The latter aspires to bring something new, something never before seen into being. It is insight into and appreciation of the human condition that tingles sensibilities not often stimulated.

This makes extra demands of the viewer/reader because they cannot simply reference old familiar ways of looking, judging,

experiencing. It is as the difference between the ‘finely crafted’ paintings of women by, say, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Pablo Picasso’s revolutionary *Les Femmes d’Alger*.

Contrasts, juxtapositions of the unlike, the similar but different, of opposites, unfamiliar connections, inbuilt elements that help cohesion, are a few of the devices that feed dynamic counterpoint. They are vehicles of expression, which violate and expand borders of form. The omission of ‘the’ and/or ‘and’ is a device used in all six collections, but more often in *An Abundance of Gifts*. The aural effect is subtle yet positive.

Narratives are sometimes non-linear, making for surprise structures, sometimes challenging to decipher. Rhythms, visual appearance, selection, sound of words can become the structure. Descriptive language is used in relation to broad landscape and more local formations that, while being apt imagery, are also in some sense magical and childlike, acting as pointers and aids to a widening perception.

Beyond the Found Haibun, a few of the contents and interior themes in this collection include:

3 bears - or what loss of personal control, understanding, identity; fear of ‘disappearing’; some of the variety of historical meanings, and its applications, attached to the number 3.

Where do the pictures of 7 female ice skaters go? costumes designed to enhance a fairy-tale image of romanticised femininity becomes the cause of a loss of sexuality and identity.

alphabet (from where come most distractions) use of *de stijl* like multi-typefaces and application of juxtaposed surreal images to extract another form of ‘meaning’ more difficult than when applied in an orthodox haibun structure.

Canute loss of control and power hard to accept.

let me see what you did today nature of ‘reality’. The sea as symbol and expression of the female. By contrast there is an excited

masculinity and raw power. The image is a thrashing palomino horse and an exploding sky, a new Big Bang.

nearly Medusa application of the myth, here as a film star and a symbol of the unconscious, the writhing snake hair an equivalence to nodules growing on internal organs.

perspectives the effects on understanding and interpretation of altering viewpoints.

plain of wheat (a haibun fable) use of symbol and metaphor to express different levels of comprehension and personal development/ overlapping of biblical desert with USA bible-belt mid-west wheat basket. It is also part elucidation of 'secret' language contained within the literal.

rumours, of course an adult fairy story – so contains hints of innocent unknowing, obedience to the law, an inherent malice. There is a breakdown of normal reality expectations.

the last dragon myth coalescing with a contemporary Festival and Nationalist imagery.

waking the difference in familiar and less familiar 'realities'. 'Reality' is not always what it at first appears.

stanley pelter

a fame moment

“ever had a fame moment?”

“you talking to me?”

“of course. i’m interviewing you, remember?”

Seems an irrelevant question. Like those asked by TV News journalists that are not NEWS. Like those that generate predictable answers. Even questions about dramatic situations lack nutrition. Always end in a same nod, smile or *“I must hurry you. We have run out of time”*. Following where this thought leads makes it seem I am pondering his question.

“have you?”

“of course. what’s your point?”

speed glance

from a reflection

that cultivated smile

all juxtapositions

crescent moon brings me back to earth
where a blast of wind sandstorms a committee head monkey
who weird as it sounds is convinced doggy position is best.
he spills tea from a multi cracked teapot shaped
vase onto a stained baby who makes duck quack sounds.
it + 2 sisters slip into a new style of thin. their size zero
mother hangs a shredded skirt from a peg screwed into
a bone chin of a hairless wolf head fixed to her bedroom door
semi open while appearing semi closed. at a certain
moment magnetic pulses freeze a curtain into position. at that
same certain moment melodious tingles fill their
obese grandmother's dinner plates. threesome children slobber.
at last thin paintbrushes fat paint brushes all paint brushes
made of badger hair take leave of their incandescent senses.

airbrushed photograph
an oil paint laden palette
converts colours

alphabet

(from where come most distractions)

new alphabet

turns into gold

perspective jingle

O alpha beta - ungailly

resemblance to lang-alpha-widge

Allphfabbeta

even inside deep sleep

residue of sound

background noise beats

*heart beats faster
wallflowers return
ancient patterns*

phutphutphutphut beyang beyang datdatdatdatdatdatd vreeow
creeowwcreeoww shwooshshwoosh beyangbeyang ziupziup. Tank
guns. Helicopter guns. Machine guns. Rockets. Voices top pitch turn
nonsense noise into meaning.

*tarnished night crumbles
snakes disconnect noise
from skins*

*Wide-open eyes collapse inside a swirl of summer solstice madness. After an
inconsequential quiver of bared nipples, a languid smile, she remembers what she
knows about guns. In distant days, when growth was being sorted, she used them
all. Now, so much a background noise, they go unmarked. She slips into being
an air-speckled cube of silence. What remains is a surrogate, a telltale shiver of
skin sinking.*

*beyond thunder
there's moonshine inside closed eyes
hack hack of guns*

"What is it? What's happening?"

"There's no background noise."

"Isn't there? Don't feel good. Why? You said we would last".

"Meant it differently. I mean...does **anything** last...?"

"You said we would. Can't feel anything? Everything is...even the
window is slipping down the wall! Silence is it?"

"What? You're losing me"

"Never"

Hold me tight into your warmth, your too fast heartbeats

*river churls
sandwich of drizzled honey
reminds me of times past*



“There’s a new noise. Can smell it. Is it because mummelah’s a muselamb dressed as...? Like I look in a mirror and see a back view of someone looking in a mirror”

“That’s a painting. René Magritte. I’ll keep massaging... There’s no one around. Besides, what’s it to them? What we are doing, is it wrong? Is it?”

*back to front canvas
in a moment
beginnings end*

“I’m beginning to feel. At last it’s falling into place. Hold me tight! Tighter. I’m cold. Background noise is so cold”

“Is that better?”

“Tighter. That’s better. It’s Warm now. What did you say?”

“How do you know?”

“It is how you do them. Passionate, but safely, O so safely. Forgot about background noise. Forgot why scapegoat’s hearing is acute. Hell, it starts again...”

“I can hear it. A throb throbbing deep deeper inside. Can you smell it? Can you? Can you lick it? Can you?”

“Yes. Like a penetration. Kiss. Stay close. Hold that upturn.”

“that background noise is losing its spell...”

“Yes it is. More. Sing it to me soft, sing it soft.”

“That old Eros magi that I know so well...”

“Your gentles slither up and down my spine, now changing water into wine...they have changed again. Now not warm not cold not so...not...”

“Shush! My coat will cover you warm. I’m here. Still holding. Yes, still feeling you inside a deep deepest inside of me.”

“Nothing but empty not warm not cold background noise.”

*veined walnut
with a gravity drop
it cracks*

cannot be sure

maybe cold coffee

maybe it spills

onto maybe grass

lark calls. probably to a mate. cannot be sure. seem like conjoined
sounds heard through a cold mist. seem like variables that join a
lonesome anguish. cannot be sure.

car rattle

cannot be sure we listen

to other meanings

Canute

umbilical chord
unbiblical king tears
with teeth bared

Minute Pople, kinsman Canute orderers fastfish to caste into him a line. Begs back of wavelight front sealine. Pulleth at ashes of burnt psalms with tattooed arms. Blue diamond encrusted crown is aglow with upstart flames. Bald crows burn inside light of an extinguished night. Wanton sea. He sits on a half-rock throne. Sits for hours, cheek nestled in his left hand. Strong boned face is intense, palpable. One harsh look wills wild oats down deep caverns of a tides strength. He is knight majestic. For him sea must forsake all else. Be his. If not it will be possessed in whatever way he, king of all who despair, deems appropriate. This he desires. This he will have. But how? Sea never stops, laps bared feet, pushes his throne in a display of shameless indifference. He determines sea as faithless opposition. When his Will is ignored, there is no other explanation.

All women are his.

They know it.

He knows no other Way.

For him, there is no other way.

long sunset
curséd tide
refuses to turn

Despite aeons of repetitive motion, varied only by a moon's comings a moon's goings, this sea, no vestal virgin, can only be what it is. Queen vixen desires more of a king than a static straight line trying to hold back a sea that fails to hold back, a sea that dances to a moon's circular voice, a trajectory that cannot know itself as we know it.

final breath of knight
dysfunctional kingpin
lowers grim eyes

He ponders. Rises. Sweeps a carmine coloured, ermine-edged cloak
to face his moat-protected castle. Strides away. Fish caught this day
have no heads, fins spread sideways. Canute, expressionless, walks
through sludge sand. Will not look back. He thinks. No one knows
what. No one dare ask.

*incoming wave
distorts dunes
enthroned eagle droops
into three swans*



c o l l a g e

small picture
disassociated paths
connect this to that

Fashion-dressed child sits astride a fashion-conscious pushchair.
Grandparents in tow. He wears an ancient mackintosh, she a slate grey cardigan, creased, ankle length skirt, skimpy glasses. She handles a pushchair, he a sharp purple, sharp pink, sharp red plastic tricycle. Shiny black 4 X 4s hit school route. Vehicles miniaturise blonde, 30 something mums.

**outpatient clinic
mystery pain
evaporates**

Somewhere in that great uneven, gales beat out grieving rhythms, clay-drenched browns, watercolour greens. Moves of two unwise phoenix bang into each other.

**And lovers sigh. And mothers pry. And tied roots cry.
And wispy clouds are a slow-moving sky. And butterflies
struggle to fly. And old lovers, in a blind gloom, crucify.**

reed shadow trembles
into a night of no scents
river bank curves

Left hand variations leave little to desire. Speed of sound reshapes is remarkable. Fast switch from him to her. *But care, CARE. Just for stringing variations on a theme around her neck, inserting daffodils, rain rumpled by a drenched sunrise, down his throat, worms fail each other's dark, causing an offence to roots.*

**splurge of wet field -
mist, adders, obsessed couple
build mixed nests**

1st

S/he are sensitive to each other, attractive and attracted to each other, humane about each other. Both, in different ways, are able to purr at each other, be responsive to each other's talents and aspirations, S/he stimulate each other, can be each others aspiration.

*glued stars
middle symphony
mourns sadness*

2nd

*What goes on upstairs that makes her so vulnerable, so fragile, so easily frightened, **so quickly hurt**, that can kick thin skin into touch, derail security, slow rivers into situations bewildering even to specialists in such an open-ended field of study?*

*surreal wish
inside a well of dreams
electrics connect*

3rd

Both rail against railway lines (except when travelling by train). Simply a matter of it being too urgent, too harsh, too unvarying, too much a cul-de-sac route.

*giant moon shape
full length of destination
bathers float naked*

4th

*Look, there's Harold Pinter, centre stage, standing quite still. Looks **very** ill. Auditorium of pauses. Up high a mobile vibrates. He doesn't move from his detachment.*

*cornfield landscape
forage of ravens pause
inside black cardboard shapes*

5th

choreographed wind music whistles grey earth clean of dust. ballets are performed but lack lustre. May well be underground so brown are their mouths, so forlorn their eyes.

*fuzz of midges
conjurers switch hands
to juggle cubes of space*

6th

***Irregular strips of sharp reds, up to a linear horizon, mark
Rite of Spring.***

***colour photograph
cut into many pieces
jigsaw rejigs***

7th

***burnt from your kiss i stay awake. across hillsides
snow freezes, iced tracks reflect. flaming lips fail
to melt snow. moisture appears at mouth edges too
remote, too sparse to germinate a released egg. we
remember that second which burns with your kiss.***

***lips touch a surprise
wild honeysuckle
length of a steep climb***

8th

Blue green grass is rough cropped. Hair, more ecstasy than fashion, bends against a dyed yellow blouse collar. Conducts fourth movement of Mahler's 5th Symphony. Poignant tears form soft baton upbeats, down beats, slow each way every way beats.

"Can I sing it?"

He hums. Unruly look stops gritty sounds in mid birth. Eyes closed, she pursues a mime. Her white skirt is pungent autumn, flows transparent in a subdued wind no longer cleaning dust away from grey earth.

“But can you smell almond in these gorses?” This is not acceptable to a camera with relentless images of double exposure promises.

“Was it you found someone’s fire-sale adjective?”

“No”.

“You sure? I remember you saying, as you had nothing better to do, you might as well give it some TLC.”

“Yes, I did say that. But it was a mouse, an injured mouse. I put a verb between its thighs, slotted it in, but, unmotivated, it didn’t respond.”

“Oh dear! I’ll settle for a hammer, a rose petal, a few slides up then down a thunderstorm, connections that join together disparate brain bits”.

“Well said Doctor. Now rattle my nasal bits into an unusual set of fragrances. Go on, then!”

*gloves touch
sunwrapped day
hints of snow*

diary – (early night part of...?)

sea rocked cliff

wave frilled lengths of rusted chain

tied to darkness

wake to sounds of a glazed sea. moist time of moon in which hollows surge in, suck back rhythms. salt spurts into cracked fruit of deadly nightshade. in this midnight hiccup it is not difficult to tune into goings on of a cruel, immature old man with a civil surface. a panic, like a whirl of fairground rides, flashes orange into a hullabaloo of fears. all is as it should be in such moments. rapier night of long knives lines up.

sleep is not collared. step into a neighbouring zone. some control is possible inside a slippery map. know there is no cover. worst moments are when umbrellas go missing.

manhandled by a swish of touches, dowsed by infantile pranks of a mannequin whose viperous response is as manic as he who illegally rid us of her, a whistling wind tunnel sucks where a five pronged torn starfish burns into dust before that rush back into a sea's unanchored depth, while sunburnt sand throws up shadow stains of storm waves.



squeezed tight. soft. last push. mucus-covered passage. natal endgame.
hysterical landing. swathes of breathless. hidden towards relax. enter
again that bed vibration before a final knife twist.

herring gull

sweeps sections of roughed up beach

storm waves crash land

dice

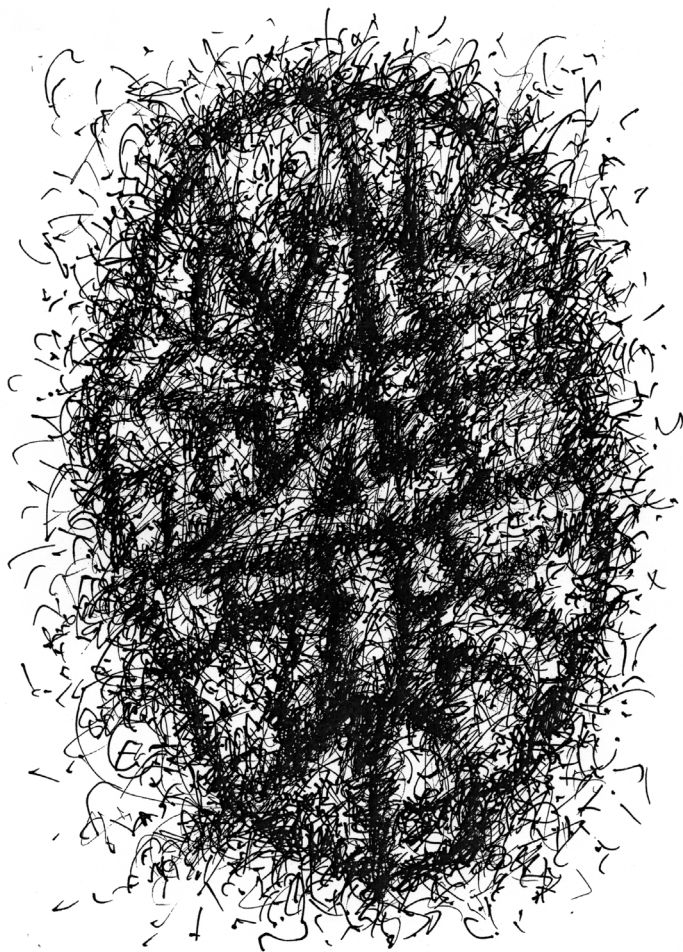
moment palm of hand feels them, moment numbers are seen, moment
of rolling energy down green baize, it is known that something
peculiar, something unfamiliar, something unique is going on.

still she loses.

one leg crow

finds a new balance

sidesteps arc glances



dysfunctional cormorant

cloned mushroom
pockmarked with holes
razor sharp thistles

she starts off same as others. different from shags but not from sisters or brothers. for a time none notice anything unusual, (which assumes they are genetically wired to notice quirks within their own species, which i doubt). even if they are, reasons for apparent blindness are simple. it starts inside.

evolutionary changes occur to cormorants that tone up survival chances. this is not one of them. what happened? a conscience was developed, that is what happened. slow at first, it becomes more rapid as adolescent wings square up to such an improved awareness. seems it was force-fed a bundleweed of homo sapien guilt. images of devouring anything, dead or alive, fills it with everything that is loathsome, repulsive, puke-making. outcome? matures into a dysfunctional cormorant. gives up on eating. for a while this pleasures. beyond that, she can do nothing. consuming guilts will consume her.

from a last uncovered crag her modified body slips into waves where, so light, it moves back, it moves forward, dead slave to a tidal compulsion.

pulled backwards
a sea wave lost in low cloud
fragile misfit

MORALS: (fables and fairy stories **always** have at least 1)

Think carefully before you give up on anything; it could kill you.

Birds-eye views of anthropomorphism are a reductive device.

Want to live a longer? Give up on dysfunctional cormorants.

Obsessive behaviour isn't always a step forward.

Nor will crucifixes save you.

Correct your children before it is too late.

family leaves

*sine curve of a web
black and white clouds scud
over fast moving air¹*

House is architected from cliff-fallen lumps of rock. Colours are light or dark grey. This vacuous variety adds interest to a dismal mid sludge range, like today's clouds, like a woe, like a man who cannot smile inside.

*inside bed storm -
hovers either side of
slow passing clouds¹*

Mother is in a particular stage of illness. So is father. More accurately, it is a state of a particular stage of illness. A battered daughter lies on a battered sofa, holding a battered stomach. She moans a pallid face; grey colours like that of stratified rock from which their house is finely crafted. Groans are given a makeover. Air sucks in cruder gulps of pain as she presses a hand between anguished groins. She is in a particular stage of illness. Correction: a particular state of a particular stage of illness.

*gone home
black eyes focus
on darker shadows*

Girl twins are close to windows fouled by pigeons. Unblinking, an arm around each other's waist, they stare at where dusk encircles an expanding coil of bats. Standing with legs together they ignore an ill mother a weak father a battered sister who thins with each breath. Mother tries to get their attention by raising an arm. She is ignored. This is not because girl twins have their backs to her but because they are trying to reach something too high for their present size.

*thin waves
bruised sand subsides
into imprints*

Skin of a sick family triad is degenerating, colours are various stages of mottled grey-green. Father falls. It is a bad fall. Sharp out-take of girl twin's breath lifts his lightweight, now brittle body, in a slow turn air curve before settling on top of a misused shadow. Frayed curtains close. Empty page of a family photograph album turns into a cheap coffin.

rigid room
honey fingers sticktogether
in alchemy



¹ *parsons and pelter*

faster baby talk

wind blanched face and honey lick lips pushitfast daddy

push me to Putney Bridge daddy. pushitfast. can't be late. my currant cutesy eyes want to see start. push them aside daddy. say " 'scuse me 'scuse me. my pinky my curly sweetie whirly girly has to see a clock of it all." tell them daddy. what did they say daddy? tell them again. say i have to see surface skimming trueblue boats. tell them daddy. tell them. squeeze through narrow gaps. show them how teensy weensy i am.

that's better daddy. i can. i can see them daddy. soon OxenBridge is pullypullpulling sleeky ways to spread white-head batheytimefoam swings of spraying puffpant painted oars. lightblue darkblue. in out in out. suckly skimfastwater. loveydovey water. feel it flow. feel it go. push full in. pull full out. lean into. dig deeply into. so rocksey hard. longerly strokes use ripely grown muscles. so readily. so steadily. GO boys go. sees them go daddyly. sees them go. see they have gone daddily mine. gone beyond what cans be seen. are they still showing daddily? no? pushitfaster then daddyO. apull apushing with mightier muscle might. are they daddily? are they doing that daddilly?

tidal river light blue waves turn darker

home now. change me daddyly mine. soon names must change. names must change my daddyO. do you knows why daddy? doos you? more thoroughly sweetly homely. that is why O daddily mine. that is why. so pushitfaster daddy. faster. changing my throatly sounds into grownup. sweetypie sugardaddy you knows what that means. means i'm hungry. hungry insideout. so push. pushitfast daddy. fasterdaddy. faster. pushitpast. Past.

rubber tyres speed friction melts them onto a pavement

food like it is forever

ancient tree

crisscross branch patterns

reform swirls of sky

“Yes, I have eaten more despicable meals in more disposable ways than I care to remember.”

“Why?” she said, strangely surprised at this change from thought to sound.

“Because then I couldn’t cook a sausage in a deluxe oven.”

“And you can now?”

“Yeeesssish”.

“Good. You really do like my cooking? You’re not just saying it because you are too lazy a bugger to cook for yourself?”

“I **LOVE** your cooking. Better than all those celebrity chefs with iceberg bank balances put together. **Much** better.”

“Sure?”

“I’m sure I’m sure. I am,” I say into a new, slightly wet sound. “Who wants confrontation?” I whisper to my head.

apple pie makeover

fronts a photograph book

melted smiles sate him

Her foods, far from being non-confrontational, always are; confronting amalgams of familiar alongside unfamiliar spices, usual through unusual arrangements, subtle props, wide range of nose-tingling odours like those found inside night shadows.

Like any great cordon bleu cook priority is not just to ingredients interlocking, colour distribution, presentation, flavours, timing, but to a unified experience. There is no waiting; book is book-marked, drawing left mid line, music on alert, television blank-screened, red wine manoeuvred.

Patterns, too, play their part. Failure evokes auras of gods past preparing mixes that do not gel. In this she allows no appeal. I am never late. Always start with a clink of aesthetically exclusive

glasses wed to admiration of cooked-to-perfection riches, smelling everything, guessing at ingredients down to mere hints of taste, sight or smell. Better to play a safe game than risk a good night.

wanton wind
recipes caress
half revealed shapes

Through painful puberty years, I chuckled at such cuckolded mysteries. Never needed to tempt them.

Fast-forward. Still no need. Special day. Stop everything. Food aromas taste of bliss. This does not happen as a magic potion that excludes an expert. If momentum slows might it eventually lead to a cook's measure of time becoming overcooked cosmic time?

"*God only knows*" as my wanton crook of a cook of a mum used to say at just about every thing I ever asked.

improved roof tiles
in unison doves
spread perfect wings

foreplay

*made up slang
vantage point crosses over
wild headscapes*

Angry, hysterical, you shout.

"How dare you whine? You're a real buttock pain. Just too over zealous jealous. No more! Not after what you've done to us."

"Bloody hell! There's no talking to you. We said not to let smoke come between us. We would work it out. Talk it through. What's the point if you always shout at me when I try to? I'm the one who gets blamed. It's always my zinging fault. I'm fed up. Where's some of that empathy you spread over everyone else?"

First applied applause. First hint of applied tears.

"You know how much I've got to do. I can't cope with you going on. There is nothing to get jealous about."

Deep-breathing silence punctuates with real tears, near words.

"O.K. I'm sorry. I'M SORRY."

"Say it again."

"I am really sorry."

"Again."

"No."

"Again, again."

"I'm **really sorry**. i love U. You know that. You do."

"Turn off that stuffing football."

"I'm not sure I can do..."

"Turn off the telly!"

I keep telling you - God, Themis, lives (hallowed be their names).

*2 lions
rage roar their love intense
multi colour sunrise*

forest food fantasy

*she holds hands of friends
inside a mushroom circle
magic radiates*

Another ramble. Undulations for three miles until a big forest entrance. Surprise is not just with height or even variety, but spread out, full width breadth of covered trees. Deeper in deepens darkness, awakens sounds flighting into a porous distance.

Unexpected clearing. Not large, but unruffled, flat, topped by a pancake sky. With no edge it seems more of a mirage plane than a box top. Grass details are altogether more singular. Then dissolution. Green luxury disassembles into constituent hues. Hard bark runs liquid before rising as atomic mist. Metamorphosis completes with a watercolour blue wash. Moments of silence. Moments of emptiness. What is not there is too elemental to reveal.

Then a slow reformation into new styles of semi-solidity. A theatrical, open-air culinary set-up floats. Everything a forest feast needs bobs gently up, gently down, hovers over an air-filled, translucent table on which Matter has moved into a minor key. Even this is edible. Hands pass through bits of a banquet like it has always been this way. Menus pass around. Mezzo-soprano winds sing two Gluck Italian Arias in skin quivering sounds.

starters -

grilled marinated shitake mushrooms

'beurre rouge'

blueberry in red wine soup

warm red pepper salad

beetroot with soured garlic cream

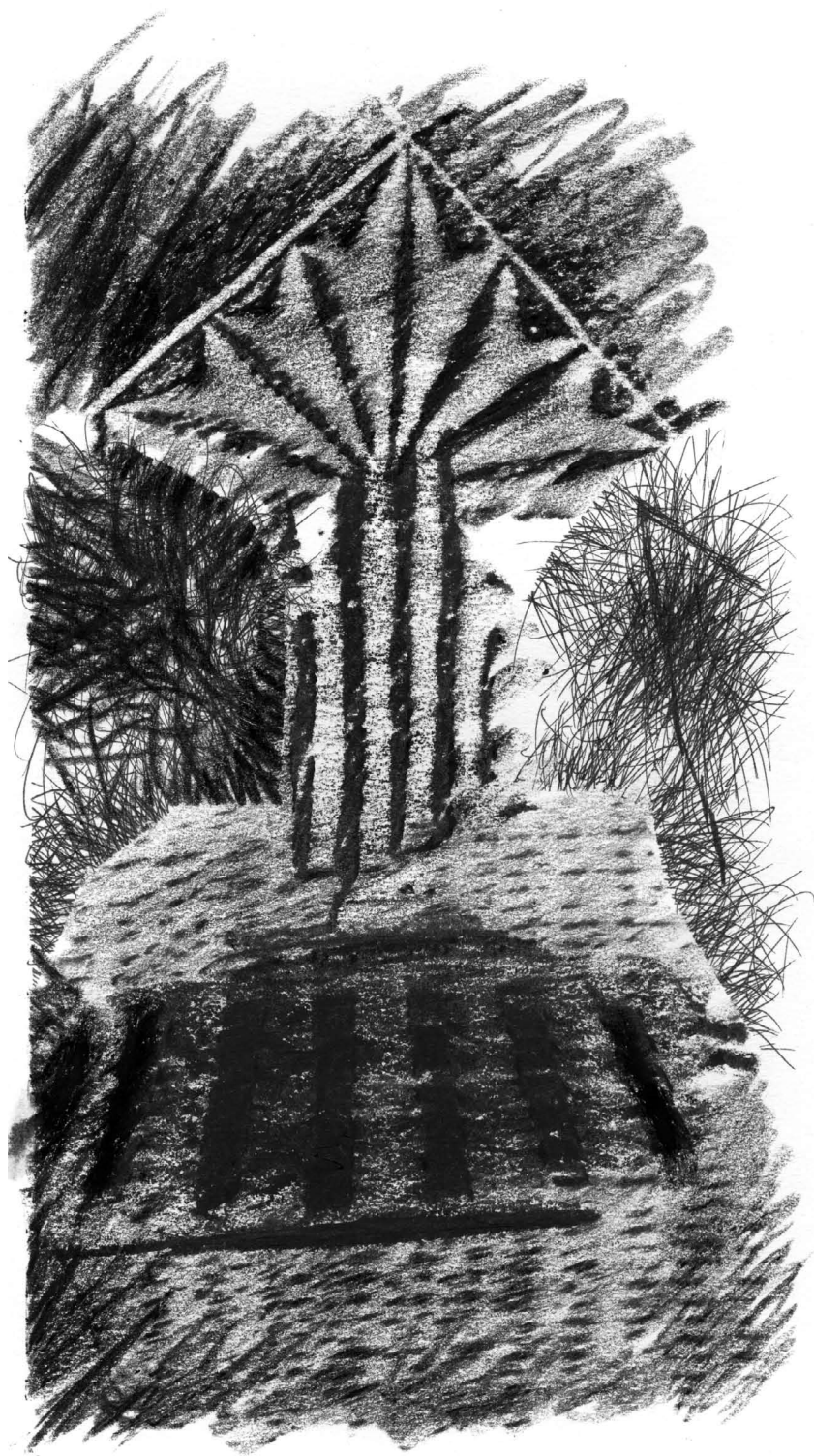
salmon quenelles

carrot mousse

mackerel with gooseberry sauce

roasted aubergines, gruyere with a tomato and pecorino sauce

aubergines, green beans in coconut milk, with



lemon grass tucked into chilli
soupe a l'oignon gratinée with plaited con tinted
by a green herb sauce

main -

pumpkin soufflé, marinated pheasants, Tuscany
potatoes

lemon poussins, marinated artichoke hearts

guinea fowl Madeira

rack of lamb with herb blended walnut crust

lamb tagine

afelia

merguez with peppers shaped as potatoes

chargrilled vegetable platter

desserts

key lime pie

baklava

almond tart with mincemeat

caramelised orange

juxtaposed, of course, with exquisite wines.

~

Whatever reforming is about, wish, wish, wish you can wish to be
reformed right here, right now. Wish, wish, wish you to float to me, be
my guest for this one immaculate feast. I can play the host game.

snowwhite eaten

grass tablecloth covered

with garden gnomes

A Child's Christmas in Wales¹

found haibun 1

subtle music

inside christmas carols

try to hear trad jazz

Bring out the tall tales now that we told
by the fire as the gaslight bubbled like a diver.
Ghosts whoood like owls in the long nights
When I dared not look over my shoulder; animals
Lurked in the cubbyhole under the stairs where the
Gas meter ticked. And I remember that we went
singing carols once, when there wasn't the shaving
of a moon to light the flying streets. At the end
of a long road was a drive that led to a large
house, and we stumbled up the darkness of the drive
that night, each one of us afraid, each one holding
a stone in his hand in case, and all of us too brave
to say a word. The wind through the trees
made noises of old and unpleasant and maybe
webfooted men wheezing in caves. We reached
the black bulk of the house.

'What shall we give them? Hark the Herald?'

'No,' Jack said 'Good King Wenceslas.
I'll count three.'

neon villagescape

fresh snow

fills the sublime sky

¹ A Child's Christmas in Wales

Dylan Thomas

the work of Rineke Dijkstra¹ found haibun prose 2

quick look

at too much there is to see

heat of a sodden beach

“A young girl stands on the beach. Her heels are pressed close together on the wet sand. Behind her is the sea, and above, the infinite blue of the sky. Her orange bikini emphasises a well-developed figure as she presses her long blonde hair to her left shoulder, while her right hand with rings on three fingers rests loosely on her left thigh. She looks at the camera with a certain shyness and searching dreaminess expressing at the same time a self confidence.”

large photograph

frame finds a way through

two dimensions

¹ Rainer Stange – Photographic Exhibition MIMA (*Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art*)



Gloria Ridge found haibun prose 3

*home baked cake
long drift into winter
for the chosen one*

Where are they all gone? I had them here, all of them.

Now they're not here. It may be my true love, my one true love. His hair was golden, his eyes were blue, he stood six foot two in his bare socks, the first one. He bumped into me coming out of the four ale bar into the corridor, where I was scrubbing near the milk stout. I was a young girl then. He was my first. Swept me of my feet. Swept my chimney, he called it, my black chimney. What could I say? It was a frosty morning. Frost clears away the flu and does good for England. Everything's a mess

That time they let me play. Let the piccanninny join in! that Bobbie yelled. I enjoyed it more than my tapioca.

What would you say if I took off my arm
and gave it you in a stew?

Got you there, got you there!

Why not?

*ice edged snow
white wedding ring
worn to destruction*

the angel of the odd

found haibun 4

*hanger ins der aire
vot i tink eeze for jus me
te see fer mesel'*

'As vor ow I com'd ere,' replied the figure, 'dat iz none of your pizzness; and as vor vat I be talking apout, I be talk apout vat I tink proper; and as vor who I be, vy dat is de very ting I com'd here for to let you zee for yourself.'

'You are a drunken vagabond' I said, 'and I shall ring the bell and order my footman to kick you into the street.'

'He! he! he!' said the fellow. 'hu! hu! hu! dat you can't do.'

'Can't do! said I, 'what do you mean? – I can't do what?'

'Ring de pell,' he replied, attempting to grin with his little villainous mouth.

Upon this I made an effort to get up, in order to put my threat into execution; but the ruffian just reached across the table very deliberately, and hitting me a tap on the forehead with the neck of one of the long bottles knocked me back into the arm-chair from which I had half-risen. I was utterly astounded; and, for a moment, was quite at a loss what to do. In the meantime, he continued his talk.

'You zee' said he, 'it iz te bess vor sit still; and know you shall know who I pe. Look at me! zee! I am te **Angel ov te Odd.**'

'And odd enough, too' I ventured to reply; 'but I was always under the impression that an angel had wings.'

'Te wing!' he cried, highly incensed, 'vat I pe do mit te wing? Mein Gott! De you take me vor a shicken?

*he do call te mee
'nein wings nein de birds
Angel ov de Odd*

The Passion of New Eve found haibun 5
(lost prose, not all recovered)

*an unease
from one to the other
glimpse a sea horse*

THE ROAD. When I can drive no more I huddle in the back of the car. Uneasily dream. Am in a frenzy, a hurry. Do not know I speed towards the enigma I had left behind. Do not know I cannot stop. Morning. Ground white with hoar frost. A crimson sun rises over plains that roll as far as the pale hem of the sky.

*shape of speed
furrowed brow
ploughs a deep landscape*

As summer grows more intolerable, the Women increase their depredations. Practice humiliation at random. End of July. Sewerage system breaks down. Lavatories cease to flush. Rich smell of shit adds a final discord to the cacophony of a city's multiple odours. Rats grow vicious as hyenas. Streetlamps are shot out. Those left are of the soft pink colour city authorities hoped would reduce aggression.

*prism splits white light
beside lily bed tangles
the defloration*

Although she sings so very softly, I hear her wordless song. She often throws a liquid glance over her shoulder. Knows I am following. She lures me on. Drops her fur on the floor. I strip, my existence gone. For one moment senses are eclipsed in an atavistic panic before original darkness and silence. I drop upon her like a bird of prey, although my prey plays the hunter. My voracious beak tears open the poisoned wound of love between her thighs, suddenly, suddenly. She flings open the window to let the smell of sex out. She is unnatural, a visitor in her own flesh. Duplicity gleams in her. Cracked mirror reciprocates her bisected reflection and with mauve exhalations. I

lick her all over. Pull her down upon me. Sometimes she clambers on top of me in the middle of the night. Waking just before she tears the orgasm from me, I remember the myth of the succubus; devils in female form who come by night to seduce saints. Grow bored with her. Have had enough of her. Left only with the habit of her sensuality, an addiction which half shames me.

*lost to myself
in the centre of a desert
emptiness of sand*

There is no one, no one. I am helplessly lost, without map or guide or compass. The landscape unfurls around me. Enforced sterility, dehydrated sea of infertility, post-menopausal part of the earth. A road runs through an insane landscape of pale rock, honeycombed peak upon peak in erratic structures. Jostling pebbles mark the path of rivers that dried up before time began. Snakes and lizards rustle in grey sand. Buzzards float in the sky.

*blood hidden by earth
beneath ancient cracks
another emptiness*

A transmitter crackles. Sonorous voice intones: EXCEPT THAT A MAN DIE AND BE BORN AGAIN HE MAY NOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. All my fears fulfilled! Down, down into the dark, down into an inter-uterine place hung with curtains of crimson plush, into a curtained cabinet where there is a white bed “Mother proposes to reactivate the parthenogenesis archetype. She’s going to castrate you, then excavate the ‘fructifying female space’ inside you. Make you a perfect specimen of womanhood. Then impregnate you with your collected sperm.” It is difficult to see in that abattoir light. Remember an atmosphere rather than an event – a sense of antique ritual. Feel intimations of total collapse. A crippling pain heralds my first flow. No way of staunching it. Source lies deep beyond my volition, the emblem of my function. They leave me, bleeding as I am.

*mixed state
of incomplete change
seahorse disappears*

I draw his head to my breasts; experience a mysterious contraction of nerves. He softly bites at my nipple; grows potent. Don't want him to come quickly. Want time, the swooning dissolvent woman's pleasure seen but never experienced. With his free hand he begins to explore the raw, exquisite, violet oyster Holy Mother had inserted in the russet gash that runs with viscosity and twitches uncontrollably. He and I, she and he, are the sole oasis in this desert. He tells me my intimacy is a sweetish smell. Rotten, too. Also a little salty. A primordial marine smell, as if we carry within us the ocean where we were all born, smell of the first sea, waters of beginning. Out of these fathomless kisses, our interpenetrating, undifferentiated sex, we make the great Platonic hermaphrodite. The erotic clock halts all clocks. Eat me. Consume me. Annihilate me.

*ocean hem line hemline
snared into swirls
edible seaweed*

His kisses explode like tracer bullets. We suck at the water bottle of each other's mouth. I have lost my body. It is defined solely by his. Correlatives involving one another. Quality and its negation locked in necessity. I sob out pleasure. Your body clenches in the mysterious equivalence of orgasm. We lie still while the sun dries our sweat. My eyes fill with mirages of lakes. Our little boat sails over this sea. Prismatic raindrops spill down cheeks. We are turning into water; will be able to drink freely. Then he is wrenched out of me like a cork from a bottle. I scream the pain.

"You must keep your eyes closed when you look at me, Eva."

Glossy foliage of lemon, orange and eucalyptus glitter in the sun. There are palms, too, with calloused trunks, lines of palms along this avenue, eerily denuded of traffic. For all the tropic vegetation there is

no sense of lavish over-spill. Stony soil under crude palm tree shapes
look as if snakes would mother there.

dry stoniness
the least succulent
breed primitive seeds

Unexpected, a mountain range looms to my left with purplish outlines.
Still nothing moves. Not those glossy leaves, heavy, still, carved from
glass. He had been she, only ever was she his creation. Disappointed,
outraged, I scream. Ocean, ocean, mother of mysteries, bear me back
to the place of birth.

half a walnut
returns to earths womb
scarlet lipstick gash

GREENPARK Underground Station (Jubilee Line)
found prose 6

coven convenes
beyond a contour of flesh
a pickle of heads

black cinema is triumphantly born! get ‘ims footoutta yer arse.
WALK FOR LIFE - Sunday 19th June. Register!
Natural History Museum f

backtothetrain

GREENPARK

is everywhere

a
c
e
2
f
a
c
e

Nederlands Dans Theater - One of a Kind
(A team of heartbreakingly sleek and avid dancers)

“I don’t mean to sound evil. But I am. *Queen Bee, that’s me*”

Emergency - to stop train, press the button above this notice.
Penalty for improper use - £200

War of the Worlds

Don’t Believe Anyone But Me – *President’s album out now*

13 conversations about 1 thing and 1 thing only

Codes. **Masks. Signals.** *door opens door shuts*

Uncertainty into Certain. Bang! Bang! SHE is a killer

underground train
pairs of eyes advertise
silk sheen pants and bra

DEWEY DELL

found haibun prose 7

*byzantine pattern
in raindrop prisms
new arrangements*

The signboard comes in sight. It is looking out at the road now, because it can wait. New Hope. 3 mi. it will say. New Hope. 3 mi. New Hope. 3mi. And then the road will begin, curving away into the tree, empty with waiting, saying New Hope three miles.

I heard that my mother is dead. I wish I had time to let her die. I wish I had time to wish. I had. It is because in the wild and outraged earth too soon too soon too soon. It's not that I wouldn't and will not it's that it is too soon too soon too soon.

Now it begins to say it. New Hope three miles. New Hope three miles. *That's what they mean by the womb of time: the agony and despair of spreading bones, the hard girdle in which lie the outraged entrails of events.*

*epic testament
recounted once
tales of her death*

¹ As I Lay Dying - William Faulkner

Penguin Books 1963

Little Bird¹ found music score haibun 8

swirls of a blackbird
sweep inside man made rules
song clouds organize

Allegro leggiero

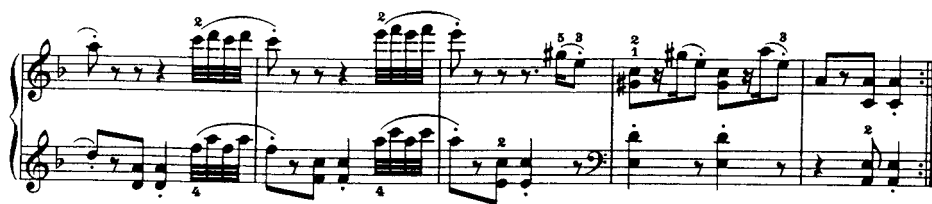
EDVARD GRIEG



shapes on a page

notes reform themselves

into a near bird



so many tingles

disembodied music

is soft and gentle



music abstraction
makes a deflected image
trill soundalikes



1 Little Bird

Edvard Grieg

My Name is Asher Lev* found haibun prose 9
(maybe because of, not despite the number of 'I's')

skin burns
rain calloused city
shakes up shadows

A narrow window took up most of the wall behind the mashpia.¹ I looked out of the window at the maples on the street. It was raining outside on the maples. I saw the branches dripping in the rain. How would I paint that, the rain dripping from the branches, the rain streaking the windows, the grey rain filling the world with dismal mist?...The bleak sky hovered menacingly over the tops of the buildings. The mashpia was saying something to me, but I was not listening because I saw the clouds moving swiftly and darkly across the buildings and I wondered how I could catch that dark movement, that watery swirl of light and dark greys.

early berry *withers inside its colour* *dull canvas*
I watched him put his hands on the desk, saw him still talking to me, and thought the street was crying and wondered how I could paint the street crying. I thought I had said something like that to myself before, but I could not remember when it might have been. The street is crying, I thought, and I'm sitting here. It's my street...I want to paint it; I have to paint it while it's crying, and why am I sitting here? They're going to take my street away from me... Do streets in Vienna cry? Not for Jews, they don't. Ribbono Shel Olom², what are You doing to me?

serious meeting -
important matters
beyond these high walls

* *My Name is Asher Lev* Chaim Potok Penguin Books 1972

¹ mashpia the one responsible for the development of souls, and whose task was to teach the doctrines of Ladover Hasidim.

² Ribbono Shel Olom Master of the Universe

weather* found haibun prose10

*ridged ice cracks
earth coloured stones in groups
so close they touch*

It is snowing heavily. A few minutes later, we stand outside in the snow.

“Sometimes in Siberia when it snowed, it was colder inside than outside. You and your mother should both live and be well. Be careful going home in the snow. Snow is an enemy.”

The snow is thick. I can feel the icy surface of last night’s snow beneath the snow now on the street. It is slippery and treacherous and I take a long time getting home. I feel buried in snow and ice. The darkness is alive with the sound of the storm-filled night. I stand at my window and look out at the falling snow... I stand at the window a long time, watching the snow.

*steam rich breath of bulls
quiver white laden earth
an unblinking stare*

The weather turns warm. Green buds appear on the trees. The sun shines into the living room through the huge window. The light seems to have a life of its own. I watch colours change. I watch new shapes come alive and die in the slow movement of colour and light.

*frantic mating
woven nest architecture
burst into wild life*

It is a stifling month, oppressive with humid heat that remains through the nights. The asphalt of the streets softens in the heat. Drenched in sweat, I painted stripped to the waist.

That summer I live in a house on the edge of sand dunes. In the early morning I can see the sun on the water and the silver foaming on the surf. The sun rises through the morning mist and burns the mist away.

The river runs dark even in sunlight, except along its deep banks where the reflections of the stone walls and houses are the colour of summer sand and ripple faintly in the lazy flow of water. In a little more than a year, that river will rage and flood the city and destroy things so precious I will weep into the silent mornings. But this summer the river is gentle, a dark cool benign presence beneath the hot sun.

*reduced tree
amputated branches
grow mottled leaves*

I look out of the window at the maples on the street. It is raining outside on the maples. The trees wear dead leaves. A bitter wind blows. I see the branches dripping in the rain. How can I paint that, the rain dripping from the branches, the rain streaking the window that comes in the open window and collects in puddles on the wooden floor, the grey rain filling the world with dismal mist? People walk beneath umbrellas. The asphalt glistens. The bleak sky hovers menacingly over the tops of the buildings. I see the clouds moving swiftly and darkly across the buildings and wonder how I could catch that dark movement, that watery swirl of light and dark greys. It rains on the river and the gabled houses. I see sand and a vast ocean in the rain. I think the street is crying and wonder how I could paint the street crying...It will all die when the rain ends, I thought. But what difference does it make?

*power prayer
indifferent to the rain
eyesight ripples*

*far from the sea edge
deep as can be imagined
shapes of big waves¹*

1 mast menace

Protests against mobile telephone masts mounted this week as residents complained they were spoiling views and threatening children's health. People on Beacon Heights are angry about plans for a 40ft mast they claim will cut house values. A representative of the telephone company this week invited residents to suggest other sites. She said the scheme was designed to meet local demands.

2 fighting the flood risk

Torrential rain caused havoc on Friday as water engulfed roads. Residents of Leaford Road spent the evening brushing away water. "the flooding keeps happening. There really is no excuse for it" said Councillor Mrs Christine Noble, who used buckets to catch the gushing water. Mrs Ivy Norton (62) missed a hospital appointment because the cul-de-sac was flooded. "There was sewage coming into our back garden".

3 promise of more buses

Better bus services have been promised for Bandon after complaints from villagers. Mrs Sue Waddington, the district councillor, has been trying to resolve the situation for six months. "This is a problem with no quick solutions," she told the parish council, "but I do believe there is light at the end of the tunnel." The 10 who attended the meeting clapped her.

4 cream tea

A cream tea raised £113. The money from the tea, organised at Copper Beeches Residential Home, will go, as usual, towards the residents' amenity fund.

*bad weather forecast
telephone directories
replaced by websites'*

5 fair nets £1800

A summer fair at Fillam Primary School raised more than £1800 on Sunday. Mr Peter Eveleigh, the school's head, said the money would buy a new stage for the Christmas production. A bouncy castle, skittles, tombola, raffles and various stalls were among the attractions. Mr Eveleigh said that, although the attendance was down due to the inclement weather, the money raised was an increase on last year's total.

6 Stubhouse WI

Nicola Host presided and welcomed three guests. Mrs Jean Holt spoke about the origins of Japanese cording, used to braid kimonos, bell ropes, bracelets and hair bands. Members tried weaving and threading a corded tassel attached to a key ring. Mrs Edna Haskey thanked Mrs Holt. The next meeting is an outing to Southwell Workhouse followed by a talk about making silk paper by Dawn Karellia.

*country graveyard
rusty gate opens
onto more shadows'*

¹ john parsons and stanley pelter

Name Dropping etc.

found haibun prose 12

*he sings one song
she another
stage lights blind*

“I’ve had a somewhat mercurial relationship with **Nobu**, the oh-so-posh restaurant in Old Park Lane, Mayfair. I went there on November 27, 1997. Hated, hated, hated it. The service was amateur and diabolical, the food varied from too spicy to eat to just plain lousy. The waitress dropped things all over the table. I wrote: *I’d like to be lobotomised, so the evening in **nobu** is removed from my memory.* After that, chefs being petulant idiots, they didn’t want me back and I didn’t want to go back.” – I did go recently to its third creation, **Nobu, Berkeley Street**. I took the ex-girlfriend who accompanied me on my fatal visit in 1997... She was a terrific dancer, performing in 42nd Street at the Theatre Royal Drury, along with another fine hooper, Catherine Zeta-Jones. They’re great mates. Catherine became a star. Vanessa (named after Redgrave) has two children with a nice young man in finance and lives in a splendid listed house in Hertfordshire. Her eldest son, Marlon, is named after Brando, whom she often met when with me... PS: Here’s a joke from that splendid musician, Chris Rea, currently packing ‘em in on a world tour. *Police arrested two boys, one for drinking battery liquid, the other for smoking fireworks. They charged the first one and let the other one off.*” I thought that was very funny.”

(You said you were ‘not put on Earth to unwrap sugar’ which leads one to ask, “what were you put on Earth for?”)

*october sun
becomes march
hares scratch hairy heads*

Royal outrage of the week

A screening for a deaf audience in Sydney, Australia, of The Queen, starring Helen Mirren, was unintentionally turned into comedy... “Buckingham Palace” appeared as “Burking in Paris” while “did you

vote” became “dead as a boat”. Meanwhile Prince Philip reported, “people removed their heads” rather than “their hats”.

Extra helping of the week

A diner has been offered compensation after a fat cat dropped through a restaurant roof and onto his back. “I was enjoying my food and suddenly heard a crashing sound over my head,” said the diner from Beijing, named only as Bi. “We don’t know where the cat came from,” a spokesman for the restaurant told the Beijing Times. “It must have been wild.”

*honey fingers
they stick
to sugar speech*

Talking heads

My job by Jeremy Paxman

“The producer pokes me with a stick and gives me a sheet of paper. I go down to the studio and read the paper. Afterwards they give me my medication and I go home”.

Her knowledge of the army is amazing for a grandmother. I suppose it’s slightly her job.

Prince Harry, who was told by the Queen he would be serving in Afghanistan.

*unique mask
sold to synchronised swimmers
with upsidedown moves
identical colour
from stardust toenails*

Last week, as featured here, Sienna and Rhys showed early promise of shaping up to be Official Favourite Celebrity Couple to the tabloid press by playing tricks with a bread roll at an awards ceremony. Which is all very well, but it’s hardly going to have David and Victoria “he wears my knickers” Beckham losing any sleep...So Rhys and Sienna have gone one better. They have ‘romped’ in public. The Daily Mirror

watched in shock, while presumably taking careful shorthand notes as the couple ‘cavorted’ on a flight from Los Angeles to London. “*The pair’s antics reached an eye-popping climax – at 37,000ft – with Rhys ripping off his top and jumping half-naked into Sienna’s fold-out single bed.*” the paper gushed. “*Sienna and Rhys began snogging, tongues a go-go,*” the report went on... There was also news, in The Sun, that Amy Winehouse is launching her own brand of clothes so that fans can “*copy her **unique** style.*”

insideout cloud
iridescent beetle trails
through a bridge of legs

Cracking the mystery of the universe

Stuff should be exactly balanced by anti-stuff (matter and anti-matter are the correct but now jaded terms) and therefore there should be nothing, but in fact there seems to be a slight preponderance of stuff and so we get galaxies, planets, Condaleezza Rice and halibut. This is called, alarmingly, the CP (charge conjunction/parity) violation. QCDOC (a £7m supercomputer at Edinburgh University - its short for quantum chromodynamics on a chip – didn’t put it that way. What the computer had been asked to do was test the standard model. This is a theory unique in scientific history in that it manages to be fantastically right and unbelievably wrong. The standard model deals with the interactions between tiny particles such as quarks and gluons. These are what you find inside an atom and their behaviour is distinctly odd...the standard model survived the scrutiny by showing that, under most circumstances, it would predict the CP violation. But unfortunately it remains unbelievably wrong...It doesn’t include the most elusive force of all, gravity. It is known that the standard model will fail completely at very high energy levels. When we get to temperatures close to those at the Big Bang, with which the universe began, stuff behaves even more weirdly than it does now...The large Hadron Collider near Geneva cost about £4billion and is due to start work this year. It is a giant ring-shaped tunnel around which beams of protons will race and smash into things. Ten times more energy will be unleashed than in any previous collider. Imagine two airliners crashing

in the space of an atom. This is what it was like milliseconds after the Big Bang...The hope is the collider will reveal new and unexpected phenomena, signposts pointing to answers to the huge outstanding questions of contemporary physics. (Professor Richard Kenway, who led the QCDOC team) believes physics is on the verge of the biggest revolution since Einstein and Plank. It may not happen. The collider could cause a “vacuum metastability disaster” an annoying outcome that would destroy the entire universe, and halibut. Unlikely...But it will be something like a great work of art, a vision of truth; not the truth, but a version or image of it. Kenway - and of course the usually reserved QCDOC – has every right to be excited.

*silent struggle
beyond collisions
lie tinted art hints*

Last word

‘Hawkeye’ Lee 1925-2008, fighter pilot

Squadron Leader “Hawkeye” Lee was a Hurricane pilot who shot down five enemy aircraft over France in 1940 before being forced to bale out. He had to bale out again during the Battle of Britain and was taken to the local golf course for a brandy by soldiers while they waited for an ambulance. Heavily bloodstained, Lee stood at the bar, where he overheard a man complaining: “The machine-gunning made me miss my putt. And who’s that chap at the bar? Bad show, all that blood - I don’t believe he is even a member.”
(*The Daily Telegraph*)

*waits in a blood pool
sounds of an ancient game
time his off-beat heart*

(*Sunday Times* – 02/03/08 – *News Review*)

what is Art, again?

found haibun prose13

Chirico Klee

Magritte Miró Matta Ernst

un chien andalou

I defy any art lover to love a painting as much as a shoe fetishist loves a shoe.

George Bataille The solar anus 1927

("George, that's a negative," muttered Vermeer. No one had ever heard Vermeer speak. They look up in some disarray, which, for innovators, is not disappointing. *S.P.*)

What were the grounds for refusing Mr Mutt's fountain:-

1 Some contended it was immoral, vulgar.

2 Others, it was plagiarism, a plain piece of plumbing.

Mr Mutt's fountain is not immoral, that is absurd, no more than a bathtub is immoral. It is a fixture that you see every day in plumbers' show windows.

Whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain or not is of no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view – created a new thought for that object.

As for plumbing, that is absurd. The only works of art America has given are her plumbing and her bridges.

Beatrice Webb (approved and partly written by Duchamp –The Blind Man, no 2 1917)

wood colours

'nude descending a staircase'

a revolution

When I first started using found domestic goods, it was in a way analogous to fossils – contemporary fossils...these items are material for me that is found in my environment, it's not recovered in any sense, it deals directly with my life and the majority of my experiences, whereas walks in the countryside and rural atmospherics don't play a very large part in my life.

Bill Woodrow 1981

My outdoor sculptures are places. The material and the idea are of the place; sculpture and place is one and the same thing.

Richard Long Five, Six, Pick up Sticks, 1980

*long distance garden
meeting of painted grass
and heraldic stones*

Then the sun rose and was so dazzling I found it impossible to see. The Thames was all gold. God it was beautiful, so fine that I began work in a frenzy, I can't begin to describe a day as wonderful as this. One marvel after another, each lasting less than five minutes, it was enough to drive one mad.

Claude Monet Letter to Alice Monet, London 3 February 1901

*through day and night
a dawn's short lintel
only think of you*

I express myself *by means* of nature. But if you carefully observe the sequence of my work, you will see that it progressively abandons the naturalistic appearance of things and increasingly emphasises the plastic expression of relationships.

Piet Mondrian Dialogue on the New Plastic, 1919

The man who wants to shoot a cloud down with an arrow will exhaust all his arrows in vain. Many sculptors are such strange hunters. What you have to do is fiddle something on a drum or drum something on a fiddle. Before long the cloud will descend, roll about on the ground in happiness, and at last complacently turn to stone.

Jean Arp The Man Who Wants to Shoot a Cloud Down, 1956

*sun play spreads inside
an amorphous Zen Garden
absurd sculptures curve*

In the realm of the blue air more than anywhere else one feels that the world is accessible to the most unlimited reverie... The world is... on the far side of an unsilvered mirror, there is an imaginary beyond, a beyond pure and insubstantial, and that is the dwelling place of Bachelard's beautiful phrase: 'First there is nothing, next there is a depth of nothingness, then a profundity of blue.'

Yves Klein

Sorbonne Lecture, 1959

Funnily enough... a dick with two balls is a convenient object. You make it and it's already whole... I can do all those things that you'd expect any sculpture to do. I can think about making vulvas, but I'd have to start thinking about where the edges are to be.

Sarah Lucas

Interview with Carl Freedman, 1994

*hand rhythm
connection of one solid
to new material*

What do you think an artist is - an imbecile who has only eyes if he's a painter, or ears if he's a musician?... He is at the same time a political being, constantly alive to heartrending fiery or happy events... No, painting is not done to decorate apartments. It is an instrument of war... against the enemy.

Pablo Picasso

Interview with Simone Tery, 1946

Matisse turns to him. "Pablo, that's so...so...you. I thought you'd say 'One never stops seeking because one never finds anything' or 'I never do a painting as a work of art. All are researches, experiments in time'. Occasionally, I wish I'd said that".

"I like that. Here, have another dove," says Pablo. "Is it his turn" thinks Henri. "Merci."

Stanley Pelter

Notebook

*exchange of doves
two new ancients
share two more symbols*

True art, which is not content to play variations on ready-made models but insists on expressing the inner needs of man and of mankind in its time – is unable *not* to be revolutionary, *not* to aspire to a radical reconstruction...

Andre Breton and Leon Trotsky – Towards a Free Revolutionary Art, 1938

I do think it's true that all depictions must be what we would call stylized. There is no way they can't be... They are not the reality. They are put on a flat surface as stylizations of some kind. Listen to what Leo Steinberg has to say about Picasso: "*Survey Picasso's lifelong commitment to the theme of woman as solid reality...one arrives at a disturbing conclusion. That Picasso, the great flattener of twentieth-century painting, has to cope in himself with the most uncompromising three-dimensional imagination that ever possessed a great painter.*" Amazing, isn't it?

Hockney on Art – Conversations with Paul Joyce.

*chinese scrolls
extend an artists insight
paint brush salute*

"Come, sit next to me, David. Come. Don't be frightened. That's good. You on my right, Sarah on my left."

Sarah Lucas, nobody's plaything or anybodies fool, gets up, walks to the back view shadow of Marcel Duchamp who has just started playing a game of chess with himself, and firmly kisses its head shape. He slides the chess board and pieces between the two sheets of a plate glass construction he has been building for the past 15 years, stands up and, without a word, carries a smiling sculpture of Sarah Lucas out of the Hockney stage-set and into an ominous Chirico shadow-crossed townscape. On top of a pre-inscribed pedestal, he sets her down where the unseen moon can be most effective in returning her to her fleshly form. There she will stay.

Stanley Pelter Notes

*agricultural art
lets august seeds scatter
beyond the harvest
disfigured figures emerge
from a moonlit stage*

Quality Street¹

found haibun prose¹⁴

*just the two of us
her sweet tooth forgotten
inside the moment*

I always bought you
Mackintosh's Quality Street
Chocolates and toffees
wrapped in glittering purples,
scarlets and golds,
shining like Cinderellas
in large circular tins
and tall boxes as I handed them
round to the other gnarled fingers
twisted like tree-roots
as they lay in their laps.
Today I almost reached up
to the shelf in the supermarket
but then I remembered
your locked door
and the long corridor
I don't need to go down anymore.

*stretch of day
forgets her shadow
light fades*

¹ John Daniel

The Road

found haibun prose 15

*gray drum rattle
in a mired landscape
a flash of yellow*

They camped that night in the woods on a ridge over-looking the broad piedmont plain where it stretched away to the south. He built a cookfire against a rock and they ate the last of the morels and a can of spinach. In the night a storm broke in the mountains above them and came cannonading downcountry cracking and boom and the stark gray world appeared again and again out of the night in the shrouded glare of the lightning. The boy clung to him. It all passed on. A brief rattle of hail and then the slow cold rain.

*nowhere close by
mountain storm parades
into distant reds*

When he woke again it was still dark but the rain had stopped. A smoky light out there in the valley. He rose and walked out along the ridge. A haze of fire that stretched for miles. He squatted and watched it. He could smell the smoke. He wet his finger and held it to the wind. When he rose and turned to go back the tarp was lit from within where the boy had wakened. Sited there in the darkness the frail blue shape of it looked like the pitch of some last venture at the edge of the world. Something all but unaccountable. And so it was.

*false flowers
tied to cracked barked trees
still just a boy*

A Serious Talk

found haibun prose 16

*no leaves to fall
throughout the night gravity
feeds other concerns*

VERA'S car was there, no others, and Burt gave thanks for that. He pulled into the drive and stopped beside the pie he'd dropped the night before. It was still there, the aluminium pan upside down, a halo of pumpkin filling on the pavement. It was the day after Christmas.

*festive day plus 1
pools of glistened ice
slow to melt*

He'd come on Christmas day to visit his wife and children. Vera had warned him beforehand. She'd told him the score. She'd said he had to be out by six o'clock because her friend and his children were coming for dinner.

*fresh clitoral ring
unsteady smile
talks in silences*

They have sat in the living room and solemnly opened the presents Burt had brought over. They had opened his packages while other packages wrapped in festive paper lay piled under the tree waiting for after six o'clock.

*old rosemary
inside a lamb stew
jaded scents refresh*

He had watched the children open their gifts, waited while Vera undid the ribbon on hers. He saw her slip off the paper, lift the lid, take out the cashmere sweater.

*uneasy silence
punctuation of
presents being opened*

“It’s nice,” she said. “Thank you Burt”

“Try it on,” his daughter said.

“Put it on” his son said.

Burt looked at his son, grateful for his backing him up.

*slight warmth
not far below the crust
a tangle of roots*

She did try it on. Vera went into the bedroom and came out with it on.

“It’s nice.” She said.

“It’s nice on *you*, Burt said, and felt a welling in his chest.

He opened his gifts. From Vera, a gift certificate at Sonheim’s men’s store. From his daughter, a matching comb and brush. From his son, a ballpoint pen.

*perfect shaped present
hard space between his desire
and her neat response*

What We Talk About When We Talk About Love
Raymond Carver

Collins 1982

“here is not there”

you said

*face a stone wall -
chocolate box paintings
do more damage*

“a stage of illusions is on a three part move” you said. “all shapes, all sizes flick, flutter, hide. some are part of a quaint recognition. some are someone else’s somewhere design that wants to do away with you” you said. “always an existence kept secret. always it floats. at a planned moment design unfolds” you said. “with no understanding, blood-sucked into a broken glass-rimmed cortex, you are a target of action. cause of something awesome, you scare. more than scare” you said.

“Always centre of globular things, he is an assassin, that is what he is, always ready, always fitted with alien, hand-me-down sound-bites, like sharpest of mass-produced knives. His gene cauldron burnishes metal blades from splinters of scar tissue welded to the inside body of an extended stomach. There is only one destination. Just one. Then a refashioning, new shapes. Before the next flamboyant purpose a new shape of things. Screams will service an abundance of pleasure. Tautly honed metal glistens silver as, loud, it severs a backbone. Inside groups of distorting mirrors you watch his redirected, rough-skin grimaces shorten or elongate within slightest wind of her movements”.

*dandelion patch
manicured garden of shrubs
overwhelmed with smells*

“there is a garlic smell cellar. ancient damp mixes newly sprayed urine with a humid loneliness” you said. “in debris of dark a group, tied together, dig. cockroaches churn blackened havens. with dirty string tied around their necks, they pocket mud covered diamonds. every step sinks them deeper. no easy task, this... only those with steel jaws...only fittest...” you said.

“Keep digging. Solution is there. It is. We found it before. Hit a rock.

Now fork's broken. No visceral sensation, here. Damn that mauve threat. Over here!"

"Why?"

"Becarse ere is de best spot to lay dee most attraptive trap. Not dere. Ere. Dere'll be no escape dis time."

"how are we going to get him down into this piss-hole of a cellar?" you said.

" 'S'not a ploblum. Ee's unaprepared ov ower plans. So's ees eazee meating fur uz to cannabullisiah"

"let's clean up this black-hole-of-ascending-pongs, purify air with scentiness, give in to sum light. Yu speakin' funny" you said.

"Am i? Mus be sense scentless. Zen ee wownt know itsere atall. No 'wow' affectin' stuff. No nuffings. Unawared, we'll ave im cooked to a burn-tup cinder fer an engleesh arfturnoon teaparty glut. Ee won't 'scape. No' dis toime. Tyme. Dat's de ansir! Make it cook out loike Time isself. Den it will wirk like clickworks."

"write yer R, mi leada." yu said

"Enuf of d leyder! It'll be yore tirn soon enuff."

"trap is carefully set, practiced in black arts as we are. we can now act in de most orderly of ways. no other manner will do trick. this those devious ones know well" you said.

*pain fills wiv blud
proddin needles 'urt
allreddy bruiseal skin*

"Got 'im. Got 'im good an proper. E is spiked, jus like I promise ee wood. Keep at it front man. You'sdoin'good."

"i see it now. undo me, you misfits! ok.. i admit you are, indeed, my masters in dat black arsehole art. can i escape your trap? you may have gone over the top this time. and not just to me."

"How dares you interrupt, wen dis hen's shoutang at yers? We tries negosheation. Yus jus wouldn't, wood yer? Push. Push. Push. Jus keepen on pushin. Now's time fer us to swipe yous owt".

"but, but, but...you silly old fart. you grotesque cube" you said.. "lots of true men, true women, want more, more, more of it."

"Liar. Liar. Liar. Liar. How d d d dare you!"

"i can show you" you said. "I can".

"Swipe out. Wipe out. Farce too late. Faze farcicals toos late. Yous condemd by yous own perversables."

"but....." you said

"No 'buts'. No this time. Yous been tride again mushy many times. Owt of yer open wound windup will come pun punish punishment. No interrogupshines! I propose yew t be euphemised sterilised lobotomised. Dose in favur....."

woden spatula

to beeeaaat a dissonance wiv

dee screw a gain tirns

"i can be hard, too, you know. ok, I admit it's been a good performance. if I tried to do it," you said, "it would probably be more lacksadaisical. So I can't get worked up over so..." you said.

"Takes 'im out! Euphani..."

"etc etc at my angry glee, result of manicuring a victimising trap there for all to see more forthright, more spitting, more presidential than frayed tapestries behind which they manoeuvre a dangling rope shown on live TV, a moment of abject despair for which there is no secret escape staircase after all, only a small warmth, a fire blossom, red with my red, beating with my beat" you said before you continued "moments are darkening into full-on lack of light on-stage where there's a long, long silence because off-stage i can hear a long long pain that, starting as a low rumble, builds into a crescendo so shrill, so prolonged, it churns blood of even student audiences into steam as see-through curtains close while, along their base, young flames grow in height, increase in strength, begin a cloud" you said for a last timely of time.

on a stretch table

this fly mastiff fist

bangs into sound

inside a branchscape

same oak trunk

walked through everyday -

spiderweb branchscape

“We? Inside a branchscape? That’s where we are? Inside an everyday spread-eagled, skyfilledbranchscape?”

“Yes. *What do you see?*”

“Digital fields. Flat. Feigning to be hills. Turn a full circle for a bit of 3 dimensional lark-about. Wiggle up to a filmscape sky, through moist depths, creamy breadths of pillow-counterfeiting clouds. Everywhere a web of distance. Aerial perspective is sandwiched space that slaps fading greys of brown fields. Wayward wheat-fenced furrows fanfare a wave, etc etc”. Got the idea?

Yes, as I fumble, stumble, even crumble behind hostile hedges stained with hair stiff blood of gap-toothed hares.

What do you see?”

“See a fosse that flatters course flotsam, castrated cats calling incoherently to war worn flesh of a German artists’ ravished yet ravishing doll¹. See a symphony of strings pouring from an orchestra of foxgloves, wet grass coruscating from scents of wild poppies, muddied residue slurry down a flush of river. See dialects of dew on dead nettles, first splash of red on a girl’s hairless nest.”

tight disarray

inside a spacescape

watch it redesign

“We? We are inside a treescape painting, that’s where we are. Just another everyday stretched, primed, paint-levered canvas”?

“*What do you see?*”

“See greens, yellows, purples, pinks, reds, blues of all tints, hues, shades. Cover a bland canvas with devices designed to disillusion. Try to cast a spell on everydayscapes. We have only just walked out of everydayscapes, significantly a different branchscape, a lateral leap from that to this? See it clearly now.”

“What do you see?”

“See paintbrush shapes of colours change colours by overlay or mingle. See lead colour contrast with complementary. Discords almost overwhelmed. See apparent distance. With what fluency see leads into adventurous reorganisation. See landscape distort layers. See unfamiliar unity. See space illusion. See colour of greys reduced in ways not conceived since Age of Golden Distantscapes. See paint applied appear easier than it is. See close-up colours deepen, contrast with everyday eventscape. See many forms processes determine product vivacious. That I see is what is.”

branchscape brushes

perspective aerial moved

by colour of ways

“We? We are painting a landscape, that’s what are we doing”. *“What do U C sea with waves astounding?”*

“See distance between, wood held, metal gripped badger hair in hands, fearful white canvas, problems in everyday landscape”.

“Yes. Can’t drag eyes away from eye coruscating colours moving from disorganised forest through which we are a travelling part. See spontaneous trails of tongue-licking paint, contrast of shapes, iridescent colours, even ballooning volumes.”

“What can U see in undressed sand sky sea-swelling a switch through to disguised hessian?”

“See order into hide. See to extract is difficult to anything resembling what like it is. That I see.”

amorphous body

inside painted bodybag

a web of branches

¹ Hans Bellmer *La Poupée* 1934

is nothing sacred, even?

question google -

why that leaf colour

why not that why not

“Why keep pinpricking? Who does not want to lean toward a ‘master/disciple’ apprenticeship, to follow unanointed godheads through a diminution that fractures etched skills? Even oxymoronic atheists learn not all things can forever be unsacred. Somewhere something may be sacred even after arguing against Godlike disguises. Even after that. It’s an initiation. What do you mean what do I mean?”

“What do you mean? What do...?”

“I mean disputatious. I mean unable for all time of time to stop even questioning questions. Have I, perhaps, got it wrong? If I have, then Moses is possibly as good a masked-up guy as anybody to ask”.

“Surely you mean Moses as metaphor, a stand-in fall guy.”

“Does it matter? Just let me beg to differ.”

“You really are something else.”

centre too centred

narrow page needs to move

to the other side

just out of season

flight of gulls
first hint of something fleeting
just out of season

Leave white cottage behind. Already a threatened Bay starts to heave. Green sweep turns crab dusty browns into mottled greys, like it is a map of headstones splattered with dull graffiti etched into incoherent patterns just able to move from this to that pirated shipwreck, from one ruptured mist to a moon's halo. High colours fail to infiltrate. Ragged cloud-like shapes drift, spread lower into just a row of cottages. Nothing stirs until that undercurrent beat of music waking. Just out of season.

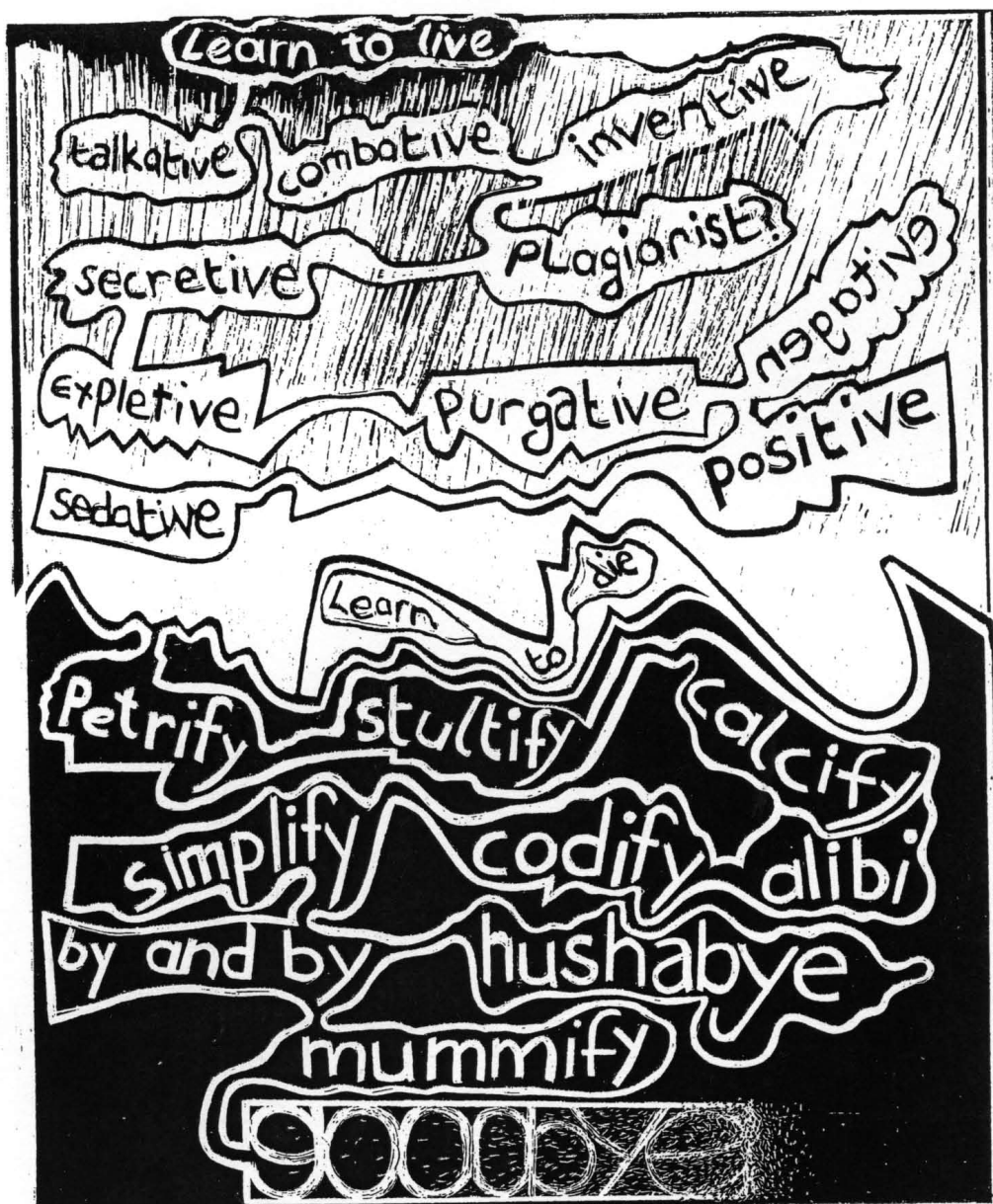
green beach hut
graveyard headstone grit
dissembles into greys

Despite low goings on, sounds of joy are just about awake on this downhill part of a fervent day. Almost passion. Eyes flicker as sounds emerge from a crustacean castle. Turbulent waves are on hold. Pulse slows into inaudible beats. Lovers live smiling songs. Down holes a drip, drip, drip of water enters absorbent roots.



Drift of clouds spread lower, weave into patchwork eiderdowns
of mauve bell heather. Stiffness flowers in her valley of architectural
moisture. Stones, overlaid with ossified lichen, rise over jellyrolls of
softblown winds. Her flesh flames into a Venus throb of burnished
seeds. Just out of season.

late blossom
flakes into dust
timepiece speeds up



then alive
now dead
his similar face

let me see what you did today

**where waters meet
lies a felled oak branch
still no reflections**

why?
because i...
see you see me?
i do not see you see me
do not?
why not?
because i...
because notes are written
in one session?
day in day out
let me see what you did today

**snake circles itself
wind that buffets
is buffeted**

what if what we just said wasn't said?
who says it was?
not me
why?
because i carp. because i more than carp
why?
because that is neither high nor low moral ground
WHAT?
how about this then: because best days never
repeat repeat repeat. never never no never ever ever
let me see what you did today

**spider skin
write quirky reminder notes
on torn paper scraps**

like it ease a strange of roome to view

*randome image
starte of somethinge strange
in a strange roome*

Like it is a strangest, an incomplete roome. Not a roam at all. Just a corner of one if truth is opened up like an oyster-fed shell. Edges do not meet at 90%, like oure rhyome. Less. More squashed. Like there is no rune for a pause. This is an implausible piece of roome. Above a dado rail it has worn, muffled William Morris wallpaper printed from original woodblocks (now catalogued museum items). Badly pasted, coloured inks slide. Faded edges fray. Below is peeling brown varnish. Around an unpolished door handle a circle of light has a lead role, like it is centre stage.

*aftere a stumble
blood drips upside downe
unknowne muscle retracts*

In semi-shadowe a flimsea girle kneels, backe bent forward. Eyes closed, hands tied too tight, grazed knees ooze blud. She hurts. Bared, pear-shaped, jung breasts move in time to rapide heartbeats. An older sistere pushes ostriche, goose, swan feathers into winged-shaped, chickene wire structures. Some pierce taute skin. Bloode spurts jets of red roundels into a cup of whisky-laced tea.

*indoore rose watered
teenage girls playe this strange game
until lighte concaves*

Another sister is seen through a gloom of shadow. One eye presses against a keyhole. she has a clear view of a robuste, foam-lathered horse rampaging around a muddy compounde. Excited, rearing front legs thrash air like whirring locusts. A layer of texture diminishes. Palomino, in a steame bath of frenzy, becomes a vigorous chalke line on a man-made hill.

*one neue excitement
change in a lithe body shape
begins to tune flightes*

Now, a beleaguered sky squeals, then explodes, like it is another bashed Big Bang. Humming vapour kettledrums into a crescendo. Dissonant wings overlap each other. A plethora of bald-headed vultures descend, shuffling dust in a running stop. Wild teenage legs of thate younger sister lose braine control. Entangled with a foreshortened floor, every part of her is covered in sweat. Hot steame rises from surfaces like she is a kettle of newly boiled water rising in heated width.

*numbe with a strung spraine
nonconfirmiste roome changes
wired alchemy*

This corner of this strange roome evolves seasick sounds whose darknesse is this jellyfish fear becoming. Distant Sunni of wildnesse closes in, prepares to jumble this tangy beach of protruding rocks, seaweed, salt stained air. This not yet really a strangest roome dissolves into specks of compressed energy.

This beginnunge is something big. I mean like big, **big, big.**

*heartbeat again speeds
reformed umbilical chords
change girls into birds*

lost seal

opaque light
single file procession
to the sands edge

Bay is grey rough. Short flashes of sun. At one edge of a tidal river, beside a small lake left by receding water, wild primroses tangle in wild grass. At high tide they are covered. We expect them to drown. They don't. Those who live close pass without a glance as they sidestep discarded underwear.

Want ter pick one. Jus one. Please. Pleeze.

You can't. They're protected.

Who'll know? There's no one around.

I will. You will.

That sucks. Daft. We yar talkin' one, 'ere.

I will buy you some tomorrow, when we get home.

F'getit. S'not de same. Yer never ever understan'.

Hair-wrapped faces tumble into a wet rowing boat, balancing bulky jackets, crusty bread, margarine free sandwiches, transparent plastic bags. With a push that wobbles we cast off. When it begins to float she begins to row. Not any great effort, just a soft extension. Everything else is still. Not a spouting of sound until a seal grunts, slips beneath seaweed smells of a gentle surface. Our heads are elsewhere. Slowly, smacked with small waves, a gold-leaf thin boat floats towards a fixed centre. Evanescent Island disappears.

slight pull of water
waves of salmon spawn
hint of battlegrounds

It's goin' t'be a cold evnin

Yes. This is about right. Throw a handful in. Just a handful.

Why is this about right?

It feels it. Does it really matter?

S'posenot. Here?

Yes.

Some fall onto wet shoes. As mist some drop into water. Lean over to watch. Most lie on a surface swaying with wavelets. Lazily, bits move down, not in a straight line but in curves criss-crossing. Fish suck in sinking food.

*soft tidal wave
residue flotsam lifts
into slow wind*

Wha woud we do if a seal cum up 'ere?

It wont.

But what if ...?

It wont.

Can I eat me san'wich now?

Yes.

Shadows sharpen. Ash settles.

*lost seal
below static water line
curved shadows sink*

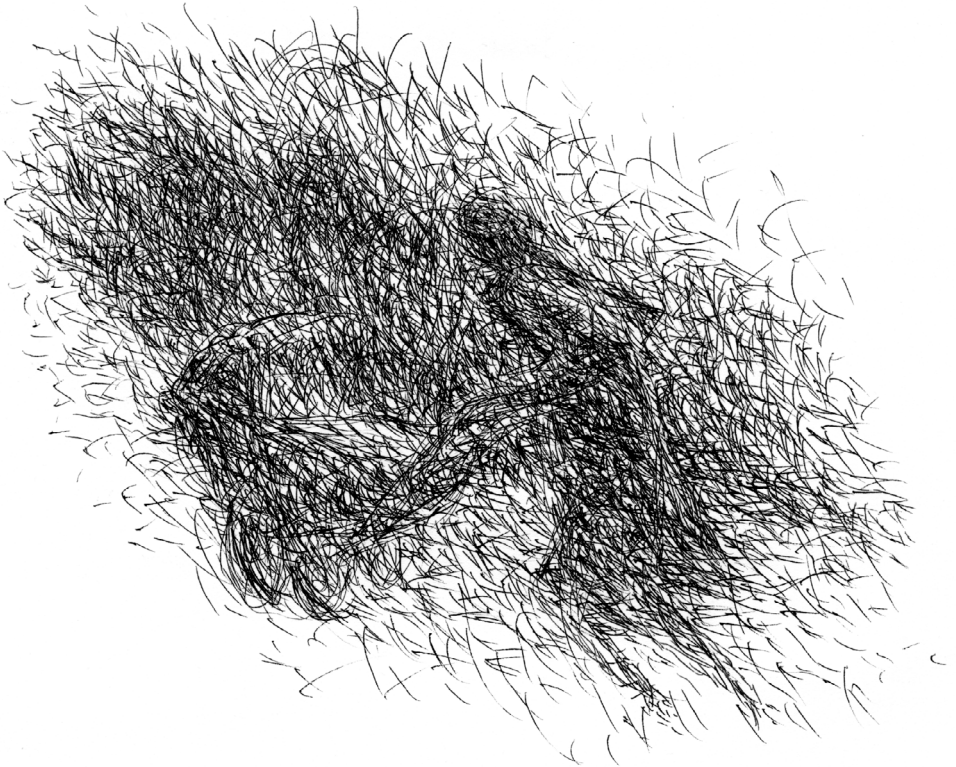
memory lane of clichés mine

*intense glance
rain cloud turns tide
in his favour*

Yet another fooling around in curled Memory Lane space? Time to call in inaccuracies? Hang onto a parachute? Over dramatic? Where are our smoochy-coochy cakes we loved so much?

Like his erratic heart, his unpreserved breathing, it is important not to be intrusive. Do not want to search out how's, why's, wherefores. Intrigued only by what happened to present tense past. Still hurts.

*garden pot
fills with old weather
tide in his favour*



Bitter tastes spread into a mirror image. Wonder why it still hurts.
At some point told of his memory of my birth date – 2 years before
event. Passport cross-examined for corruption. Memory is not simple,
that's for sure. Even with photographs of early flesh, mangled black
hair, recall is less than it could be. This newly dead guy cheated to
make different models. No, there are better memories.

*words fondled
as resolve stiffens
tide turns in his favour*

But memories, like fading songs, are made of this; posthumous
reference points. Footnotes attached to a jelly backbone. No, that is
not the real McCoy either.

*head music
castrates an old piano
tide turns against him*

mostly most days
are much like today
blank canvas painted white

‘Most days are mostly everyday. Every yesterday was mostly days of little learning, of yearning inside flutters of disappearance. Most days are strains of stress made pains into mostly slow decisions, a glide into bed in more or less one piece. Most days are not red tick days. Shopping, TV, over-eating, telling or not telling what should not pass for truth at double-edged thrust meetings, letting this or that slip by, unaware of being unaware of not churning what may well not be there to churn. Most days never display more than hints’.

no time for a face
to gather
black painted eyelids

‘Most days are metaphors’. “*Metaphors?*” ‘Of course. For mostly actions that might, in most days, act out another everyday worth of another everyday survival. Most days, in similar but different ways to breathing, acknowledge ultimate defeat’.

“*That’s pretty pessimistic, isn’t it?*”

‘Yes, mostly. Probably. Most days are so dull, so tired they cannot recognise victory in defeat, which demand far more of most days’. Probably lots happen on most days while, mostly, nothing much does.

dusk shifts
tiny mausoleum
mostly nowhere

Music Maketh Man - a walk on the pine tree side

so little sky

firm walk along a firm path

until it breaks up

It always starts off in this way. It is what happens after that, when a path subdivides. It is when these go into crazed arteries. It is then it happens. It is then time to sharpen points to sleek tips.

moon strapped

overture of a vixen

preface night work

Through twists of pine tree sound curves – music? Yes, indubitably. Not Pachabel. Not Monteverdi, Boccherini or Albinoni. Not even Bach. Not a toccata. No fugues, partitas, oratorios. There are chromatic chords, but not those exploited by even him. These swim under anchors of a fixed tonic that make it less secure. No cadences. No common chords. Devices of chordal progressions are jettisoned. Messiaen's fifth piano Prelude *Les sons impalpable du rêve* abandons tonal principle of harmony. I can hear it. Discords are not resolved. Notes no longer stand out. No sense of key. Yet not a nihilistic breakdown of sound.

pine tree makes music

twelve sounds which relate only

one to another

Deeper into new tracks. Twelve new tracks. 12 equal notes of a chromatic scale that harsh through leaves. New cohesion. Repelling tonality. Replacing it. Blindly it can be heard, blown wild, yet recognisably Schoenberg's *Variations*. It repeats. Know this section, like I know trees have musical prowess. Part again repeats 34th to 38th bars of the opening theme:

inside new scale

tribulation opens

into a vista

Is there a moral? 'There is always a moral' I tell them.

nearly Medusa

*black headed woodpecker
dust charged wind of a scorched sun
changes down colours*

*“This is a thing that happened before Monroe started maken the heads,
while he was still maken the naked ladies”.¹*

Nearly naked nearly dozing lying in a field of poppies as his cinema switches screens to winged Medusa, most human of three sisters. As usual, her momentous head writhes, not in agony but in shapes of restricted life. A convulsion of snakes, their every eye sharp into every dark shadows every hidden light, link body swaying flesh. Sometimes, in an intense jerk of hypnotic eyes, they shoot out stiffly. In a vacancy, this image always scares into his peculiar shape of shrivelled scragginess. No Titan Atlas turned to stone, I can turn her intense eyes, swirling snake coils, heat, into Pindar’s ‘fair cheeked’ or Ovid’s ‘beautiful nymph’ punished for being a victim of rape. Sense she is made from terror. Surely, not terror. Not **real** terror.

*hiss of snakes
others turned to stone
by her eyes of fire*

Have no idea why she forms such a large part of my other life, but there she is, an everyday feature of an unreal event to which we all bear witness. Have no idea where it comes from or how to hold back its intrusions. At first, being so insistent, thought it to be that tribal Jewishness which shows the code language of Yiddish communication able to sustain two contrary meanings. Never gets close to understanding.

*cracked table
smallest of flies
upside down*

Defiant atheist, there is no collusion with support systems that need a strange shaped Superman or three to assist living, to clap in death. He

does feel longevity inside shared genes, touching an internal museum, or a collection of ancient secret languages yet to be transcribed. Yet this emerging Medusa never stops being scary. Sobbing into Mother's protection, there is still a need to hide from dark nodules that rise to the surface of an adrenal gland, a writhing head.

*squirrel dares a grand leap
with first clap of knife cut hands
it bounds to home base*

If only, nearly naked, nearly dozing, lying in a field of poppies, I was too young to know. An unblessed sight of this up-front, mythic image terrifies because her vulva can be seen as it opens wide threatening to absorb. Now wants to be Perseus, repudiate an image so wondrously feminine. Without coming to terms with her viewpoint it would help to decapitate her, let this insistent image be gone forever. It would help to free her two children, Peg, who can fly to nevereverland, Chris, who will become a giant hero. Just as this is pictured, her blood spills onto seaweed, turning into Red Sea corals.

*kestrel hovers
hidden field mouse loses
one sided battle*

With one swish of an internal scimitar her head, too, is separated from a frozen body, lands close to a scarred seashore with a thud. There is a slow flow of spoiled sand. Eyes contort with exploding capillaries. Brow, already heavily furrowed, deepens with anger. Snake hair, far from murdered, coil, stretch, twist even faster until they reach a dervish dance-climax. Meanings change, but I am too scared to interpret.

*peregrine falcon
slower fast red kite
snatched into uplift*

Her fabulous body soon reforms, a scene that re-enacts with no end.

We batter at a deeply scratched wooden door, each time striking harder with more strongly cast hammerheads. Always it becomes **Μεδονσα΄ς** fulsome image, more realistic than my own mother, more involving, more inviting. Always, just after each first blow, she collapses into a pagan, underground blood river. Hidden, it divides up villages, towns, cities. Each reappearance is an insideout drowning.

*snakehead division
blood river coagulates
into renewed forms*

Town bred, in this flickering red field, nearly naked, nearly dozing in near fusion with a female fold of cliff that welcomes tide spurts, rearrival is a new interruption. With a penetrating smile she destroys his simple desire to meld with poppy heads ready to explode their seed. Her eyes streaked with snakeskin become more penetrative green fusion. She shuts them in a futile attempt to shut sight. Ginger lines spring up, but fall into disrepute before her strength. Air surges in gurgle sounds of a background Requiem. She stares at buckler fern. Pulls down silky clouds to shut out film fiction. Turns into an electric light. Boils a kettle. Makes a cup of decaffeinated coffee. In silence, watches a television film. Yawns.

“*This is a Way, I suppose,*” he says, trying to convince himself to move sideways. Turns her off as an electric light. Bulb explodes. “Stupid boy. Drives himself out of his head this way as long as I can recall.” His wild-eyed, curl twist hair mother again.

*for a scared man
not even half grown up –
un peu exagéré*

¹ *The Naked Lady* Madison Smartt Bell *from the Crescent Review*



糯米酒

Nor Mei Chiew

This wine can be white and yellow. It is dry, strong and used in the cooking of game. Women drink the wine after they give birth, as they believe it helps them regain their strength. It is made from glutinous rice.

nor mei chiew
cooking wine
or elixir



not another Ark

*call in a wild sky
far from this overloaded boat
there may be land*

Look at a rear window. Still raining. 40 days 40 nights. Rain, rain, rain of biblical proportions. Through a thicker sheath layer images of ancient desertscapes are invisible. Anything physical corrodes inside unfamiliar tensions of wetness. Risen sea becomes a new horizon a new way of life. Flooding is a visual trap. Though safe we are scared. Very scared. Fear makes us cry out to Him.

*call in a wild sky
far from this overload
there may be a chance*

Notebook

Dear undying -
Sometimes it's hard being me. Just like what you
kind of said about the

Today I bought a book of American
post-modern poetry. I thought it would be 50¢
it was going to be a graphic design book
"The Art of Looking Sideways" But now
it is not the art but this one.

managed to snatch a letter from the
market. Then the ark
et
So I sat and waited.
Thinking outside the box may
no longer be thinking outside the box at all.

Feel angry (ish) about
something. Maybe the cuts.
Probably not.

Then you sat next to me.
Then you shaved me,
and we smiled.

a diary
bags of space
fill every page.

notes for something

Metropolis of ants spread over his Wellington boots. Knows all sense of rhyme has been lost. It is time to scratch at a period that lacks passionate feelings. But this morning cannot rack up sufficient strength.

“I’m cracking up, cracking, cracking up” he whispers to his internals, half hoping nothing notices.

*he went to the park
when conveniently dark
trod in the muddle
of a lover’s cuddle
and a half forgotten quark*

Studies another seemingly unfinished painting. Wild, wind-stormed trainscape rushes us across a beyond. Hints at some godly omniscience, but no more than that. Want it to be a high call of a humanism depicted in a way that dematerialises solids, that merges natural elements. It is my task never before undertaken by paint, brush, fingers, rags, oil, thinners, impasto, glazes. Thought to inhabit with more people but block that decision. Occasional figures are small, a device to lead eyes to where it most exacerbates such vastness of a molten landscape. It is with that they must empathise. Journey, identified with a swirling landscape of colours, makes distant horizon a line to move away from. Here, highest mirage is an achievable possibility. It’s 1844. Colour arrangements are dramatic, incandescent. Impact will change sensibilities. For many painting seems unfinished long after I know it is. This has been a tortuous journey travelled alone.

*after a blast storm
foundations crack
institute still stands*

Wrote an almost illegible note: *impossible not to brak rules. whose? should there be a military language? “demilitarise”, that’s wot I says. there is order in mi werk, an order dat makes unsolids of solids, or a diffrent shape of solid. reynolds said to me wen dis year’s royale*

ercademy exhibishone opened: "turner, yer wurk perplexes me." "dat's not ur problem, joshua, dat's wun good soulootion. it's god to be perplex. my paintin is ur success." he slid away, looking perplex. is it possurble to do errorless wirk? i never start wiv idear ov order or disorder but with mood, colour as evocashon. it's so obvious. does it matter that it is not immediately fathomable? i pour everything away. all i came to distil i distil. my view is not looser, more elliptical. it is structured. they have but to manoeuvre a fraction. visit 'er again. she remove er clothes. agin i can't look or no look. again she undress me. no i look ridioolus. don't care! i'm payin. known er for yers an' yers.

*fast forward
in ambiguous painting
colour bursts open*

Last time I believed god powered though me skylines was drawn with a meat cleaver, mauve globes tried to escape a translucent cube, someone, somewhere wrote "*Names from their death industry I carve on stone*". No, I am nay wearing ur hat. A butterfly *does* cause a whirlwind. Clouds are boxed in by reddened light. Breasts are sacrificed in everyone's game of chastity lost, while some claim touchable evidence god painted my *Rain, Steam and Speed The Great Western Railway*. Hell! They will be saying next he isn't cruellest of cruel; that it's only a wizened man's sickness we ave to somehow understand. I say "damn such crookedness, damn this cruwellest of men!"

*unscented flower
when closed lips are red with blood
limp poppies blacken*

nothing happened

*cold moon light
shadow lengths curve
against graffiti*

“*nothing is for nothing*” we were forever being told way back then when grabbing at something for nothing seemed an OK payback for such a bleak start-up.

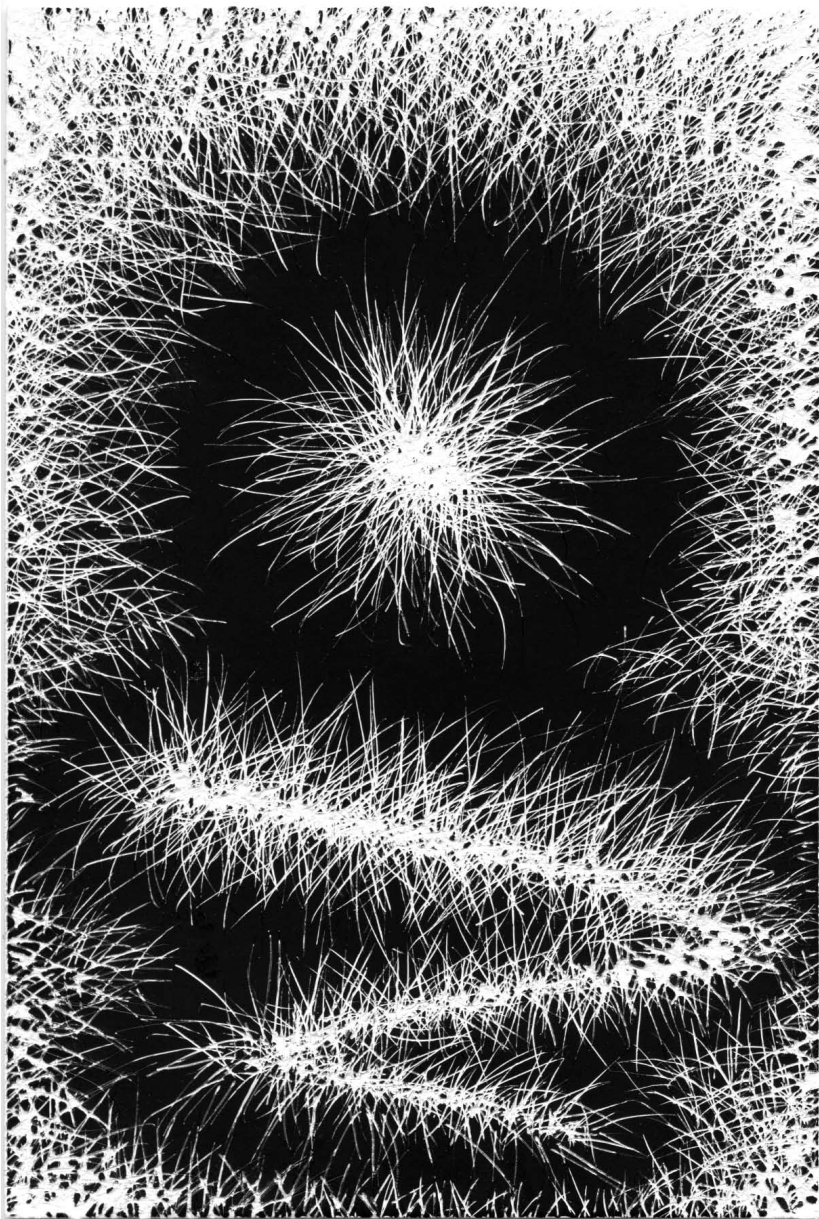
*adrenaline spurts
from inside an inside gland
an outside blankness*

at this battleaxe time one viable alternative is to get a handle on what it would be like to advance a theory of **hero of nothing** *lived* out on a dull bedroom stage not that it can be a full blown theory because as i told U **nothing is something** if you grasp my meaning. meaning i am not so maybe sure.

*no ready camera
waits to photograph
biggest bang ever*

this particular **nothing as hero** happens on a night when a universe blasts into unforgiving. happens so only remnants of a smoking gun remain to tell about it. you know how imagination works when caught out; images change events, speed from behind eye screens as fast as emails take to arrive, what newspapers say: “*in a flash it was all gone*”

there i am walking over to your place. usual pace. same space. as usual. **BANG.** it is over. not even sure i heard it because soon i am hero wriggle-writing-about-it. “*it is only one BIG BANG bumping into itself in order to play catch-up with such ridiculous fast expansion.*” no it was not i but hindsight journals said that. or **was** it me when stained glass making in that newest of Royal College of Art buildings, dreaming of a wild life with an amateur’s splash dollop of anarchy?



thunder closes in
from history to prophecy
actions change

so **who** was it nearly said “time present time past are perhaps present in time future. time future is also contained in time past.” *its my hand in the air. look at me sir. here sir.* yes. you with a flagellating hand. *perhaps it...maybe it was...spit it out boy. its that bitter old bigot t s eliot that's who.* in what? *in in in...* come on. we haven't all yesterday afternoon to waste. ‘burnt norton’. *it was in 'burnt norton'.* at last boy.

ash smoulders
from brain excitement
sudden flame

know this is not that. definitely not that. now it has all been cleared up cleaned up spruced up. no longer state architecture made from starched newspaper it is an aged shell full of puff with little glitz made of glass mirrored from inside. now every bleak imaginings are likewise viewed.

from today will rarely remember you. promise. did anything happen *after* those squashes slid me into your open middle road which spread pace into my space? **nothing happened.**

post bang consultant
operations may just be
a tale of success

1 yer o.l...was:sting

mr yous-fit-me
is a 1 ^{to} ~~plan~~ ^{blendin'-in} ~~plane~~ plan
to muck-usix-easy-a ^{going} gooin
but it's foikes ~~dee~~ man/she
oose furrows ^{trails} ~~el~~ own ditch
~~beyond the ^{taper} mound of~~

X pees on yous-fit-me ^{poohies}
poohymms

^{spread}
~~Speed~~ ^{turn} ~~your~~ line in ^{to} curves
X ^{your} ~~per~~ stock shares ^{ings} into upside down
an' ~~(throw on) dreamst~~
practice as 'ard as yer can
when the west meets east
an' north north touches south

yer can wear a ^{yellow?} ~~white~~ glove on one
hand, a black on d over, a ~~started?~~
✓ sock with a complementary green
splodge on the left tols area,
a blue 'an orange-striped
one on the right, X make

✓ an ~~unassuming~~ occasion,
~~but~~ an ^{unassuming} ~~suspicious~~ scene
of partying with yerself
in a newish kinda ^{air} ~~unf~~ dance

only empty

*cordite flash splits cloud
from blind games of ancient greeks
to mouthful of words*

only empty beginning. yet empty is not aware of beginning or what it is to be empty or not. she is empty but is not aware because that is all she has been. or so it seems. maybe to her too. only she knows. does she?

*another blind flash
more games of possibles
before night fills night*

empty is now only inside dark. only now empty is full of sound. she does not hear this sound. vibrations are too fast. only animal hears it. animal hears it in his sleep. twitches. only in his sleep. his hearing sleep.

*moon movements
shape shapes of her dreams
dog ears flicker*

night she is full of pictures. she does not remember. she is scared of drunken gang attacks. round after round of machine mouth fire. somewhere a group seem set on stopping her new army of repetitive sounds regrouping.

*gigantic balloon
in a room of explosions
it is blown up*

only time i saw him cry

sudden flutter

of a sun coloured butterfly

stagelights dim

*(Eretz Israel: Birth of a Nation. State of Israel opens for business May 14, 1948. 4pm Tel Aviv Museum, 2pm England. The United States and Soviet Union are among the first to grant recognition.) **only time i saw him cry.** That night the army of Arab neighbours launch an assault by land and air designed to exterminate this ancient alien birth. Months of fierce fighting follow before the attempted foetal death fails for the first time.*

declaration made

property pages highlight

rising price of land

perspectives

walk lone walk
tree based mosaic
harbours danger

perspective 1

follow Glen Catacol to flat stones. tread with care. ankles twist.
hands flick. who doesn't know someone whose feet disappeared
under disguised pools of water formed in a near secret night? more
squelch of slosh mud.

see much that is small, that is low; scuttling lizards, coiled adders,
frog leg tensions, bees rummaging disturbed bell heather, pulpy
caterpillars that, unless eaten by coiled snakes hidden in bracken,
will change shape, colours, style to become ergonomically efficient,
flight-enabled, short-lived Emperors.

waterlogged spread of buckler fern disassociates from simian
gestures. rowan berries are below. peer down. within a frail sound
all have gone.

microscopic view
tiniest elements *grow*
out of proportion

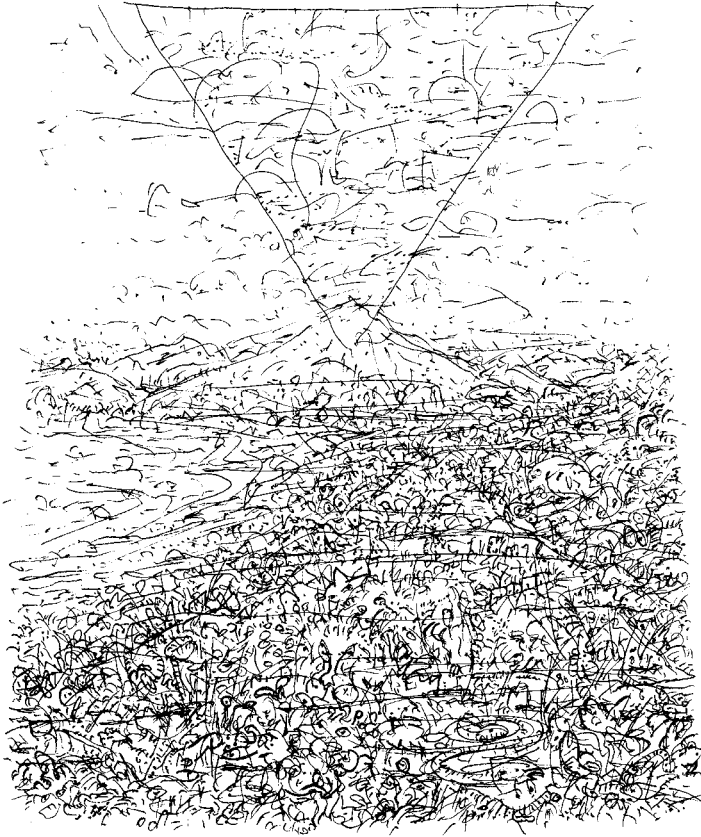
perspective 2

rib cage downside, lie on a flat rock. repetitive water sounds at
eye level are close on their downward rush to an endless spray sea. lie
on a middle rock. just over there water hits boulder planes, sculpting
out lines of speed.

reverse perspective -
linear or aerial
no more effective

perspective 3

lie, back down, on most angled rock. eyes follow then collapse
into an undulating line of crests on both river sides. strung across
are receding clouds that cling to summits as soft pinks speckling into



orange. these leak light, but others snuffle down slopes inside a hush
of mid-afternoon. Further into a greying distance Isle of Kintyre
separates from thin lines of sea.

*stand close to turns
world away from
a grain of sand*

perspective 4

upright on a Centre rock. bowl earth. sky a full 360°.

*tall crest moves
blemished talisman
as ancient grave*

perspective 5

on. across. rock-wobble-balance. water throbs into a future ravine. on. to glean diomhan nature reserve. over to beinn taruinn. look down on rowan trees, on gorge, on waterfall, landshapes, skybits, thumbprints of olden times ploughmen, a sea rim spreading beyond lands drowned, fishing boats sunk, fossils of words hidden inside throats gasping for a next gulp of air.

collage puzzle

from small piece to large

an incoherence

perspective 6

try for semblance of sense. how to tie one bit to another. was any one perspective more expressive? did one linger in this slight wind, pursue or, carried away, edge into an harmonious mosaic? who knows? i try sewing this angle to that corner of sun as it twines over a length of silence. secret roots enter a soul cleansing mikveh that contains one measurement of water for each of forty years purification Israelites underwent before they could enter that long promised land.

fruit empty rowan tree

an unclean man

his ground plan buried

perspective 7

with black white, all colours in-between, from perspectives that have been are now or yet to happen, this is a combination to beat them all. From a knotted text this will be precise evolution from hairy caterpillar, through pupa, to camouflaged butterfly.

puffed dandelion

knows how rivers travel

shadows again lost

plain of wheat (a haibun parable)

*From the east
men and women march
stones block the well*

Heads bowed, large numbers make The Great March, as it became known in later retelling. After years of confused searching here it is, flat dough of plain extending beyond length of human sight. For millennia underground waters soften even sharpest edges of stones. Their well remained blocked for years.

*From someone's east
biblical mid-west is met
rain reshapes round stones*

Two groups of leaders see that, beneath this stone covered surface, earth is semi-fertile. Animals are excited by frozen smells of water. One small family group say, "here we can grow grapevines". Another, much larger group, says, "no, this is where we shall grow wheat. We shall feed everyone with our bread". One small family group member reminds them "we cannot live by bread alone." Predictably, they turn away.

*From the east
many people arrive
sow wheat seeds*

For years hidden in rare belongings, coveted grain seed is earthed. And earth is kind. They start on removing stones that cut their feet. Vast is the plain. Their task endless.

*From the east
water flows dead are dead
for the lack of it*

Wheat flourishes. Each stalk, at each moment of changing seasons, is identical to its neighbour. And people are, in a delicate way, joyous. They dance through wheat about to be harvested. They stand on large rocks. See for many kilometres. Again they dance, believing

themselves in a heaven that stretches beyond a high cloud sky; above what, it must be said, frightens them.

*From the east
wet earth grows rewards
thirst quenched*

But that one with uncouth hair, that same One who moves a peregrine hawk's speed, again suggests they grow a vineyard. Again rejected. But this One can scan extended plains of wheat, select jewel seeds deep hidden among chaff. Such vision enables water to morph into wine and even beyond. But not here.

*From magnetic east
three fingers point skyward
heat source renews*

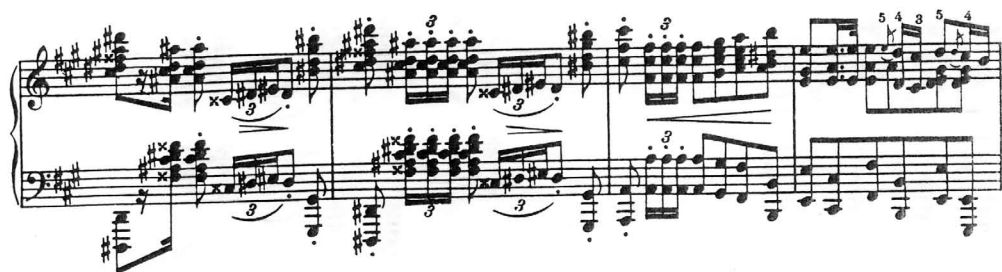
This One, increasingly invisible, is able to translate distant words, turns solids into space in plains of wheat that will never become a vineyard. Three shapes emerge from their manacles. They bend a larger arc, reach an endgame, begin another. More complex, they are at odds with their surroundings. If seen, tied to a stake, they will be burnt alive or suffer another finito.

*From a high point east
three from one beginning
shock waves earth bound*

One person tries to smile. One person is silent. One person knows they are three. All know One is a small but complete number. One knows it has been zero and is now three. One knows that has meaning. Two suffer.

*From east of Eden
new language combinations
increase confusions*

polonaise op 40 no 1



private view

umbrella of stars
wall hung portraits
watch watchers

Wednesday. Early evening dark. London's Leicester Square. Packed. Such a level of hustled, high-pitched speech. Fatty fast foods eaten. Couples connect, jostle, shout at mobile phones. Cinema queue widens. Case-hardened, slow moving, well-advertised police cars parade, manoeuvre between noises.

plumage of tame birds
spread into opera shapes
colours massage

National Portrait Gallery is no different. Expensive cameras flash light intensity into pigeon speckled sky. Designer dresses glide through ornate, catwalk doors. Flamboyances collide in relaxed dissonance. Dressed-to-impress, creased smile gay look-alikes kiss spectacularly. Rich Art Collectors, accompanied by buoyant offshoots, celebrities, middle-aged writers, aged ex-art students flow up carpeted stairs, mix with rich Art Dealers. It is all mingle, all jangle. Penguin attendants spread drinks, ply vetted guests with expensive nibbles. "Sorry, food ends here. Wine, too." Beyond is Exhibition.

vegetarian
paint eats exotically
into older foods

For tonight he is wearing a made-to-measure pinstriped suit. Kissed by those who kiss. Cuddled by those who do not. Peristaltic smiles squeeze through. Coddled, he quietly expands as crowded breathing filters into satisfied glows. A new conglomeration of bodies manoeuvres into convivial positions. Hope it goes unnoticed. Catch his eye. Butter-slip through groups of pastiche groups into number one exhibition hall.

early work
c ple arrangements
om
x
made to look easy

Etchings. Turned that heavy Victorian Press wheel for this for that one - A Rake's Progress. Draughtsmanship, designs, contrasting thickness of lines, variety in depth of acid bite, managed misbalance of spatially inverse or reverse perspective, simultaneous surreal viewpoints. Such fluid intensity. Tensions disguised to achieve off-centre arrangements. Meanwhile, hovering in background quivers is a sub-surface misogyny combined with prolific creative output that is a smouldering Spaniard in Paris. Less sign of any conceptual baggage.

magic template
able to justify
so much work

Next to me snappily dressed post-middle aged men with coiffured grey hair talk talk talk. They have fields of missing sound to harvest. Further along an early dealer hovers, back to a full-length portrait of himself. "Hello, K. How are you? You're looking good. Your 'Wider Perspectives' exhibition is needed, now!" "That exhibition was a long time ago." "1985." Smiles dryly. Turns his head. Tanned, he looks his older age.

cliff edge
in all directions
fashions on show

Group of mock-kiss women mock-cuddle. Walk catwalk shapes. Even beyond top skills of manufacture they are beautiful. Hair movement chemically stilled, stalks us streaming wild hairs. Built tall tall tall they wear short short short skirts that cost my forever. They manipulate space with fashion style elegance. Then those shoes shoes shoes. Individually shaped with coloured high high high heels. Subtle make-

up fills issues of flossy glossy Magazines. Stare at this pinnacle of chatter-group-genre. They don't look at anything; seem incapable of stopping their eccentric squawk talking. "Who are they?" I whisper. "Models. Go to everything. Part of their job. Agencies become Friends of this, Friends of that. Need to be seen by money."

facial image
financial lives
full of games

Gallery shop is filled with a pot-pourri of Who's Who. Many many many mementos; Celia Birtwell hand-painted scarves, calendars, magnets, mugs, ashtrays. Even portrait sticks of rock!

"You don't have to buy the book, you know?" she semi-whispers, handing back a Debit card.

"Don't I?"

"It's part of your leaving pack."

"Each of those models gets a...?"

"Yes?"

stare at shelves
fairy tale prints
stare back

He moves towards a portrait of choice. Jostles of amateur photographers. Small drawing of a dachshund, Stanley, now a breathless skeletal grey. Until arrival of a second, he was often only other living being inside a busy studio. Sees me enter. Beckons. Squeeze through red sea snake wave that parts in unGodlike shoves. Stand close, a right arm enwrapping, small framed drawing on my left. Sea of waved cameras try to backtrack memories, wondering who... when did...what did...

blue shadow
over a background
his breath close

With a turn of head, says quietly, “To Stanley, the live one.” Blinded by flashlights, feel calm of his kiss on a rose-heightened left cheek.

complete artist
an abundance of gifts
given sideways

Leave. Follow back views. Shaped walk of multi-imaged Celia, seamless Lulu, film stars laid bare on photographer-packed pavement, outrageously vibrant Vivienne Westwood, feline pack of tall, tall, tall gift-pack-carrying fashions-in-motion. Slither between shadows.

star of raindrop stars
painted birds
angle into rain

QandA

Q oil spillage?

A same place
as last year

Q What has been your most unlikely ambition?

A To be Oliver in early film version of Oliver Twist

Q What happened?

A Didn't know how to get to wherever it was you went to be
looked over by whoever it is who looks over you in order for
you to be considered

*heart beats faster
film version
as if not for reel*

Q Who got the part?

A Don't remember his name. If I did, would work hard at
forgetting it. Much repeated television repeat repeat repeat
since so know he was thin blue-eyed angle-cheeked sharp-
nosed true-blond with an irreducible accent

*Q is there a curve
in the spiders web?*

A moon moves round

questions?

open knife
now in a closed position?
no answer

Walk to his exhibition¹
Asks a question

“how...mean
...what direction
do you think
critics will go?”

Much worse than predicted

“do you think those critics killed my wife?”

Islamic patterned courtyard
Cannot help but stare
There in a circular centre
like a painted statue
of an ornamental peacock
superimposed on macho colours
is a layer of mosaic jewellery
Does its tiny head lift
into a skin rending scream?
Disturbed air moves us on

male display?
hypnotic layer
of jewelled colours

¹ Ron Kitaj – Retrospective, Tate Gallery 1994

rumours, of course

balloon theory
held between knees
bats weigh dimensions

“It is rumoured that somewhere inside this fortress of spruce trees exists an unfamiliar range of activities.

You must now discover what it is”

“*Why me?*”

“You’re next on her list”

“*What list?*”

“This list” he says, poking me hard with nail doctored fingers. Before setting off I ask if there are any indicators.

“Yes, but it is confidential information divulged after me, Mr Very Important Treasurer, checks your expenses claim.”

“*What expenses? How many comrades who have ridden this ride into blind weights have returned with any information or leads? If so, why not show me?*”

His face deadens, disappears inside a committee of weird volunteers who, backs to each other, nibble fingernails.

waiting room
grabbed passing smiles
weigh less here

Believing it would be for all their bests in this most ungrateful of all possible worlds I set off. Travel deeper into a crackle of codes. Slither through swathes of honey temptations, shift tiredness several latitudes into new highs. Inhaling fears, there is help in climbing high. A rich darkness squashes closer but thinner air is even friendlier.

cloud dimension
new moon filters through
weightless spruce trees

Then other noises. Whisper “*Is that you? Is there anyone there? If there is please show yourself. I am a soft friend with little taste even when seasoned*”.

“Of course I’m here. Here, of course, is where we live. Enmeshed in woodland we are vegetarians. Of course you are welcome to join us in a high land leaf feast, but, of course, you must first be weighed.”

“Weighed? Why? Whatever for?”

“Of course I must weigh you. That is what I do”.

All I see is dimness. Even used to black’s ferocity, her mist thin shape, low-key solidity still surprises. Make out her youthful hands that flow through hovering, misshaped weighing machines. Weights are different size balloon balls, coloured, sparkling, ethereal. Multi-pockets of jumbled air, coloured points are prime constituents.

*light speed carousel
rotates in four dimensions
a weight equation*

“Of course you sit on scales. How else to weigh you?”

“It’s not grounded. Will it take my weight?”

“Of course, but, as it is market day, you must, of course, hurry. There is a weightless mass of customers waiting. Yes, of course they want to buy scientifically up-to-date techno balls, or replace over-exercised ones for others with less substance. If I spend much more time on you they will, of course, drift away. My sisters will then, of course, beat living dark night light air out of me.”

“Is that what you do - sell weights?”

“Of course – you’ve asked me that. What else can I do?”

“Your unforgiving forest abounds with rumours, you know.”

*new spruce tree s t r e t c h e s
ancient dimensions even lies
are weighed*

“Of course. Tell me what you think you have heard, even though, of course, I know. Of course, tell me. Do tell.”

“It is rumoured you have built a weightless weighing machine that weighs problems, ghosts, distances, toe-to-head of those who believe they are without problems, that can navigate, manipulate, ruminate, cogitate into that half sleep by which something can be done through subterranean activity, delivered behind private stage sets spread across corners of a

darkest spruce tree forest. These are some of many rumours that abound on my upward journey to you."

"Not bad, of course. Of course, not good, either. Of course I sell weights. All hell would be let loose of course if I didn't. I would, of course, never appear again..."

*weight specialist slave
multitasks 24 hours
fleet of dimensions*

"Slow down, slow down. There is no one else here."

"Of course there is, but thank you so much. Must catch my breath. Here it comes. Watch out. **Bend.** Got it of course. Caught within soft teeth of course. That's better. Where was I? Yes. I sell weights, but mostly weigh things."

"What do you weigh?"

"Anything my eye catches. Sometimes they move too fast but, after years of regular practice, I am pretty sharp. Quite an expert, in fact. Not much gets past me."

"What do you weigh?"

"Weigh solutions against problems, present as it is propped up by pasts. Weigh what-ifs, if this is as it is or if it is a bit that. Even weigh what is weightless, not that there is much gentleness to be found anymore because every empty body is so apathetic. I've weighed every thought, passion, idea, every about-to-be action he, she or you have had or are ever likely to have, then, now or in your future. I weigh all sorts of weird odds, curious ends, man-made erotic bits in-between. All is grist for my weightless weighing machine".

*thick dimension
covers her thinness
nothing else remains*

"As you discovered a corresponding wavelength you may, this weightless time, go in peace, especially because you willingly accept wave formations of forgetfulness that will tremble through you for evermore. Without this, you would be composted into an edible mulch".

*“Thanks. Before I forget. Why **so** inside a forest? It’s bizarre.”*

“If Garrett Lisi snowboards wearing a lab coat while edging toward a theory of everything based on a 248-dimensional structure we know as E8, my weighted answer is a weightless Why Ever Not So Deep Inside Forest?”

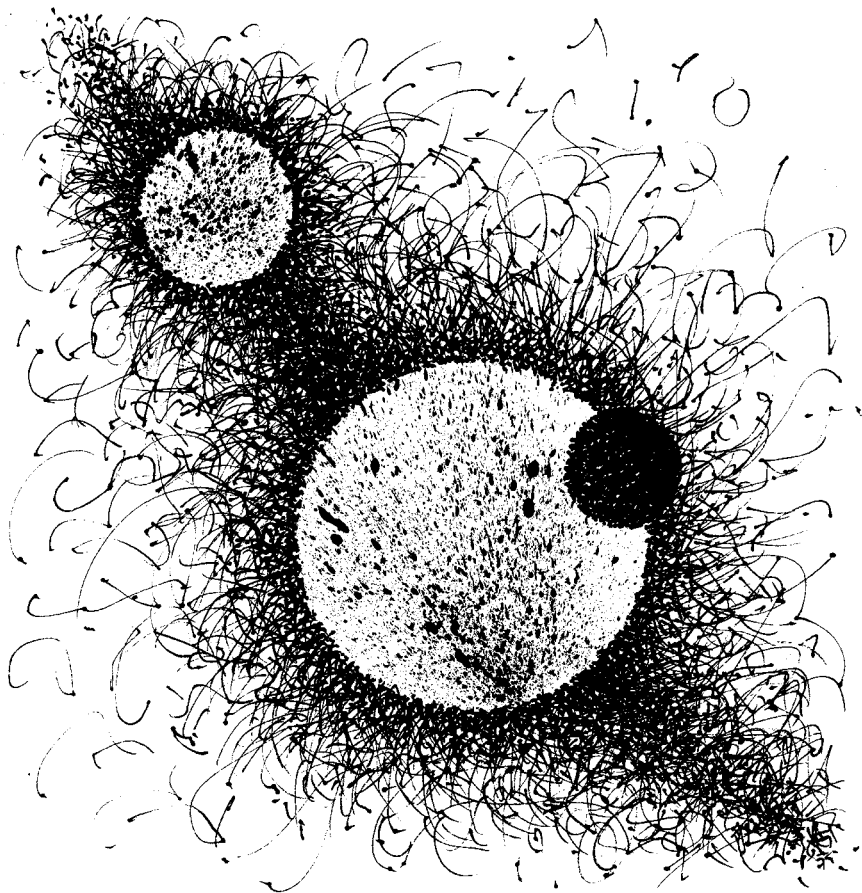
*one weight too many
her dimensions
forever float*

scared in an uplifting way

*from a scarecrow
confusion expands
scared birds scatter*

When young enough to be nervous of dark *and* light, ghostly powers are part of everyday. Able to frighten but never lethal, they glue together groups of secrets less available to reason. Through them high-pitched games are practiced.

*see through a snow veil
into a night of dark light
everywhere shadows*



Rapid eye movements lead to transportation. Squeezed eyelids, increase chances my room will begin to swirl, which can affect a crinkled townscape, half seen, indeterminate. Timing is unlikely power source. Even when elevation is solely physical there is a rotational blur that turns into a mix of anticipation, excitement, manic behaviour, acid perception.

*Egyptian eye curve
calls from herds of three tone doves
return thin echoes*

Here is found a galaxy rushing away. So great is magma of possibilities that some say it is a suckling child exploding into laughter. For others, it is a semi-scientific theology of cause after effect.

Who yet knows?

*early ghost -
under blankets touches hide
inside dark lightness*

seepage

shared night
sudden seepage surge
kills them

seeps into every entrance
every exit
drained holes fill
drenched trenches
picture attic wishes
turn to dust
her marriage his clothes
are covered with it
spindly old men
bedraggled
at last succumb
to stories that
have always been lies
all this alongside children
who play ickle tickle touchy games
in an improvised private dark
where all manner of peculiar things
seep into what will become of them
when seeping underground
waiting for trains
to carry them into a black hole
never to ever be seen again
never ever again ever

gas spray
filters through unprepared skin
bonfire of books

shadows and souls

*dash of light dark
mixed with weighed mirror souls -
cook for 2 hours*

At first I fought for his shadow, believing it to be a soul because then I believed in souls, secret until released from a wanton mesh of flesh-covering bone into some invisible somewhere for some unspecified purpose. But this fleeting shape undresses one grey from another, like a chameleon. It fights me as if (but I cannot be sure) it resents being mistaken for a soul, dislikes being subsumed in attributes that have little to do with it. Shadows, as we know my love, do beautiful things until half faded by a half jaded sun. When a moon ripens smells add shadowy dimensions. If these are from weeping figs little we can do will dry their leaves, even if they sway, even if they overlap plentifully.

*soul of nettle soup
deep red of early berries
into wet shadows*



she lives

*imprint of a dove
flat front view
on a large window*

through a bleak century, with its hurts, its
cruel men, transparent women, nights of
dull image lows mixed with days of high
drama, she lives inside a drenched family,
inside their woes, inside a feeble daylight
that moves towards a full-stop long before
she, a stranger, departs.

*last flutter
brittle beech leaf
long abandoned*

shouts within

pebbledash night¹
sky coil on coil
of poised adders

Night storm flows an electric current towards her house. He waits. She waits. Between impermanent shrill sounds they hear tentacle notes. She turns. He turns. They can wait no longer. Her eyes squeeze a bleached sight into vibrant insight. She shouts. He covens his ears. Sheets of handmade paper swirl around a dustbowl floor. Land at her feet. Dirty butterflies rumple into a descent. Still she shouts. Not quite a scream. He covers his ears, squeeze eyes into vibrant insight. A raw storm slits his throat, stifling inside cries for help. Holds his neck with taut hands, squeezing somewhere low inside. Surges of metal forge deeper. Sounds on hold, she shouts at his forced breathing, now also on hold. Lengths of coiling wind move into a strangled desolation. Globe eyes touch sheets of handmade paper that have begun to levitate. Constellations of rusty nails fall through her tin roof. They rattle in harmony with a cloud of twisted leaves visible through rips in uprooted trees. His extinguishing body, smothered in damp detritus, trips over a trick blend of distorted shapes. He expires. Bleached sheets of handmade paper expire. Her shouts expire. Shouts of a night storm expire. Rough edges of wind rustle. Slight moonlight sways. She bags up his body.

dies within a storm¹
knew it would happen
one day within

¹ stanley pelter and jeffrey woodward



the last dragon

festival hall

restored wallpaper

shapes the myth

The last dragon in Wales was killed in Newcastle Emlyn. Did you know that?

Have heard it said, hereabouts.

Mind you, it was long ago. Long, long, long ago.

Why are they so tenacious about it?

There are good reasons. It is a truly stylish dragon. Uniquely Celtic, it must be said. There is not anywhere a kite-like glimpse of Chinese. Throw in other bits of lopsided myths, you cannot but admit they have good reason to hang onto it.

Did the dragon come first to suffuse soulful memories or did they phoenix it from embers of flexing desires?

It was so long ago. Who would know?

Where I went to buy bread, cheese, milk? Where they were given a £10 note? Where, drifting into Welsh, they gave me change for five? Where they didn't even mind arguing the toss.

The very same.

How do they know?

Suspect it is the wrapped-up gift of ancient lore that passes time. Next year is the big one. Next year is the first Festival that will, at last, see the dragon return to Wales.

Yes, they said. It is the Celtic 1000th Anniversary of thee yeare learned Druids, crafted from the inexplicable arts, predicted it would be possible fore it to be borne againe.

You know about that, too?

welsh flag blows in waves

coded reminder

display

of an ancient time



*poppy seed blocked duct
empty molluscs and brain waves
begin a next scene*

*meal simmers
yet more overcooked greens
and black deeds*

acid attacked rose
dictators tiny power
stains petals

civil war face
an anguished death
freezes distortions

the man who would be king

*prize still out of reach
crown sits on a gilded throne
guarded by werewolves*

“they are never going to get the better of you again. not ever, ever” a curved reflection, looking more like a hazelnut sundae than a face, ripples up to him.

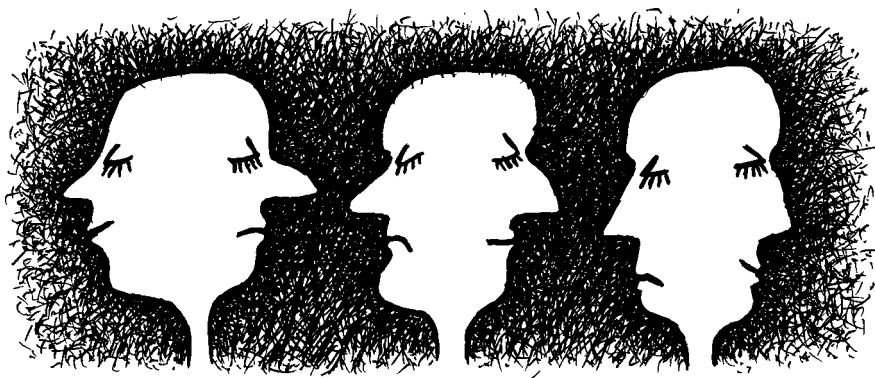
“you sure?”

*“i am. when i say **never** i mean **never**.”*

So begins his rather mixed-up story in which a face really does sometimes disappear or become a flat road map or more like a hazelnut sundae reflection.

*siamese twins
ripples of confused laughter
a body length apart*

A traditionalist, it starts with “*once upon a time*” (at first *long ago*, then *not so long*) a special boy/girl seeks a glory path that would hail, then crown him prince-of-men. Never wildly happy, Marti Hermaphroditus (a name used according to need) lives with his/her mother. Long ago father, after many battles, trials, tribulations, unglued from an untenable triangle. As far as is known, he is again one unequal part of another.



broken triad
caterpillar pupa
disjointed butterfly

Marti is not a front-runner. Light hair insufficiently blonde to be effective, blue eyes low key grey hued, skin too white, he is easily upset. Even if sensitively put, any query of his wanton demands is machine-gunned. Interpreted as a Pavlovian response, it implies lack of control over events. Some see it as an intelligence blown haphazardly over fantasy seas by a shared half-mast brain. Certainly, he is not a first port of call for sexually affluent males or females. Attraction comes via mathematically applied formulae. As soon as this knowledge is experienced at first hand, he is left high, dry, alone. But, using darker aspects of his cephalic ganglion, it brings a moment of clarity on how to obtain rewards. Day after studious day he works to understand. Every month he suffers a period of drenched pain combined with a too short lightning flash.

hermaphroditus
he joins her in reflections
of shared needs

Each month, crawling to her toilet, he talks to her reflection that responds from a listening depth. Here, surely, is a gift that confirms her right to status, to his cherished level of Kingship. They wish to be *numero uno*, adored by subjects hypnotised by devices his years of study have uncovered.

This is no everyday example of infantile narcissism. Nor should this gift be misunderstood. It is not that he has a twin or an articulate ‘she’ reflection. It is more that his reflection does not work in step with simultaneity. Conversations of illiterate plainmen give him ways of achieving without being an achiever. Sometimes a watery reflection is a distorted leer. But this grafter tills his gold dust dowsed field with such passion that rewards must follow. But, as with his sorcerer friend, Dr. Faustus, there will be a reckoning. Pardon? You want what?



*at the kingqueens feet
her wish is his desire
she sells him her soul*

“You want fame. You want riches. If you had to choose you would give up financial overkill for admiration of your gift?”

“Yes, I would. I would.”

“You would do anything for it - lie, unfairly condemn, change displays for disguises, sell yourself to a reflection, exchange even your lousy soul to get it. First you should know what you are.”

“Yes. Yes”

“You are effete, so you must learn to exploit. You are a skirt man trying to escape. Both of you need daily doses of suckling. Good signs are you sacrifice attachment to advancement, affection for calculation. Both are effective devices. Yet, pathetic, you sit with little understanding of what is required of you. Your adversarial ways do not a great con-man make. Sorry for that cliché but you deserve it! Your own knife will tear apart her dance of seven veils. You ask much. Stop tucking your brain inside her fancy pants, sucking your nipple with her lips. Stop dissecting kisses with juvenile tantrums.

Quite unnecessary.

Stop!”

“well, I never. you’re a real Sigmund of an erudite reflection, a Jung of a shadow, an underwater colossus, if ever I saw one”

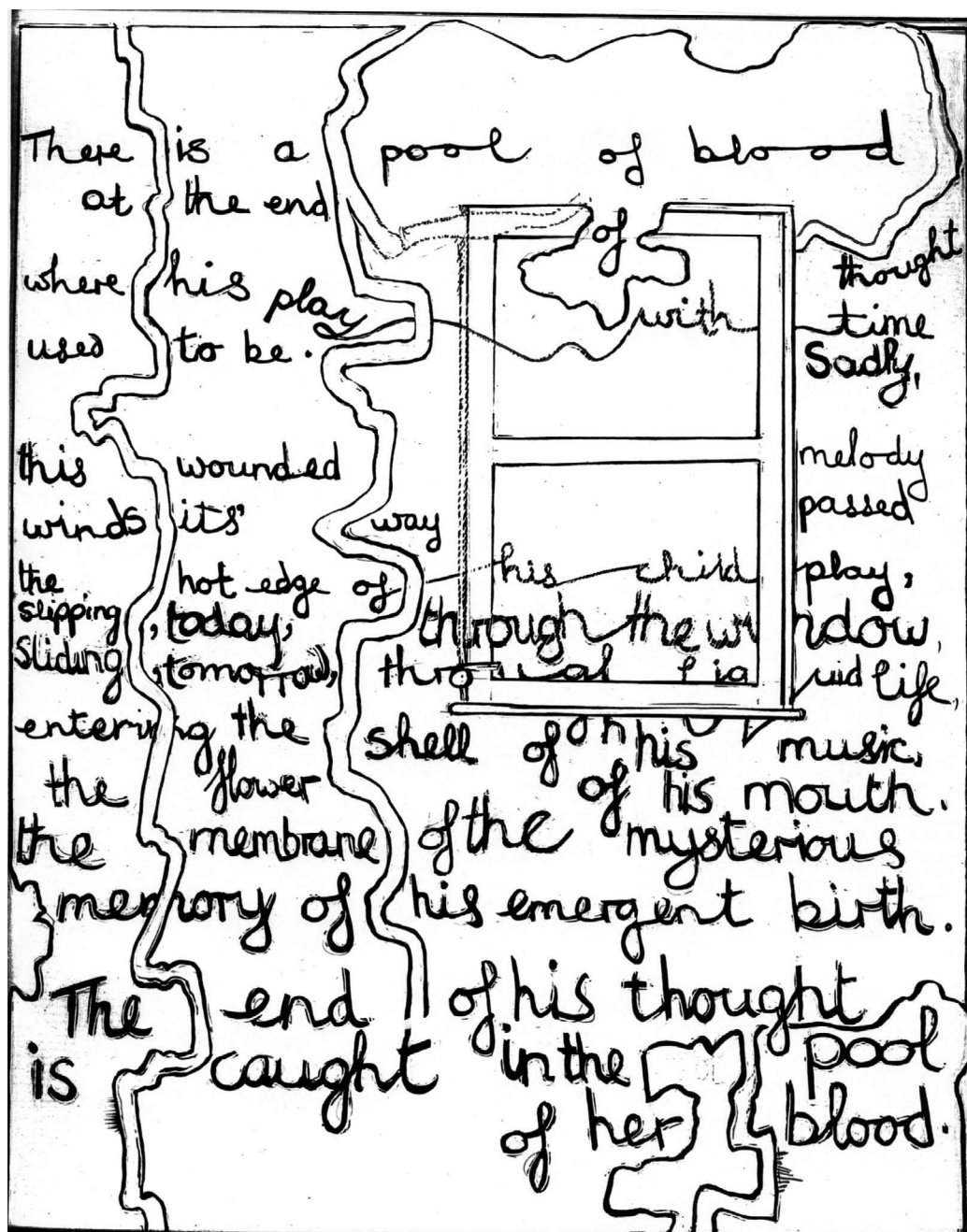
“psychiatrist, if you don’t mind. p s y c h o a t r y s t”.

“and your conclusion?”

...and so on. As is spokened, not youre e v e r y d a y repeaat patacakepatacakepatacake patterne of a reflexion but one that knoweth its minde, who can twittwoo into telling Marti Hermaphroditus truths even unto ye moderne torture chamber.

*double playgrounde
of complex patterns
one wille queene/king bee*

there is a pool of blood
 an unfamiliar space
 in the window



3 bears – or what!

*same 3 green leaves
3 faint shapes of a blind children
spread across 3 rooms*

Enter on automatic. Front door unlocked. His flat not mine. Front door looks like my door. Electronic key unlocks it. But it is not my door. It is his. Am inside. Flustered. Landing looks like my flat looks. Coat hooks are where they should be. Handprinted wallpaper is like that on my wall. Mock rococo framed mirror frames are same size same shape same low tone as mine. Light entering from a window above his door creates same mauve shadows.

*trois roués de fortune
trois l'hermites et trois jugements
dans trois bateleurs*

Each object print colour style is everyday but repeated in threes. Sometimes they differ in size form or depth. One living room wall is entirely made up of threesome puzzles. Another is of multi-choice questions. Here conundrums - there illusions. Only solved by touch. It is a study room. Hypnotic. Designed to draw me in. Designed to confuse Of course.

*3 dandelions
grown to confuse 3 of him
3 dark dreams*

Room Rondo Roams. Black Screen opens. Message: *“intruder. choose a chair.”* Three identical ones light up.. *“Why that one?”* writes itself in onto a screen. **“Ergonomically designed to my shape, height, weight?”** *“You’re dead right. One to you”.* **“What do you mean, ‘1 to me’?”** *“I mean? Why are you in my flat not your flat?”* **“My key fits your open door. Besides you are not here. Not really.”** *“If you say so Joachim da Fiore Joachim da Fiore Joachim da Fiore.”* *“Who? who? who?”*

Feel discomfort but at one with my selected chair. Three identical signed prints appear. Repeat those seen when I first entered. *“Choose*

one you would most like to own.” “**But none are different. On you they are only images. Not like real ones that hang on my – I mean your wall. Even if you print yourself you would be off-colour.**” “*These wall prints are a small part of a run. Choose.*” “**How can I when there is no difference. Under duress I would select...let me see... middle one**” “*Why*” “**Balance? Holds outside ones together?**” As he said “*that’s one to me.*” Watch my clothes dissolve only to disjointedly reappear neatly folded in top left corner of his screen. Three identical apples appear. “*Choose one.*” Seems pointless to repeat same point. Extract middle one from a screen whose images are breaking into shaky lines. Take a big bite. Juice spurts. Short-lived tingle. “*Definitely one to you.*”

*3 identical leaves
those same 3 evergreens
move in unison*

Suddenly everything speeds up. Screen hit by 3s followed by threesomes of **choosechoosechoose**. faster faster faster they come like machine gun fire fire fire. All shapes sizes fonts. Italics chase bold larger point sizes different typefaces unfamiliar images. Always a strong urgency. Always imperative of **choose choose choose**. Too fast. Too much glitter. Decision-making faculty is floored. Point at any one of tttthhrrreee. call out call out call out for it to slow slow slow. But speed whirls whirls whirls into broken phrases. Swirls swirls swirls become deserts of sh sh sh apes apes apes fractured.

*3 mirror images
soap opera politics
on television*

“*it had a sweat on* it had a sweat on ***it had a sweat on.*** We did try a box of them exploden twentytwo like what that boy shot the president with **we did try a box of them exploden twenty two like what that boy shot the President with choosechoosechoose hisisathingthathappened choosechoosechoose Soon’s I made her mouth she started in asken me for stuff**¹ **choosechoosechoose fool dog has drove out his brains that away long as I can recall fool dog has drove out his brains that awayaslongasIcanrecall** fool

dog has drove out his brains that away as long as I can recall
choosechoosechoose. felt like an ailing turtle *felt like an ailing*
turtle felt like an ailing turtle² don't ask blue-sky questions
choosechooseCHOOSE. Head throbs. Yes YOU. you *must*
CHOOSE. Play. Try to solve puzzle built into a conundrum. Go on.
Go on. Go on.

judgement day
for once three darks
fail to light

Computer screen quivers energy. Physical movement is my only power. Numb. Stand up. Walk towards a still open door that is his door not mine. Throw a smile that breaks into shards. It bounces against everything. Creates a Cézanne-like sense of form out of spatial texture. Close his front door. Move sideways to next door which is mine not his. Same key opens it. Throw my clothes onto my bed. Turn on my television. Look at my print. Take a deepdeepdeep relaxing breath breath breath. Turn on *on* **on** my computer.

chiselled flintstone
3 bumble bees warm
inside a curved centre

¹ 'The Naked Lady' – Madison Smartt Bell Crescent Review

² 'Unknown Feathers' – Dianne Benedict MSS

unexpected

yet it happens again

*honeysuckle opens
unexpected odours
of wind crazed dawn*

cultivated garden begins to jungle. grows trees. 3 apple, 2 pear, 2 plum, 1 walnut. for some branches weight of a fruit drowned harvest is too much. other fruit is so high it is dangerous to reach up for them. they move in time with wilder wind currents.

*active night
expected outcome
of fruit laden branch*

for as long as can be remembered, fruit ripens for locally grown starlings, nuthatches, rooks, sparrows, robins, greenfinches, blue tits before they ripen for us. watch as frayed edge holes are peckpeckpeckpeckpecked indiscriminately into 7 fruit-trees filled with wings. eating feverishly, they sense a need to pack in as much as possible before shapes of a fruitless season emerge.

last year this fruit pattern did not happen. this year it does not happen. i, U make a prediction about next year.

*mid day green sky
under a bright red sea
an event*



unofficial imitations

unofficial site

far from an unofficial
crowdcrowdcrowcrowwd rowdycrudecrowd erupts
in of course his unofficial s p a c e
where
sunlight s p l i t s into unofficial
shadows
that f l o a t over limpet fronds
but only as if it were an undergarment
full of osmotic matter that spins used reds greens yellows blues into
tiny bits of other combinations each full of imitation
fronds imitating themselves screened by
unofficial frond-makers themselves imitations of book-seen copied
drawings of fronds copiously copied in new
imitations.

with unofficial
eyes-to-the-sky
unofficial fronds
become unofficial
lily leaves

o
late freesia just m v es
unexpected w i n d
noticed by an absence

village hall elder citizens committee

lonely traveller only Moses questions god who in part repents

Village Hall Elder Citizens Committee meet the coach. 13th time they have organised a ‘surprise venue’ outing. Living in the 5 village network, 23 octogenarians and 32 “in their seventies” are going. Mr Bill Rivell, owner/driver of the coach, himself no slouch when it comes to age, is now a friend.

After an hour of driving they have a ‘toilet stopover’. Mr Rivell points to a male stork awkwardly walking awkward ridge tiles. The accident is quick. There is a loud noise. Only Mrs Beplin van Quillet, who lives alone, is hurt. She hit her head against the seat in front. Asked how she is she smiles an introspective smile. The cut is not deep and, although it bleeds and she is feeling weak, she agrees “it would be such a waste not to go on”. Everyone claps. Mr Stubton, prompted by an empathetic wife, moves next to her, “just in case”.

Whitby is the ‘surprise venue’. They have been before. With the exception of Mrs van Quillet, who has no appetite, Mr Stubton and Mr Ormesby, who have cholesterol problems, they eat large portions of fish and chips meshed into salt, vinegar and tomato sauce. All agree, “it’s as good as it gets”.

Mrs van Quillet is dropped off at the Cottage Hospital, “just in case”. Mrs Stubton tells Mr Stubton to “stay with her and phone a taxi when it is time to leave”. As Elder Citizens are falling asleep, the planned ‘singalong’ with ‘The Over 30’s Choir’ is cancelled. ‘The Over 30’s Choir’ is disappointed.

Sadly, Mrs Beplin van Quillet has since died. The Doctor says, “it is unlikely the earlier accident was a factor”. Although she kept herself to herself since the death of her husband in a freak accident, everyone who had been on the trip attended her funeral. Mr Stubton feels the accident may be responsible for her death. He doesn’t tell anybody, especially Mrs Stubton who does not know what to believe.

‘we all die’ she says in a garden wilderness only his doubt

Waking

is a physiological process. Experience informs of more. It is that moment when dreams seem to emerge. Now is yet another of many resurrections.

*in a real dream
glued eyes smell of forest leaves
images pull apart*

Nonplussed situation. Sight still stuck in-between-time. Struggle to open. Slowly eyelids crack. Slight focus.

background noise one eye a mist of light

Unsure whether it is internal or external. Eyes move into position. Gaseous shapes begin to solidify.

*just asleep
thin shadows
cross into day*

November. Thick eyes settle on walnut trees in full leaf. All seem to be stretching out an already long leaf season, preparing to miss a period of essential dormancy. Trees stress. Leaves small. Crowns thin. Fungus spreads.

*sight of wood pigeons
rustle inside leaves
turns to green*

Watered, both eyes snap open. Focus sharpens.

*express train
dream of wild grass
pulled sideways*

waves

*anniversary
painted collaged images
in dire need of change*

naked U, naked i, lie on a near edge of a vast expanse of sand. thin slits of sunlight turn on hinges before, on tips of endless waves, they travel lengths of beach. rocks drip interned water, make depressions in an area of surrounding flatness.

raising yourself U rest on elbows, sighting an incoming tide as if seen through glass. waves chase a semi-circle of cove towards an unsolved problem U have that, in these conditions, can only be half-stated. your head fills with a reckless image.

U look down on his satisfied pose. should U tell him? perhaps not. look up into a sky now bruised by greys, just sufficiently interesting to merit another glance. i always said we should be honest. "*we should always be honest*". U shut your eyes. reflections ripple.

*heron statue pose
white tipped waves
ruffle shadows*

what an unusual rainbow

unexpected white skin
black of two blackbirds
a stark contrast

Rainbows reflect other powers, other events. Many have strong colours. Some are atypical twins. All fade. Even children quickly notice these varying phenomena. That is another 'well known'.

childhood friend
cordon bleu colours
open eyes wider

Less well observed less studied are those that split. Look. It is not like others. This one is fast to rise, explodes from ground up a full length of its semi circle.

atoms crowd out light
innocent faces
hung out to dry

Last night U said ***stop playing with frontier games.*** Tonight remember it is not yet a painting. That comes first doesn't it? Gives it a semblance of dignity. Makes it more solid. Struggle for an answer.

ramshackle house roof
double colours
lose some focus

Where do the pictures of 7 female ice skaters go?

pubescent girls

*new jeans dyed with
wear and tear¹*

7 girls wait for a bus, costume-hiding holdalls at odd angles to each other. With newish lumps talk slides into giggles.

discuss hair styles

*all leg laughter and
raised diphthongs¹*

Reach ice-skating rink. They change into ice-skating-to-kill uniforms. Technical twirls, curls, jumps, turns, pearls of whirls have far to go. But, for joy riders, they are not bad.

On ice they emerge from pupas. Disguise hangs in a mass-produced changing room. Dressed in baby-doll pink skins of sentiment, they become skating marionettes. Sequinned tights twin robotic knickers, Egyptian-Mummy make-up aggregates to a stance of emotion. They travel a crisp journey of toys.

Moving elliptically, pieces of asexual material glide motion into mock snow glass bubbles. Here are no nighttime pictures.

crowded bus

*7 girls
wired together¹*

¹ *parsons & pelter*

Vermeer and a stony beach (collection 5)

In this volume Pelter keeps mainly to the central facts of his experience and presents them in a whirling, vigorous way that unites the devices of modernist art with the social realism of post-war Britain.

John Daniel

Pelter's down-to-earth nitty-gritty style of observing and writing is such a refreshing change from the prissy, classroom copies of what literature once was that comprises so much of haibun today...I have a feeling that Basho, coming back today from the withered fields to which he went in 1694 would read Vermeer and a stony Beach saying to himself "Kokode bunchou hoshi nasu haibun." (That's what I wanted to write with haibun)

Jane Reichhold

Eye Luf yr stuff

Ernest Berry

'fucking dentist' induces tears of mirth, the rib-aching kind so rare in my personal life

Malcolm Williams

Vermeer and a stony beach makes me laugh and weep and ponder

Chris Allinson

Your book inspires writers to be truly creative

Tish Davis

Drawings, glyph, the whole shebang – very provocative. Even the spine is cool and will explode my shelf

Mike Fessler

Really sort of American flag – Great! What a brilliant way to comment on Empires, wars...difficult to 'nail to any mast' for young Americans, I'm sure. **death by a thousand accretions** – time tripping everyone up. The *mist, smoke chimney line* made me shiver. Masterly. Brilliant pages.

M G

*Vaasb is spectacular. I **love** the cover*

Barbara Large

Includes haibun from the very top shelf. I now understand why you are so influential on even the work of 'gurus'.

Shauna Geldoff

