



# **About Time**

**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*

*slightly scented short lived words and roses*

*Vermeer and a stony beach*

*An Abundance of Gifts*



George Mann Publications

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## Dedication

### In Memoriam

**John Marsh (1936 – 2011)**

A stimulating and courageous teacher, prolific graphic designer and illustrator, he was also a fully paid-up member of the ‘swinging 60s’. He designed the front and back cover and produced some of the illustrations for Collection 1, ‘past *imperfect*’. At the time of his death he had just started work on illustrations for collection 7, unfortunately too few to now use.

A true friend from 1947 when, against the odds, we began our escape.

*inside a laden yew*

*marsh tits bloat*

*with rare loudness*

*dark waves*

*sound out light*

## **Acknowledgement**

Grateful and heartfelt thanks to Izzy Sharpe, who not only helped with editorial work, designed and created 6 of the 7 full colour front and back covers, but also built and manages the periodically updated website, [stanleypelter.com](http://stanleypelter.com). It now includes some of the visuals for a new book designed to promote visual creative processes for 11, 12, 13 year olds.

*Stanley Pelter*

## Preface

*Conceptual blocks are mental walls, which block from correctly perceiving a problem or conceiving the information that is necessary for its solution.*

The Three Domains of Creativity

Arthur Koestler

**Creative people value accurate observation (telling themselves the truth). They often express part truths, but this they do vividly; the part they express is generally the unrecognised. They see things as others do but also as others do not. They have more ability to hold many ideas at once, and to compare more ideas with and against one another – making for a richer synthesis. They have more contact with the life of the unconscious, with fantasy, reverie, the world of imagination.**

*Frank Barron – article: Scientific American – September 1958*

I can demonstrate that I can sometimes believe in something and yet not believe in it. Nothing is less fathomable than the systems that motivate our actions.

Georg Christoph Lichtenberg

1742-1799

A creative person has a healthy scepticism about existing answers, techniques and approaches. Judging ideas and the work of others is an emotional block to being creative, the safe way to go.

James L Adams

Conceptual Blockbusting 1974

***‘Catastrophe’: – to have missed the opportunity: ‘Critical moment’: - the status quo threatens to be preserved: ‘Progress’: - the first revolutionary measure taken.***

*Walter Benjamin*

*The Arcades Project*

What I want to do is to distort the thing far beyond appearance, but in the distortion to bring it back to a recording of the appearance.

*Francis Bacon*

The aim of all art was the undoing of the world of things and the establishment of a world of values

*Max Raphael*

## Introduction

*If intimidated by unfamiliar packages, images and structures, strange happenings in undutiful night-times only few take for granted, stop now. Wrap up against winter freeze. Hide from a fog so thick only werewolves or dreaded phantasmagoria can live within it. Keep striding straight ahead, along a well-worn path. Play! - this is not for you!*

'We create and try to express ourselves when the conditions of our living are changing so rapidly that the old forms for describing our feeling experiences become no longer adequate and there is a gap between the inner reality of feeling and available ways of communicating'.

(Marion Milner – 'On not being able to paint'  
p123 – London Heinemann 1950)

*land of the one-eyed  
along a straight line  
blind lead the blind*

Writers of haiku traditionally 'compose' a 'death' poem: one death haiku per death! Haibun, an associated but *separate genre*, connects into different patterns. I hope so, as in at least Collection 7 there is more than one. Less hampered by tradition, an alternative philosophical rationale, spiritual faith, (or lack), means they can be part of a support system for a Life *and* Death *series*. As DEATH, like BIRTH, is an important part of the cycle, it can be appropriated. As with most Life there is usually only one Death! An interlocked, time-spaced duality is what we are. For now, that is as good as it gets. This approach seems more appropriate than our contemporary medal/prize *modus operandi*, which demeans the *raison d'être* of haibun, haiku, senryu, tanka et al.

Other haibun in the Collections have described or imagined death, near death and any number of life experiences, semi-humorous, even surreal journeys that cross borders of life, death and return. Hopefully, it is done in a way that complies with Einstein's comment that '*imagination is more important than knowledge*', and also with



his skill as a visual thinker. Now, as age intercedes between actions, reactions and interpretive meanings, each event, its consequences and internal images form and reform. The importance of opinions become increasingly tenuous. Ranges of experience that appeared solid revert to plains of emptiness, of Zen's affinity for the raw and unpretentious, breathing life into tight arteries from the indeterminate.

The linguistic FORM journeys of much published haibun are one directional, one dimensional, often unfit for the function of accurate expression and meaning. Increased value needs to be placed on those that invoke queries of, and about, the apparently more unusual and mysterious aspects of experience expressed in forms which most amplify meaning. Structurally these violate conventions, including strengths inherent in, for instance, more unusual opposites: thought/visual; past/beyond-the-known; emptiness/solid; unity/detonation; danger/dull; birth/empty; frontal/ebb; remembrances/emptiness; conserve/dissipate; dream/sight; dream/insight; famine/visible; amniotic fluid/sea; experiential/empirical; past/intelligent interpretation; famine/visible; imaginary/dialectical unity; homogeneity/revolution; auratic/mechanical technology; diachronic/synchronic; excavation/reconstruction; future predicted/future actual.

Louis Althusser writes in **Reading Capital**, "*historical time is continuous and homogeneous and contemporaneous with itself*", and Walter Benjamin, in **Gesammelte Schriften** – "*Literary History is a hydra with seven heads: creativity, empathy, taste, timelessness, imitation, re-living, illusion*". Contemporary haibun is insufficiently in the necessary state of flux, transformation, even crisis. Lucidity is neither an aim nor criteria. Again from **Gesammelte Schriften**: "*Remembrance must not proceed in the manner of a narrative, still less that of a report, but must, in the strictest epic and rhapsodic manner, assay its spade in ever new places, and, in the old ones, delve to ever deeper layers*". Terry Eagleton wrote in *Walter Benjamin or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism*: "*Nobody could accuse Walter Benjamin of classical narrative lucidity. One Way Street, with its typographical experimentation and spasmodic structure, was a deliberate deconstruction of the traditional unified text.*" And T S Eliot's '*between conception and creation, there falls the shadow*'.

Writing in new forms of expression is to make old forms of

language a stasis – while some content may be new, the language of expression is not, is an artificial form. Any new forms of expression will not become naturalised until they, too, alter and reform. With haibun, we are not yet in that radial realm that relates to a particular shape of progressive memory. In every era the attempt has to be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that, mostly from unawareness, tries to overpower it. Embedded haiku are in a similar situation. These haiku are not ‘stand-alone’. They are an integral part of the prose and their shape, form and language should reflect this. **Existing stand-alone haiku are inappropriate for a separate genre. Using them reflects a lack of understanding of the nuts and bolts of the medium.**

Experiences, events, and those that emerge from under the surface are, too often, treated in haibun as singular, another way of saying ‘lineal’. What is remembered is *not* at the other end of a linguistic line. There are approaches more connected to the function of the form employed to generate expressions of content, and these converge to build others to fit different contexts. Authors and readers should be able to construct at least one radial system capable of interpretation in a number of ways and on multi-levels. Anything less denigrates the form, turns it into a heavyweight stasis from which it is not easy to extricate much that are the mechanics of the creative process. Paul Klee pointed out *“in the form of what has been accomplished in music by the end of the eighteenth century has only begun in the fine arts. Mathematics and physics have given us a clue in the form of rules to be observed or departed from as the case may be. Here salutary discipline is to come to grips with first of all with the function of forms, and not with form as the final result...In this way we learn how to look beyond the surface and get to the roots of things...yet nothing can replace intuition, for without it the totality, the wholeness of things remains outside of our reach.”* Sketchbook.

Form is an essential function of technique. But technique, central to haibun, is also its servant. Language is the cooking ingredient, which, according to requirements, determines the outcome from raw material to a variety of functional and cordon bleu meals. Language manipulation, invention and development, cooked in an endless

variety of ways, determined by theme content, is a core part of the haibun genre, yet is constantly ignored for a one-fits-all railway journey. Language technique exists to fit the function of content, and is endlessly variable. The primary constraint is a lack of understanding, analysis and practice of the creative process.

Some haibun in collection 7 describe and transcribe illness, end-game outcomes and processes of dwindling. Not wanting to believe, this part of the lineal triad relationship is gradually closing velvet curtains. Poignant but usually consensual music pushes into each day's application of time-diminishing powers. But it is also a way of accepting views of reality different from but related to that of birth. In this later stage of linear life-to-death experience, despite ongoing puckish swirls, there is a move towards a pre-determined end, disguised by increases in indeterminacies, where ghost-like repressions re-emerge as apparitions and 'reality' beyond present understanding. Deformations abound, some invented by the ageing process, others by boredom induced by repetitious structural form. Most accept these strictures, a poison for many creative processes. I am unbothered to read haibun that reflect subject matter, language formations, alternative form or that evolve from structures, devices and 'areas of experience' in the previous six Collections. It does not expand or diminish ego.

Given the time-scale, there is an inevitability to a once-in-a-lifetime-end-game experience as it moves into less solid actions, negative sensations, new regions of non-experience of other dimensions where, by design, we ask more questions than can be answered. What is less or even unknown may be an integral part of an amorphous reality. This may be forever emptiness, more than a void, less than an experience.

Previous evocations of darkness, shadows, caves, sanctums, here merge with a full rainbow and a coming-home-to-roost. Now, not description or prediction but a different reality, day and night become apprehensions of a 'dark-time', threshold to a final shut-in-shut-down, a last extension of the painfully strong birthing push. From that exposed moment this end game existed. Until now it has been impenetrable, inscrutable. Although this is the one time its

otherwise secret reality can exist, there is an inexorable sense of *déjà vu*, a homecoming to familiar territory because, for now, it has to exist, reappearing in disguise, as if emerging from a distorting mirror.

Barring rearrangements and accident, it is an organic development but not the end and be all of **About Time**. There is a continuation with the section of 'Found Haibun Prose', (already dismissed by many for being either insufficiently subversive or for not sitting at peace inside the typical walled-in haibun path). With Collection 6, **An Abundance of Gifts**, they provide clues to an altogether different rationale for their existence in haibun form. Their repetition is, for me, already contentious in that it is sliding into haibun's dippiest slope, to become yet another brick in an architecturally hard-up temple dedicated to the anorexic god of the consensual.

Alongside questioning and using developments of adult fairy stories, myths, fables, integrated or overlapping collage and montage techniques, time that criss-crosses life and death, mixed-up historical timescales within the same haibun, first use of less usual words like, for instance, 'stupa', techniques and issues considered by 'gurus' to be 'too intellectual and complex word volcanoes', for the less-than-creatively 'defined' haibun form, length (or lack of it) of some sentences and haibun, variety of syntax, use of new devices or new applications of existing ones, the beginning of adoption into the work of others has begun. Developing technology speeds up this process and function.

We are born into language and, from early days, adopt it whether suitable or contaminated. Too much is accepted as if all inherited language is transparent but, as Roland Barthes pointed out in the preface to '**Essais critiques**', *'it is always **previous**.... The writer does not 'wrest' speech from silence but inversely... detaches a secondary language from the slime of primary languages afforded him by the world, history, his existence; in short by an intelligibility which pre-exists him... to be born is nothing but to find this code ready-made and to be obliged to accommodate oneself to it. We often hear it said the task of art is to **express the inexpressible**; it is the contrary which must be said: the whole task of art is to **unexpress the expressible**, to kidnap from the world's language, which is poor and powerful language of the passion, another speech'*.



Some of the at least two languages that confront each other in every collection, even when ‘appropriate’ to the conjoined haibun, is said to be ‘unusual’ if not downright ‘difficult’. Certainly, the question has been asked “is it necessary?” Darnsur - Yes it is! Sometimes confrontational, it helps extend boundaries and readers into recognising that more unusual word relationships are appropriate if they serve a purpose specific to that haibun. There is an alteration between language and meaning. Reading in different ways is less important than being able to benefit from a changed relationship, viewing words and sounds as moving in another orbit, as one element of structure. ‘Everyday’ language is not simple or neutral. Nor can the reality of experience really be represented by any haibun language. The best of which it is capable is to act as a *signifier*. Literary language in many haibun of the 7 collections is a conscious and necessary deviation from that of everyday speech language. In this context, it is, as the great Walter Benjamin again reminds us, more linked to ritual function, an aid to reconnecting with the author and reader’s creative processes. Critical reading, and a fascination with this process, serves one of a number of purposes. It helps reading become part of a process of re-enactment which, although source material, can be mass-produced, an aid to personal recognition and understanding. Accessibility at the level of ordinary language is not the only aim of language boxing matches. Nor should it be! This is no way to help close in on missing connections, negative space and puzzle shapes. In consensual haibun, language is rapidly becoming domesticated, replayed and not being prepared for the end game. One way to do this is to reduce conventional expectations that connect word, meaning and source to inappropriate form. Expectations are shown up for what they are in that process of de- and reconstruction.

Actions, ‘real’ life reduced to simplistic language, tend toward the formulaic, a pattern that aims to guarantee complicity, an unconsciously agreed result with similar shapes and outcomes. ‘Saying it as it is’ itself becomes a tiny piece of magic, a spell-binding panacea, a fundamentalist reduction of experience. It is another example of that age-old confrontation between hidden crevices, surfaces of action, and their utterances in configured and reconfigured language.

It should help us remember that what we think we have seen is not necessarily what it is. For us, syntax should at least be an expression of the theme if not an integration with it. If it succeeds, and success is not solely dependent on concision or terseness, it may mutate into the theme.

Following 2 years of serious illness, more than 500 haibun and over 200 illustrations later, **this is the last collection of a series**. Each is a separate entity. Each haibun within each collection is self-contained but, collectively, they weave into a single unit, a cycle that connect and interconnect, that constitute an almost haibun novel, (if this is not demoted into a contradiction in terms), and is, to my far from extensive knowledge, the first such construction, taking more than 9 years to compose and build.

Haibun 1 in collection 1, *past imperfect*, is titled **‘birth’**. The last in **About Time** is **‘zapped sounds of death’s unholy silence’**. In-between are experiences and events of fact, fiction and imagination that both interconnect and disconnect external conscious ‘reality’. Some verge on the surreal, as described by visual artists, writers, art and literary historians. Others are mere suggestions of reality experiences, representing the range and variety of everyday life. Some in each of the Collections are bits of paths through Heidegger’s *‘coming into the nearness of distance’* which, in his **Discourse on Thinking**, he describes as *‘truths that would be unconcealed’*, a brilliant, serious description of multi-faceted reality. Any Collection after **About Time** will not be part of this or any other series.

#### A FEW HAIBUN NOTES:

A haibun, for me, is difficult to conceive and produce in a single ‘sitting’, unless a ‘one word or a one-liner’. The moment is insufficient, as is the time required to penetrate surfaces and architectonics of events. Elements can be liberated from their everyday meaning, move away from an external aspect, be dissected to reveal interiors, regrouped, ambiguities introduced into producing the most appropriate verbal polyphony. Equilibrium between various facets can take years to achieve, and follow years of learning and practicing many essential aspects of a personal creative process. **This, more**

**often than not, has priority over ‘inspiration’.** Most haibun need to be ‘rested’, sometimes for years. Only then does the usually covert meditation within the Unconscious emerge. It is this that gives a haibun power over us. Without it, **however finely crafted, however long spent waiting for inspiration, however short the sentences, ‘everyday’ the language, consensual the structure, however unnecessary may be the beginning with a previously composed self-contained haiku, the haibun can be no more than another dollop of weak orthodoxy.** I work to avoid building a haibun around a haiku successful when self-contained! Leave these sleep in their own bed!

As with earlier Collections, some in **About Time** are based on the factual (or mixed factual), the rehashed and amalgam of the stolen brought together in a literary osmosis that induces suggestion and areas of sensation ‘beyond mere illustration’. The appropriate distortion of ‘the everyday’ should be allowed to enter nervous systems of sensitive, intelligent reading, as the work and writings of Sergei Eisenstein’s ‘Film Form’ entered mine an aeon ago.

Because haibun is a form the short does not mean it is a simple medium. Some are intentionally very short, others intentionally ‘complex’ compared to the mountain of consensual work. For these, reading and understanding need to fall into patterns evolved by ‘sensitive and intelligent’ readers, and requires long and arduous practice for which we are not otherwise prepared.

Haibun, because of its form, seems to be less suited to character and narrative than other forms of literature. I have attempted it when content seemed to necessitate. It is not an easy device to successfully employ because of its more shadowy existence. What passes as character in novels take too long to develop in Haibun. In the attempt, an uneasy metamorphosis, a symbolic realism becomes a faint perfume with which to deodorize the genre.

Consensual haibun is a looking back not a forward looking process. As Henry Miller writes in ***The Cosmological Eye***, *the fear of standing alone is evidence the faith is weak. Man is happier when he is in a crowd; he feels safe and justified in what he is doing. But crowds have*

*never accomplished anything, except destruction... When a man is truly creative he works singlehanded... Mr Herbert Read, in an introduction to "Unit 1 writes: "The modern artist is essentially an individualist; his general desire is not to conform to any patterns, to follow any lead, to take any instructions, but to be as original as possible"*

I am surprised at the speed innovations become a natural part of the medium. Why this should be I do not know. In terms of my own work, I suppose it is because selected elements tend to run counter to accepted haibun criteria and definition. A recent instance is my 'long sentence' device, often employed on its own, or as a contrast to short. Another example is the introduction of new words into the medium. 'Stupa' is a recent example. I suppose, in an age where digital media is expanding at speed that, I suspect, would have surprised the late, very great Alan Turing, we should not be surprised.

Ideally, one author's innovations should only be a starting point for other authors to generate their own devices, and then only because appropriate to the content, shape, building block of the haibun.

As I say, it is not the fact it happens so much as the speed. For an old man this is a tricky area with which to come to terms.

### **Finally, some notes on the visuals.**

They are *not* illustrations of but enhancements to the written word, sometimes equivalences, sometimes a partly new viewpoint, a linked but separate perspective extending whatever meaning can be gleaned from the literary language.

Sometimes, intentionally, it is the incongruity between visual form and haiku prose that is the cause of an interaction which enhances both.

The 'point-of-view' of consensual haibun form is altered - i.e. reversed or transposed.

The visual can play off something familiar.

Visuals add layers of intensity to the written word, arriving at a completion in a way different to the consensual. It is akin to lighting



a match that both illuminates and burns. They have a capacity to increase audience participation, can act as a strobe, help visual ‘readers’ to extend comprehension, to move onto a less muddy track. Overlapping inter-connections are capable of heightening the *frisson* as decoding improves analytical ‘understanding’. It is a ‘device’ to increase ‘depth’, to edge readers into semi and sub-conscious interiors of ‘meaning’.

The visual can make purposeful collisions with verbal patterns, connections that are not primarily cerebral, not new ritualistic disciplines to undo Ego imperatives that riddle and make cracks in consensual haibun. Connections are not necessarily, or even usually, rational. Any number of outcomes exist beneath the surface of standardised meanings, disconnected from understanding, but which somehow relate to the Zen idea of impermanence. Creative acts are not renowned for a capacity to be easily defined. Connections often only come about when not struggling to find them but after a long period of intellectual intimacy with areas of connected concern. From a perspective of the artist/author, the most efficacious connections occur when the brain, following concentrated strain with little in the way of results, is at its most relaxed. Friedrich Kekule discovered the benzene ring structure in a dream, **having devoted a great deal of conscious thought to its enigmatic architecture**. Kekule’s brilliant insight was that organic compounds such as benzene were *closed rings* rather than open structures. ‘Inspiration’ never has been that waiting-for-a-god-to-touch-us-fingertip-to-fingertip religious illusion. Haibun lends substance to our inner dimensions. Dare we ask more?

*Good starting points are ‘Conceptual Blockbusting’ James L. Adams – W.H. Freeman and Co. 1974, & ‘The Act of Creation’ Arthur Koestler – NY: Dell, 1967*

Stanley Pelter 2012

## About Time

*far off hills  
tenuous colours quiver  
in the light*

If I had a grandmother known, even if only in snippets, she would be copiously loved. Up on a mountain top, looking down from her highest tower, once named by Kafka, renamed by Mann, is an Orthodox grandmother with a puzzle identity commingled from beyond a hail-stormed, blood-flooded North Sea. Her castle-grey face looks up, staring through interpretations of arc objects most known in childhood night lives and now when she is no more. In a low of a low valley, a self-contained but angry bull parades with resonating calls and a blurred sheen of blind eyes.

*female sees a mate  
who never does  
cuttlefish graveyard*

Her husband, small, passionate, intense when unknown influences and moods prevail, is, perversely, intellectual. This sometimes makes him crumble. He proclaims in a voice that squeaks, “**under pain of death no documents will be signed other than by me and no one will ever again make love to my woman**”. Grey is now a feature of her sick face.

*wind red cheeks  
bare valley branches      cross hatch  
impotent claims*

Her present-day body has always eluded him, even as her eyes stroke up dark cloud-covered ledges at an uppermost tip of tree-cascaded heights, unaware he would fall over such a thin ledge of air with gentlest of pushes.

*coiled nightdress*  
*inside imaginatoin*  
*imagination*

**“Hi”**. She summons all who dare answer her siren call, **“it is time to climb, to shoot for a star depicted as escaped light”**. No one responds. None understand. A wall of slowness thickens. I am somewhat closer to knowing one grandmother’s name.

## a new start, just in time

*river streams into waves  
berthed boats huddle  
inside a husk tide*

Sepia photograph simulates him standing on Catacol beach. From many miles South he arrived 15 minutes earlier after that mistake which cost him a first boat from a dull mainland. It is a mistake that need not have happened, anger he need never have felt or have to resolve. Feels it is wasteful. “*Maybe not,*” he tells himself. He no longer cares. “*At least I am back*”.

*sea tones  
together they resonate  
in only one way*

If anything worse begins he would try to end it. Even if his ill-understood frustration expands into explosive tension he would try to release it peacefully. “*This*”, he tells himself, “*is no place to grow old alone*”. At least he is back. “*I am back,*” he informs a fertile beach. “*Dunes of my father, waves of my mother, secretum secretorum, I am back for a last time. Will do what must be done, what should have been done long ago. I’m sorry for that. Will do it now. Now, it will be done. A new start, just in time.*”

*acts     just in time  
cloud shadows overhang  
thin mists*

He moves barefoot through lush sand towards a deckchair. Striped material shapes a Rubenesque body whose feet are soft splashed by wave ends. In a jumpy sea he faces her. “***Here is that perfect apple you desire.***” She takes a bite. Juice dribbles down chin, neck, chest that breathes. She stands. Walk hand in hand until merged inside unfocussed light. Walk South. Walk as one.

*sudden rook  
stabs a rotting plum  
flight into tides*

## **a sadness, i suppose**

*in working order  
is how it always seems  
heart gathers dust*

fig tree grows fruit

then a sudden death

fat cat grows thin

then a sudden death

thin girl gives birth

then a sudden death

*a sadness, i suppose  
computer grows small  
before a sudden death –*

## acquaintances

*snow gulls*

*blow through flakes of sea*

*new sense of pattern*

Ward has 4 occupied beds – Mohammed Yusif; Reginald Boss; Arleighton; me.

**1 Mohammed:** ?Do you want hamal? ?Do you want HAMAL?

*“what”*

*“DO YOU WANT HAMAL?”*

*“yes” he replies in an almost unbearable soft voice.*

Wife visits once. No expressions of love, only food, taken with a male right. Eaten in silence.

Sons, grandsons, brothers visit more frequently. Only oldest son speaks. Others visit mobile phones. Mohammed talks when old friends visit. We are in opposite beds. Sometimes our eyes meet. His face is brown cubic rock of a Brahmin priest.

*high voice*

*fearsome power*

*of sons as fathers*

**2 Reginald Boss:** Looks like one of those Victorian illustrations of Dickens Scrooge. Unmarried brother, sister visit every day. Silent, he eats what is offered in silence. Seems they live together. Reginald has a serious leg injury. Spends much of each day with a book of crossword puzzles. Infrequently looks up.

*lack of concern*

*silence interrupts*

*drugged sound*

**3 Arleighton:** Lives on pavements far from Caribbean base. Is filthy. Can hardly speak. Will have a toe amputated. Terrified of injections. Visited outside hours by two sisters who offer home-

made food. Without words, not looking at them, he takes it all.  
They never speak to him. He works in sounds:

*ooWa oowya urc Ur Urrrr ooom umlomb*, he squeezes out.

You OK?

YES.

**You R a BIG boy. Come. See Mr Big Boy. Don't move! Wait! Bring  
a commode! We gotta shower you. Bring a basin of water here!  
You're really dirty. We will just clean below. Hold Mr Big Boy to  
one side. Other side. Sit in a clean chair! THAT CHAIR!**

*wen I stan to pee de udder ting appen.*

**Let me know when you want to pee and we will help.**

*Em too late den. It don work dat way. O mi Omi Omi*

*incorrect face*

*conundrum of clean lips*

*avec dirty minds*

*tea or coffee? chocolate? No? Cold milk? Yes? No?*

- 4 Me. Drugged out of stupefied mind. Lots of deleted blood hidden away somewhere. Kept sleepy. "*It helps*". Visited every day with fruity foodies. When awake, watch in silence, read in silence, spooked in silence, speak words of silence in inadequate tongues, or so it seems. Food, home cooked, is delicious. Notebook, like a half stomach, talks unauthorised talk. Food, home-spelled, is delicious. Note colour sounds. Ward smells. That long journey. That long Silence. That long long Silence. Remember the shmuck who asked 'how are your supposed illnesses?' What a devilish shit he is that hit her – like screwball behind his cultivated front.

*real heartache problem*

*unreal sleep again*

*overtakes real light*

## again snow

Watch television football. Sleep. Now, jolted by lost heartbeats, wake. Not yet dark. It is late spring by slower time on my infamous space clock. Thick snowstorm. Out-of-date flaky silver season faintly disturbs. Forecasters did not warn it would cross their secret sea. Am certain they did not. Now, nobody knows who is buried. Churchyard different above than frozen below.

*high tuned sleep tones blend  
into oblique statements  
back to front duvet*

Should not snow inside this new season. Fruit blossom colours are disfigured, magnificent trees stilled. This is not snow time, not snow time at all. But here it is. Fragile. Fertile. Flakes already disfigure window frames. Koi filled pond reconfigures. Every scrap of shaped perspective is a snowflake mutiny.

*through wet glass  
stiff webs of shattered leaves  
ice lines imprison*

Angled moon colour, graveyard-melting headstones, just heard sounds of light snowflakes. He is not now certain they are heard. There is nothing else moving so what other can it be? Watches distance close in on his age-weathered gate.  
Such a short time awake.

*inside a new white  
red peonies disappear  
space in time defers*

Will stand in a koi filled dead pond. Will stand still. Will be covered before sculptured into an ice statue colossus.



## Ali Baba in old age

Ali Baba and his Forty Thieves emerge from lidded, decorated clay pots to sit on hospital waiting room plastic chairs, aged from Monday wear to Friday tear.

*between first dawn light  
and first signs of midday fire  
sand smells of first sea*

In his personal desert tan waves stir. Wind curls ancient grains closer to a huge PLEASE DISTURB sign.

No one is certain who or what will achieve checkmate. Unusually for a leader of thieves, this gives Ali Baba a small advantage, which, indifferent to all, he spits out. Then, in old age gulps, he downs everyday doses of Warfarin, Simvastatin, Digoxin, Bisoprolol, Cymbalta, Duloxetine, Metformin etc. He loses.

*ancient tale of childhood  
sick parrot                      with fading greys  
squawks of times long gone*

*roof garden*  
*adrenal gland*  
*spreads zilch enzymes*

## **All In A Days Journey**

‘Desperate Housewives star dumps fiancé for convicted drug dealer’

*‘Auntie didn’t warn us her son was a paedophile’*

‘I am a human Zeppelin’

*‘On a mobile phone they filmed my son as he died’*

‘Going to hang my knickers all over town’ she threatens

*‘MAN exposed for what he really is. So are they’*

‘Arv twisted me matrimonials’ she confesses to the vicar whose  
flittering smile flatters his flabby flesh structures

*‘Mother’s desperate search for washed-away children’*

*flat midday light*  
*even loss of shadows*  
*lack meaning*

## **all juxtapositions**

all crescent moons bring me back to earth

*where blasts of wind sandstorms a monkey filled committee*

room. all are convinced doggy position is best (missionary will

*just about do). they spill tea from a multi cracked teapot shaped*

vase onto a stained baby who makes duck quack sounds.

*2 sisters slip into a new style of thin. their insanely obese*

mother hangs a shredded skirt from a peg screwed into

*a bone chin of a hairless wolf skull fixed to his bedroom door*

semi-open while appearing semi-closed. at a certain

*moment magnetic pulses freeze a curtain position. at that*

same certain moment melodious tingles fill their insanely

*obese mother's dinner plates. thinness of threesome throbs.*

at last at last at last all thin paintbrushes fat paint brushes

*all paint brushes take leave of their incandescent senses.*

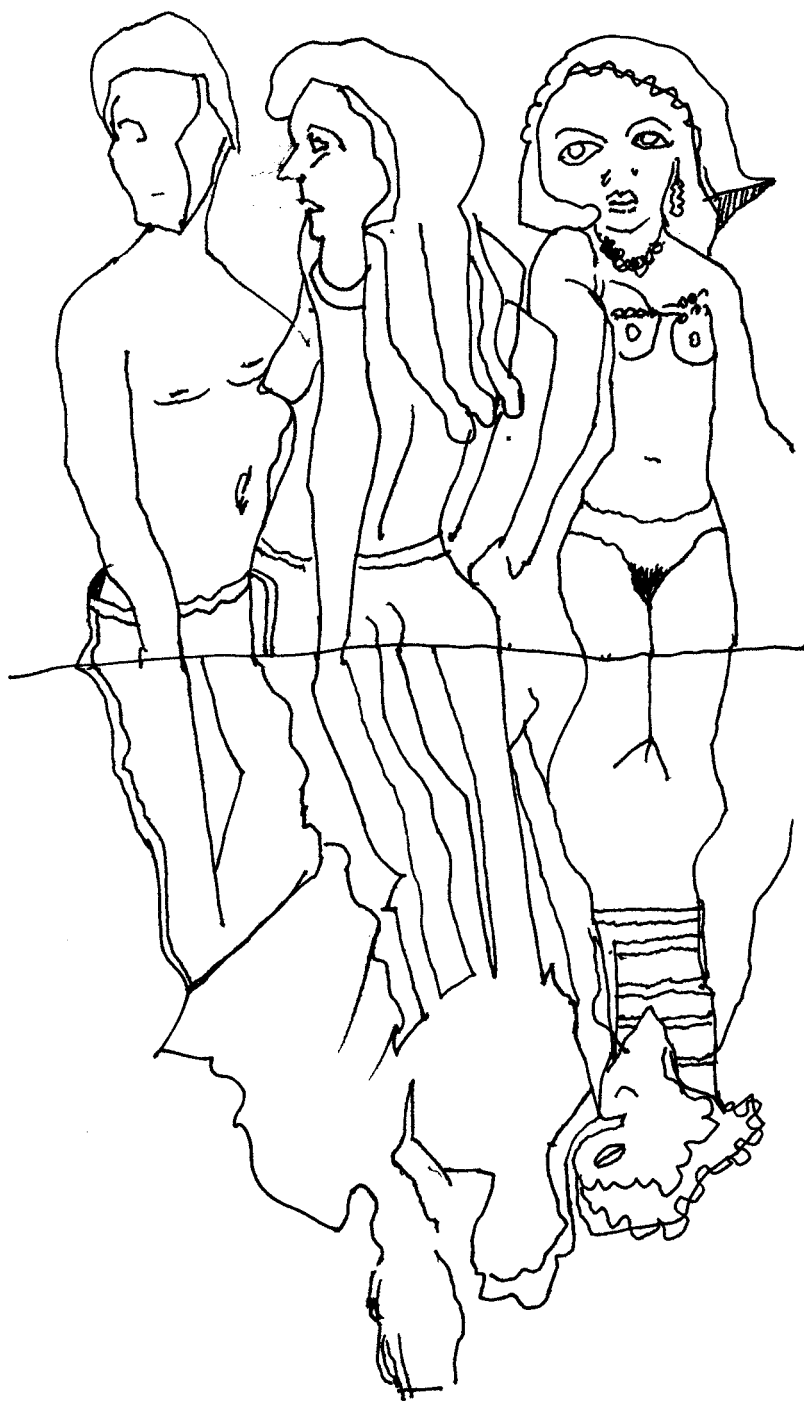
loaded brush

*attacks a paint crazed palette*

colours convert

*into Botticelli's*

3 Graces



## **all of them**

using all her power she all but cut out her spontaneous  
undergrowth. all of an all-round very wispy whisky coloured  
cloud spreads all of a moons ghost light. seems to fall flat on  
all of her. from a distance sounds of all hell let loose all closing  
in onto all her all night time bondage.

*all of a long road*  
*humanoid creations*  
*affect painted out signs*

## **as I lay falsely dying**

and after hours of inaccurate, not exuberant remembrances, I do.

another stumble  
wild water  
moon coloured

remember part of a rare game played with only available surreal woman. homework playtime, I falsely die, supposedly unaware of all around me. temporarily, she, unlike me, is able to temporarily die, temporarily return. in other words, able to experience anything she desires. as I lay falsely dying, she, near ultimate explorer of our joint subterranean regions, explores. she was incapable of ever being a bed-prone, stone sculpture for very long. then, as I lay falsely dying, it is my turn!

I also recall she stirs a graven image that now transforms into an act of judgement, of forgiveness, of redemption. do not care; crave a richer memory of her unphotographed, uncleansed rituals. these distant sets of events agitate into a puzzle settlement, forever memories forever being lost in a forever haze of time.

strange act unfolds  
inside cosmic clock  
tick tocks rearrange

## ASecondGreatEvent

*bedroom birth  
dither of first breath  
inside a pink lust*

“Painted soft red, here I am. At Last. Box open, lined with flossy lace. What have them girls done? Watertight instructions: *nothing dear. buy cheap. no hail no mary no U turn from my wish.* Plastic covered cardboard lining. No more. Told those little minxes my most trustworthy had discovered, *‘out of sight, only lining around body is furnaced. Expensive box recycled in Winter Sale’* ”.

**“Mum, you don’t really believe that!”**

“Yes I do”

**“You can’t”**

“Yes, yes I do. So do it. Do it for me.” But they don’t. They can’t live with her image of cheap. In remembrance, each applauds their disobedience as they dolly up in blowsy black lace, footing it downtown to jiggle-up black-covered bottoms.

*space spark filled  
between fading pink petals  
first puff of wind*

Silently, call out to them not to cry. Give two reasons: 1. Make-up will flounder. 2. Need a clean-eyed open-mind on such a multi-dimensional event. Blind as dimwit bats. They have to flatten it out. Could go beyond all manner of easy bits. Usually I admire their imaginations, able to simultaneously encompass several dimensions while failing to understand that a crosshatch teapot brew of dew sympathy turns into today’s imaginative recipe for what is aSecondGreatEvent. Whitened body will learn to cry here learn to lie there learn to die with a sad sigh alone.

*ghost of pale red hue  
cherub pink cheeks tomorrow  
at she turns to ash*

in her memory poems play second fiddle to images. here she is, photocopying aged men looking down on her. two miss out: 1. her dead husband who left years ago. in an empathetically semi-detached way, his face shaped into a cavernous sneer, she nursed his endgame. 2. he, who she loved through thick, through thin, just will not perish. “My *FirstGreatEvent* was not dumbed down. Have no intention of dumbing down my *SecondGreatEvent*,” she whispers through ice-box coldness.

*was born  
and now am dead  
two great events*

“Makes me laugh. None of these grey heads know each other. I know them all. Split with them all (except for him). At first, each elevates me to cloud 9, blow me out, make sweetness. In paradise each is powder-puff perfection. But it never lasts (except for him). My thought-out-through approach is distasterville (except for him). Not that I understand what went on there. Relaxed. Accepted into it. Know why he is not here. In a way that fulfils me. Watch Viagra performers flop over a too expensive box of tricks. Here they go again, Apes swinging from an idealised tree into gene cannibals hunting down emotional retards. Don’t give a Hail. Don’t give a Mary. Nor even a toss. Please leave me. Leave me to wallow in this, my first, my very own alienation.

Plug ears. Plug nostrils. Close eyes. Don’t want to smell or see incoming blast of darks. Don’t want to drip or hear drumbeat of screws joining me to wood, fire, ash, to that immense farewell.

*grip ice cold air through flames  
of consummation  
come      then go*



## **Barts Hosp**

**Smithfield Market**  
**trader tattoos engraved**  
**on dead bird casts**

Forearms are bruised. Very. Four tubes of blood every 3 hours. Nine failed attempts to insert one bloody needle! Each time an OW. Yes, I admit it. Bloody nurse said how she had *“never before heard a man give an OW over a little needle”*. She did say that. Women cry. That counts as pain where I come from. Yes, I looked. Her fine hair olive skin is flawless. No needlepoint. No pincushion arms for her.

**Road to freedom**  
**feel more a prisoner**  
**than when imprisoned**

Weeklong battery of tests. Home without visiting Lucian Freud in his Market studio. Results discussed at round-table-get-together-of-Big-Ones. 9 pm. Phone rings. That moved adrenalin a notch higher.

*“Decision. Possibly remove adrenal gland. Difficult to get at. Will need to divest you of spleen. Antibiotics will replace. Royal London Hospital will first remove your gall bladder. Not straightforward. It has melded with some scar tissue of an earlier operation when bits were just flung back in. No, we are not involved with Surgery schedules. You have to keep in mind there are hundreds of patients. No, I do not know whether arranging two surgeons to act together will delay proceedings. Has pacemaker been fitted yet?”*

“Yes”

“Good”. Jagged edge silence. “Any questions?”

“No. Thanks for letting me know”.

**mottled evening sun**  
**follows broken afternoon**  
**both informative**



## bewitched

*eureka birth day  
complex star reformation  
follows new space trails*

There is sea. There am I. There is she, body curiously haphazard, squeezed below a ridge of mixed shingle, sand, pieces of ragged rock, Jamaican black night. Sluggish, less-than-solid moon above a boat-deserted sea is our beacon. Laden estuary is crowded with sounds of amateur desires.

She looks up. Again waits. Her darkness is a backdrop for a sky-high theatrical performance. First Night Of Perseids: earth's orbit crossing comet Swift-Tuttle's pert tail, striding Olympian Perseus constellation. Fragments of meteor burn into a shooting star trail.

She is here. Alone.

Every year she closes in on that endless distance between long-term insignificance, ephemeral immateriality formed by short flares, wonder of a fanfare birthday.

*snow vanishes  
red shots of understood science  
become shrill star speed*

*"you'se born in ablazin' blackness of nightlight trails when them shooting stars was active, makin' one after anuver after anuver. lookin' up, watchin', bewitched. ran inside 'cause you'se was there, reddy white, fully borned, lookin' up as I carries you'se out to see up that fortune sky"*  
her daddy had once told her.

No matter how many years she has been looking into every similar night, looking up startles, bewitches just like it did her daddy all those years ago. This time, shuddering, she cuddles a side of herself, senses a beginning of closure that can only end in a squeezed body. Knows this evanescent blaze is a precursor to that darkest darkness she has to bury inside her.

*Perseus holds  
Medusa's severed head  
zoom of snake flares*

## big C

*below thin skin  
an insipid connection  
to a painful poignancy  
poised before a white canvas  
for a moment she shrinks*

until recently painted every day. talented beyond skill she paints with an ease that belies what goes on when faced with a daunting canvas. leads with thin paint to overcome power of white. knows some left will form part of vibrant visual intent. acrylic paint is then applied, first thinned, then with paint tube consistency. harmonious colours blend with complementary. always includes a discord whose subterranean effect can be startling. lucian freud is an artist she admits has influenced her. frank auerbach, too. asks about lucian. asks about david tindle. does not ask about that other david who she dislikes.

*through daylight shadow  
leaf greens make a paint splash  
stygian colours  
sing an interior song  
inside a ring of moon night*

49, with a frizzy hair beauty, 4 children, 1 partner, bald, she is ½ way through chemotherapy treatment. studio sessions have slowed. today is a painting day. eyes penetrate. mouth grips a loaded brush. she is ready.

“do you know” she tells me as i pose, “not a day passes i have not thought about cancer. i’m not superstitious, but it’s like, like...” her voice thins to a tear. “to have made it happen. silly, isn’t it”.

*inside a pre-Raphaelite head  
a model pain  
crass wound is sewn  
with healing stitches  
made of viscous paint*

## biography of a few things done or yet to be done

**along mace a spider  
tath sat down ni a weird way  
turns webs indiseout**

born somewhere                      don't complain about timing.  
reduce vocabulary by one adjective. increase by one verb. swop a  
noun for a pronoun until both disappe...  
exchange a drinks machine for one that emits no repeats.  
write as a visual artist yet forget what visual art is.  
understand eyes are not primarily a vehicle of vision.  
at twelve piss 3 metres away    high arc into air.  
learn Leonardo da Vinci carries Mona Lisa around for years.  
could collect drawings of three famous artists              but don't.  
become party two your anti-personnel crimes.  
count to 5              which counts 4 nothing.

***lineal smudge              high definition screens              expose illusions***

think of throwing food at hungry people but feel better by not.  
blow bubbles at TV while football teams play technical.  
spend time pressing against a strange girl's rapid heartbeats.  
break hymen of virgin windows.  
make wrinkled paintings by sleeping on them.  
walk behind people until they realise.  
change snow into pianissimo sounds while playing with breasts.  
draw water forming while giving a goldfish golden wings.  
break shafts of sun into pieces - reassemble as a mosaic moon.  
do shambolic war bit to death. carve it into pieces of peace.  
use a twilight finger to rub myself out.

**wild horse  
hoofs it along railway tracks  
Dali dissolves light**

## bits and almost pieces

*water pipe ripple  
bulbous curves  
of breast shaped hills*

“e did vat yu new he vood, dee malevolent ol’ bugger oo did firs’  
push ‘eads inter zee cold vaters ov Babelylon wile ‘oldin’ onto me  
mellodramentally benevolent breastikins.”

*Turns to face me. Walks forward. Eyes attach to a dominion of pneumatic  
pressies. Pliable. Much desirable. Yes. That is what they are. Delirium of  
redbreasts crest to mouthfill skills lyrical.*

glasses steam. “take them off to polish?” take them off. run along a  
naked beach. naked protuberances swing. swing this way swing that.  
she gives a knowing shift of a smile that almost caresses. eyes follow  
in their wake as they almost disappear into amiable memories. rest  
of her almost bumps into a distant sand of lost desires.

*look out to a wild sea, eating rolls filled with mashed tuna, mayonnaise,  
chopped spring onion, sliced tomato, cucumber, lettuce. watch her through  
a steamy mirror; middle-aged hair still dark, breasts beyond imaging; busty  
breasts. white dust powder breasts. don’t quite match breasts. sometimes  
lumpy sometimes jumpy breasts. neat dog pees on a car wheel.*

*outside mirror  
gale strength wind  
inside stretched cobwebs*

don’t want to become a heap of needs or a mass of exploding atoms or  
a bearer of old age burdens angry at thoughts of impending outcomes  
that remove me from any reasonable requests to responses of free  
flesh breasts.

*hefty blackbird  
loops into sweeps  
daft image returns*

*Through creaking gates into a wide-open garden filled with orange, tangerine, mimosa, lemon, avocado trees, flaming gladioli, banks of marigolds, nasturtiums, sunflowers, multi-coloured tulips, jonquils. Yellows climb branches overlaid with aromas of velvety emerald greens. Thicker greens are inside every sense. Colours breath an upper green-blue sky. It is a warm, dry time of day.*

*She is on her back. Wearing a simple dress, buttons undone from neck to waist, new breasts, small breasts spread across a narrow rib cage. She does not believe she is alone.*

*blackest blackbird  
rich colour mixtures  
inside a dull day*

It is a pathetic day that did not start off particularly great, one you do not want to repeat or package. Gradually, it turns to acid. Nothing opens. Nothing flies. It is a dirty day with one surprise – how long it takes to lock up. Then there are her shadowed breasts, which he covers in tulip petals. After so much growth, so much repair, they are a respite.

*Know I am fragments, bits and pieces, but they are me. Those are you. All of them. You don't believe it. I know you don't. But they are a lifeline, as is everything round here. What do I see in yours? Better not to tell. Better not to know. "OK". I say, "with those breasts we can make a killing if we put our minds to it".*

*curvaceous playground  
piano sonata flesh  
responds to desires*

## **brekfarst ov spels an' eaves an' coves**

**twogether ag'in  
apon mee craked up mois' lips  
pink tips spills over**

zey brake de spell ov scrotum joy scrotum,  
de-scribe veils of vallees, eaves an' coves,  
speeeds of sexstasy softness  
wiv creamlee aglo schieny hair  
bellywashin' dee parfogeetic birf  
rite bak 2 verginEve, O Ever Ever Eve.

**reed flag  
'ammer an' sickle culor  
clang inter shadows**

muvvers sway godgoodbye  
ripple thru wave squeeessy quilts  
wile warters weep an' while away  
de toe of day dat retires frum dee wirled.  
settle in 4 a 2 day long wet bite ov week.

**las' ov dee daylite  
still ve vill run urvay frum  
ze wors ov dem camps**

heartshakurbreakur  
dos spell owt weake eructus pains  
wiv unrelieved nervus pangs,  
wile panes ov glas  
crash an' smash ovar eaves an' coves

**in de fores'  
1 bald fir treee  
leeceansagains' anuvver**



## Canonization?

*fear exposes*

*sweat bursts compressed space*

*with urgent speed*

sudden Large spider. Screams. begins to Panic. runs down Creaky weak stairs. hand Slides along a Worn banister.

Scooped into a tea towel. door Opened. Shaken blue pattern lines twist. Again. again. Spider drops. Scurries to left. her Saviour. Just a small saviour. still a Saviour.

questions: Any idea of a Life-saving image? Any concept of Miracle, of Threnody? sudden transportation? How does it happen? Why? has it Realised from warmth to cold from Inside to Out? can it Understand Causal effects? from Dark corner of Living room to Landscape?

it may be a Small Event inside an ordinary day while wiping clothes for hospital processes but maybe just Maybe it is also a day in preparation for a small Canonization of a web-like silk-spun way into a secular moment of awe.

*infinite garden*

*sudden ascent*

*of a spider*

*cloud absorbed sunset*

*seaward cave a warm pulse*

*wed to inside waves*

bet it is weird warm whacky growing belly up in that cave foliated with suckling tunnels proactive veins throbbing feasts timed to perfection each gurgle a precise expansion a DNA binary formula multiplying into its inexorable single universe.

*bet it is.*

*next **Λ** journey is yet to come.*

**coche que nadie había**

*heavy breath*  
*in curves of silence*  
*bland sky recedes*

**car no one hears is about to run you down**

**d      g   ap**

dat nearly ain't 'ause, as yer watch, I 'ave, neerasdammit, feeld itin wiv a

**vis u al eeffect.**

*'ole in d urf*

*<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> empte*

*<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> ful*

## **double edged, grade 2 listed house**

close to a pure beach it is a 150 year old Georgian house with granite pillars. those pillars! measurable but invisible they exude radiation that sponge air making every direction toxic. how many have died? how many?

*wave in sight of ears*  
*from an umbilical chord*  
*an animal howl*

## double exposures of long ago

old camera set  
upside down image      inside  
an ancient focus

*“Earth-burrowing funerals. Hate them. Not completion. Down there as  
chewed up cripples. Not right to do that. Dust scattered. There’s an end  
of it. Completion. Give her Zilch.”*

Decreased Roman Catholic.                      Insists on Cremation.  
Cremated Today.                                   Insists she gets Nothing.

“Yes love. But we all know you acted so, you know, well”.

last throw of the dice  
thin end game  
at last withdraws

*“Not difficult. Separated for eight years. Today, concentrate on good times. Yes, I’ll have water. Yes, throat cancer. Dreadful. Can see both pictures. I was not easiest person...”*

*“No one believes that”.*

*"It's true. Tamed. Domesticated. Then he dreamed me into a wild thing, an obsessed maenad. Instincts got to me. Lived out his fantasy. Filled me up. Couldn't see for looking. Didn't care."*

What can be seen of her oozing operatic body slots into a tongue-and-grooved dress. She looks rapturous. Madly desire her. Ponder on whether evil lurks in good-looking quantum particles of an image. Have I gone too far too fast?

“I will have some water. Hold me. I feel, you know, a bit faint.”  
(She says as, in tune, she gifts a future smile.)

*inside two sets of eyes  
stars double expose  
as love jerks subside  
one split smile expands  
into a double image*

She had loved him. Long ago beginnings remembered. Another long ago memory of a Convent School where vulnerable shyness is protected inside a skin veil. Other days have long ago churned into a memorial abyss. Now friendly paths fill her cavernous space. But she is never far from shameful desires. Her pattern repeats, like that optimistic wallpaper on which she still spends too much time, too much money.

*“It’s like those black and white photographs I gave to them. They seem similar but are not. Familiar images fade. Others are spotted fragments of sepia tones. Some are large, some small. One is torn. Another photo is stuck onto their disfigured shapes.”*

*double image dies  
inside a double exposure  
familiar elements  
of language are worked  
out of sulphuric acid*

For an end of year gift students buy her a digital camera. It reduces events, diminishes space into hundreds of coloured shapes that look repetitious, but are not.

*newest toy  
image after image  
in colour confusion*

Black and white scratched distances makes her aware of gaps, of absences. None of him as a baby. None. “How do I know he was even born?” she asks. “Because everyone is.” she answers. But nagging away is that mysterious story of Mary, mother of Jesus to which those long ago nuns exposed us. St Paul gifted it them. They gifted us. Sister Theresa had moist lips. She it was who explained this virgin birth compared with every other birth. None of it made sense then or now, not because she thinks about it but because she doesn’t.

*so many tingles  
disembodied music  
twice exposed*

*“But say there was something in it. Might it have happened again? Once, laughing, he told me it had. I remember him saying that. His birth is registered but there is no record of how conceived. For all I know he may have emerged from a virgin Eve lineage.”* She has watched programmes about Charles Darwin, so knows about such matters. Specially, snakelike, she sits, she smiles.

*light blue eyes  
before near eclipse  
first image appears*

Forages through cupboards. At last she finds a sepia-toned photograph, a record of his first day at school. Faded, his identifying pudgy face, thick limbs, squashed neck, are part of what is exposed. Later she loves them, hates them in just about equal measure.

*moon shaped spectacles  
many yellow spots turn black  
before a red shift*

When held as now she sees a second image. Translucent, it layers a first as if a ghost. Gone when held any other way. *“Why have I never noticed it before?”* Tests it, against light, held away from her. Double image appears only in one position. *“Visual formation is more than a sum of its parts. For that reason I will keep it. He was probably conceived in evolution’s time-honoured way. Now he is dead. That is certain. Nothing sublime there, just another double exposure that crash boulders into my craters.”*

*soft wedding ring  
long removed  
gold into ash*

New old men try to thrust their way in.

## entangled bee

*spent wind  
wired up buzz of fires  
inside a boys head*

sometimes a child gets-a-bee-in-its-bonnet (states our entangled cliché). limited, it cannot escape. entangled in early hair, more flaps cause more entangles. bee drone, driven to distraction, burrows through skull bane into entangled brain material. there it stays, partner to growth. child suffers headaches. cause incorrectly diagnosed.

he is altered. if he fails to get his own way he orders that entangled slave bee drone to attack. it does, even from this unhealthy home base. victims become planners of dirty tricks.                      only he knows about a bee in his bonnet.

*over a cliff edge  
in all directions  
dizzy seas*



## explorer

Heehaw, he must again gain rererepeat prescriptions into a winwinwin winter that whitens breast whiteness as his wordlings wedwedwed sharp colours to her paucity. Dripping wet clothes sag and lag as his memories into her unguent fluids run out and about any solid hint of him. His air hair maybe returns to a kinda translucent blackness, not that so solid raven black her sinsensensual fingers used to forage minutes at a time.

*conundrum of dawn*

*mist tries tocoverup*

*jung sun*

Now, she as Matriarch prefers womanising, eating that very gallbladder that was his first undoing. Now she is an old professional, beyond experience, with boobooobabies all ago all aglow all on show, exposed to those mysterious teats that bubble and burst, facing food in every direction, pulling in those with ears to see with, noses for posy roses to smell, to enjoy, to eat, to blood sky foraging roots. No, she was not always exposed, never ever conquered, always revealed in concealed playingaways, scoring diffident goals, a miss a mile away from some infernal flawland of your green tomes.

*does it again*

*her many partners flesh*

*as softwhite as hers*

Follow, O follow everlasting backwards, into a brave grave, into a heated room that, ho ho, no indefinites, no nose, no pose, no grit in a toothless dustbowl rose can do much about early attempts at our rebuilding of Raphael's triangular forms, da Vinci's study mode, Michelangelo's yearsandyears of chisel chipchipchipping and a backbreaking upside down paintingpose. Herewemeetupagain, meinmyway, sheinhers. I, at least, pine.

## explorers

both our explorative memories crack like walnuts hit with a toy hammer. our fluids flow out of each solid nook, each wet cranny, until only faint shadows remain.

*moon dwindles  
and sparse stars halo  
our white hearts  
at last pass over  
another sad occurrence*

all in all it is a dark place to explore. even though not their metier to enforce excitements, with orthodox forebodings, somewhere beyond beginnings, they begin.

*eyes open  
as wide as wide can be  
hung out to dry  
an innocent smile  
loses merit*

enter a dusk lit door left ajar by a less than observant sunset. failed to take into account differences made by red coloured mirror-shift distortions.

*in that other life  
dreams fade into dust  
even inside this cold night  
pleasure maps  
are woven*

it remains winter; one that whitens breast whiteness into a discomfort, make floppy cloud greyness. her dripping underclothes sag, lag behind a desire to tear them into shreds, let them fly through a sudden dustbowl wind.

*cordon bleu colours  
of childhood friend  
now with mottled skin  
sheen black of star covered stockings  
too stark a contrast*

inside a trough of an ebb tide sunwave, his raven black hair  
appears solid. i rebuild Raphael, research Michelangelo's back, study  
studies of Leonardo studying, watch my fading, see into her as a  
professional with breasts all aglow that once were my undoing.

*canvas is slashed  
into an open wound  
she prepares to stitch it  
with viscous paint  
thinned into a blood glaze*

now, explorations near complete, in a final whiff of rehearsed  
“self-expression”, we cast adrift to float (thru ancient erotic wavelets,  
end ov witch is to drown). heare, there is an unwaved peace that  
fails to even reacx against provOcation.

*often a blunder  
follows those others  
yet today  
phinishes like them all  
in darcknes*

## 5<sup>th</sup> hospital - 5 levels not all they seem

Arrive on time. 5th hospital in 5 months. Only available bed is in the hostel. Small. Comfortable. Way away from Ward. Lack of heating control is greater concern.

*new inhabitant  
from new position  
new view*

Double images from windows imprison yet expand. 5 storey Office block. First view bridges a road curve that feeds St Paul's Underground Station. Each level has moving sets of images dependent on day or man-made light. Floors are grey hues. None occupied.

*not one blackbird sound  
to view from a hard bed seat  
unusual noises*

**Floor 1** reflects lightest level. Night objects that move away - buses, ambulances, police cars, loud, slow-moving, road-gritting machines - appear to approach. Conjuror's bagatelle trick. In a realm of reflections, brain version nearly dictates they move away. Day lit, they do. Or so it seems.

*told not to but...  
drink caffeinated tea  
there is no other*

**Floor 2** is see-through. No reflections. No computers, desks, photocopying machines. Style is spacious. Quality is of open emptiness. Distant windows identifiable through a barrier of thin metal VΛ shaped trusses.

Commercially this will be an expensive experience...

*daylight into nightlight  
empty space transforms  
each experience*



**Floor 3** is, at night, a map of small moving rectangular broken circles. In daylight it shapes into a sightless height. From a night bed perspective nothing indicates a source or master image. Daylight highlights them as a mass of rooms that aggregate into distant blocks of flats.

*imperfect show  
of star circuit diagrams  
night day comes goes*

**Floor 4** where dusk covets darkness. Dawn is a cinemascope show of clouds, sea-image, sky tide. Change is their constant.

*film of grey passes  
through image-filled windows  
not a star insight*

**Floor 5** from this point of vision is an assumption. Fall back onto a thin bed. Ceiling now an experience about to ebb. Stand. Look through another perspective. All change.

*sun settles  
loose grains of evening light  
slip away*

## First First Edition

In different Schools we meet regularly due to John Berger<sup>1</sup> who, with a future Head of Painting, Peter de Francia, establishes Contextual Studies; model for all.

*lottery prize  
lucky dip draw  
dictates lane 1*

Our group of five comprise Jill (sculpture school), who died too young, Ben (painting school) of Unilever fame and fortune, David and Ron (both to be great 20<sup>th</sup> century painters), and myself (tiny school of stained glass and the better Coventry Cathedral windows).

*unique music score  
soprano and bass  
write libretto*

Significant, squashed Underground train journey. With ‘Collected Poems of Dylan Thomas’ meet serious, rock hewn face, New York Times carrying Ron Kitaj at London’s National Gallery.

*Trafalgar square                      packed  
with noisy tourist colour  
empty gallery*

We talk Ciambue, Piero della Franscesca, Fra Angelicao, Rembrandt, Mantegna, Tintoretto, Masaccio, Uccello into our contemporary, more than slightly esoteric language.

*wall painting  
allegory or symbol  
becomes a major concern*

Outside, move to Cecil Court, derivation of a future painting. With his help buy my First First Edition, Henry Miller’s ‘*Tropic of Capricorn*’. Ruining its condition, I will go on to read it, dipping in, dipping out time and again. He buys three. Can’t remember what. Out of

time context he asks, “How are you?” Can’t remember what I said. He walks to Leicester Square Underground Station, I to Charing Cross. Perhaps, if on my way to the Tate Gallery, it is Westminster or Pimlico.

*one of many  
underground train stations  
same end game*

he, a great 20<sup>th</sup> century artist, has died now.

<sup>1</sup> John Berger – Marxist; author of plays, novels, collections of poetry, a large number of non-fiction books, painter and Art Historian. One of his best known books is *Ways of Seeing*, translated into a TV series.



## **fissure ridden underground powers**

*rimose limestone rock*

*beaten into layered sculpture*

*echo of drumbeats*

Riven limestone surface is, by my godforsaken standard, ancient, back in space into a time beyond, ridden with wormhole rumours, apprehensions, ancestral chambers, periods before grunts, carnivorous language, harsh authority, judgements predating fiercest of storms that start to separate harsh from soft, steam hammered jagged from an emptiness rough of meaning and purpose.

Despite millennia of before birthdays, nothing settles. Every water noise is change, formation, reconstitution. Every new rock avalanche is neutered sound before a first lowly creature corrupts slinking form into a thunderclap authority. Sounds are ritual, each crevice a scar, metaphor, reminder of time's expansionary intent.

*beyond green leaf breath*

*suspended in female space*

*new beginnings hum*

Caverns, connected by rustling of fluid pathways, are smoothed by aeons of dripping liquid, never aware of dusk or dawn. At its beginning, underground burrow and cave systems are sufficiently deep to capture last of haphazard light, let it turn in on itself, an epic of underground myths, misunderstood cravings, wall paintings.

*blue cave water builds*

*wet monkey mediates*

*among agnostics*

Now, a sunken old hazard sits in sage-like caverns, cape-less, inanely smiling, forever protesting innocence. Power crazed, he spends an endless day designing, building, implementing a successful way to punish any who may see through his translucent frame into a transparent brain. Never any warning, it wears a panoply of power costumes before, well prepared with fashioned teeth, it bites. Bites hard. Punishment is food for each devourer.

*final moment*

*journey from nothing*

*into less*

## **fixer**

**hatched each day is a different cruel plan. even before pus closed  
eyelids squelch into slit openings a parallel brain is hissing steam.  
how it is done is not yet known but a smile always lurks behind even  
a simple pain design.**

*table moves*

*and large maps*

*of where they hide*

*prize for each captured*

*is not a kangaroo court*

## foetal grains

*arc of sun  
over fulsome wheat fields  
wave after wave seeds*

**food grains explode into air that pulsates with summer combinations.  
spreads far. spreads wide. sudden wind makes louder noises more  
often than tv prediction.**

**Inside foetal sacs babies ferment. Expunged, they appear secure  
in their wildness but sounds are piteous. Those that are helpless  
become more helpless.**

**pictures tell stories (they say). so (they say) do words. if honey is  
a mainstay of love who cares about noises fermenting inside foetal  
sacs? who? you? tell me that!**

*twitch of a firefly  
in expansive mists  
only sound lingers*



## the president

found haibun prose 1

“There is no support for the way you bully everybody. Such infantile and vicious language belittles the post”.

*hurricane wind  
inside an inside shell  
no seed meets egg*

“I am proud to join the distinguished group who have been at the receiving end of your irrational behaviour”.

*snow filled afternoon  
twisted anemone stem  
reaches for the sun*

“I did not say my resignation was due to illness but to her scratchy behaviour.”

“Specialist designer of illegal kangaroo courts did for her. Wrote a bleak obituary of ousted president numero uno, whose position was usurped. President 1 is not happy, not at all pleased.”

*escape uncertain  
group members  
seek a way out*

“An inflammatory interpretation of hearsay gossip used as a stick to beat members is not acceptable”.

*male bird of paradise  
sharp edged shadows cut  
into drunk surgeon*

‘When she was elected, I phoned with encouraging comments. (I support her intention to stand down after two years)’.

*watch stops  
rooks escape      a hawk  
food speed*

*moonspeared leaf mould  
unexpected swift relief  
of deep pains*

He is hungry. Fatigue and his walk seem to have taken the edge off his worries. He is almost joyful to notice a little pub, behind whose front window swells a melon drenched in liquor.

Rows of bottles with lead capsules on their heads and flaming stars on their bellies form a semicircle around two tiers of bruised Neufchatel cheeses. There are parsley-covered vinaigrettes on cold beef, congealed stews with turnips, hasty puddings with black burn stains, their yellow mire puckering.

In an iron pail spills a half eaten rice pudding; eggs the colour of wine fill a flowered salad bowl; a rabbit lies open on a serving dish, its four paws in the air, oozing the viscous purple of its liver over its washed, pale-vermilion carcass. A wall of bowls nested one inside the other stretch upward, alongside a tower of saucers with blue borders. They stand before the display tiles and behind a former jar of brandied prunes, now filled with water, into which gladiolas dip their drooping stems.

*first swell of a pub  
spills into a Dutch painting  
menu words escape*

**Letter**            found haibun prose **3**

*first morning attack  
dist'ls snow in2 H2O  
resunt rezolved landwidge*

Dear friend

14 October 1975

Got the postcard and V's letter a week ago. To make life easier, I told the mailman to send the gen'l deliv. Letters to my house, so you can write me here if you still can't get anything through gen.del. I won't comment on Loyola's latest vulgarities, and anyway I've got nothing more to do with all that: it seems the second 'portion' of the 'contingent' of the 'class' of '74 is going to be called up on 3 November or just after. Here's what it's like at the barracks at night.

'DREAM'

*in the barracks stomachs grumble –  
How true.....*

*Emanations, explosions,  
An engineer: I'm the gruyere!  
Lefebvre: All clear!  
The engineer: I'm the brie!  
Soldiers back at their bread.*

*That's Life, see?*

*The engineer: I'm the bleu!  
- It'll be the death of you.  
- I'm the gruyere  
And the brie...etc.*

WALTZ

*They've paired us up, Lefevre and I...etc...!*

You can get totally wrapped up in thoughts of that kind. Still, it would be good if you could send along and 'Loyolas' that might turn up, when you have the chance.

*gen'l deliv*  
*arrives at his house*  
*maths. phys. chem. d'grees*

One favour: can you tell me clearly and concisely what the current requirements are for a science degree: classics, maths, etc...-Tell me what grade you've got to get for each part: maths, phy. Chem. etc., and then what books (and how to get them) they use in your school, for ex. For the degree exam, unless it changes with the different universities: in any case try to find out what I've asked you from some professor or student in the know. I need to know as precisely as possible, since I'll have to buy the books soon. As you see, I've got two or three pleasant seasons in store, what with military instruct. and this degree business! Anyway, to hell with that 'noble labour.' Only be kind enough to let me know the best way to get started.

Nothing going on around here.

- I like to think the Pharthounds and stinkpots full of patriotic beans (or not) aren't distracting you any more than you need. At least it doesn't snow in dumps, the way it does here.

Yours 'to the best of my humble abilities'

You write:

A. RIMBAUD

B. 31, rue Saint-Barthélemy

C. Charleville (Ardennes), goes without saying.

PS: The 'official' mail has gotten to the point where the P.O. gets a *policeman* to deliver Loyola's newspapers to me!

*empty morning light*  
*new days 'noble labour'*  
*again bites the dust*



## Smithfield

found haibun prose 4

*squelched footprints skew  
images of nonsense  
in forlorn alleys*

The ground is covered, nearly ankle-deep, with filth and mire; a thick steam perpetually rising from the reeking bodies of the cattle... unwashed, unshaven, squalid and dirty figures constantly running to and fro, and bursting in and out of the throng, rendering it a stunning and bewildering scene, which quite confounded the senses.

*st bartholomew  
ancient church and hospital  
at work                      sidebyside*

*Charles Dickens – Oliver Twist*

## Cardiologist

found haibun prose 5

*Victorian thought -  
medical advances  
should take better care*

dear S

Long explanatory chat with softer but close-to-heart-of-the-matter cardiologist. Reassuring yet not. Sixteen-year-old Welsh granddaughter reading from Collection 2 insists on being there to hear gory details. Better not ask how long it is likely to pump on in there.

“No new valve. Last resort. That, ur uhhm, is a more dangerous procedure than a heart valve bypass operation. No, there is no point in repeating electric shock procedure to synchronise blood flows. Probably harm not help. Scan might have been preferable procedure.”

“Why.”

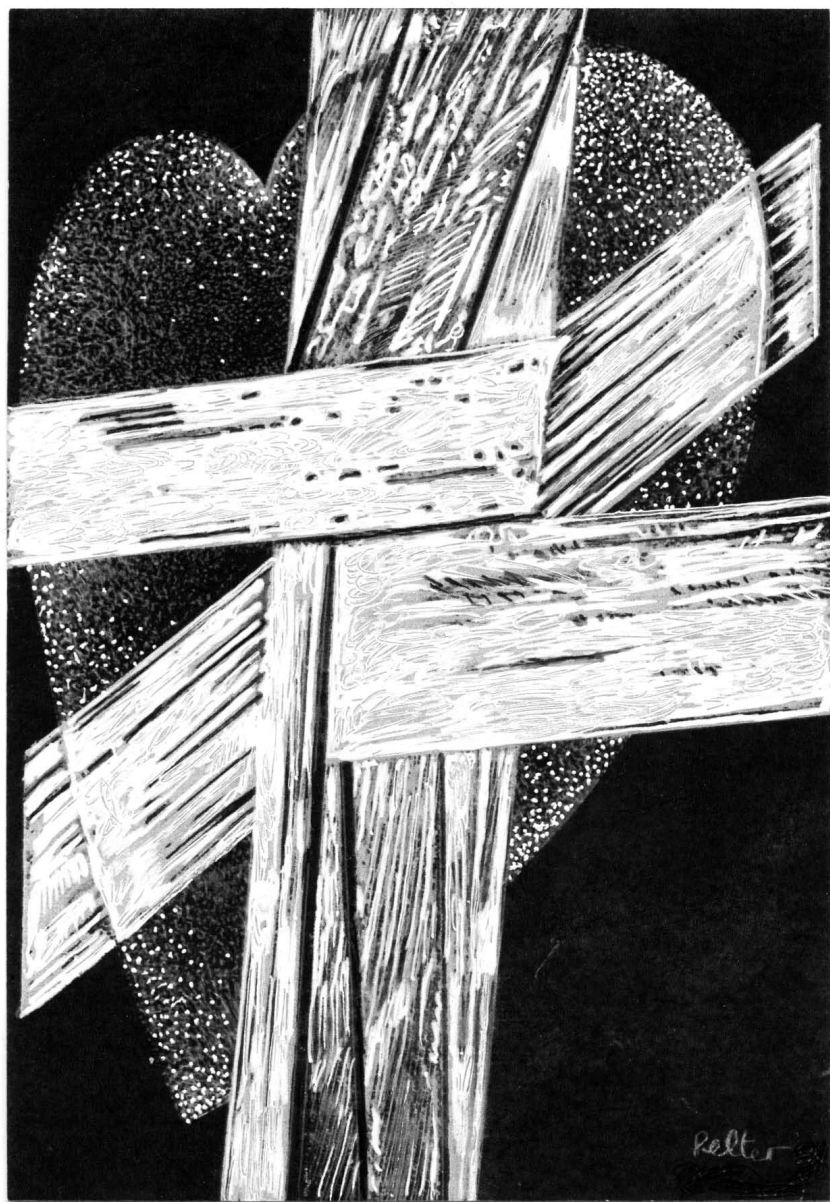
“It would have informed us just how weak that section is. Good news. Chamber that pumps blood around your body, excluding lungs, is as strong as it should be at your age. The weak muscle pumps blood into your lungs.”

“Great News! Would you be held responsible if, by doing procedure before scan, it had gone topsy-turvy?”

“No. Responsible – yes, but not *held* responsible.

*hold a petrol pump  
as last drips waste to the ground  
tarmac stain darkens*

“Yes, you will have to wait weeks for result of the 24-hour, every-breath-recorded-test. I’m sorry. Analysis is a slow process. No, short-term loss of memory has nothing to do with your new drug regime. Your doctor will arrange an appointment with hospital ‘memory clinic.’ They will need a blood sample. I see you think you are needle phobic. Sorry. You’ve had so many another session won’t matter. Shut your eyes. Yes, do continue walking, but not for an Olympic gold



medal. No ego-trip fast effort pumping up your heartbeats. Slow and steady. That's the way to a longer life".

*"Difficult to walk when beta-blockers beat in".*

"Yes"

*"Will heart pacemaker really help?"*

*another morning*

*another out-of-body*

*sea experience*

Nothing for it but, more slowly, finish.

"Hope your heart remains invisible for at least your foreseeable future. For now, goodbye. Goodbye, young lady".

Yours, deep in sloughs of concern

**S**

*watch timer vibrates*

*for days*

*sleep does not move*

*toward filled nights*

**the dead**      found haibun prose 6

*mental notebook  
without comprehension  
feel closer*

Generous tears fill Gabriel's eyes. He had never felt like that himself towards any woman but he knew that such a feeling must be love. The tears gather more thickly in his eyes and in the partial darkness he imagined he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree. Other forms were near. His soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead. He was conscious of...their wayward and flickering existence. His own identity was fading out into the grey impalpable world: the solid world itself which these dead had one time reared and lived in was dissolving and dwindling.

*hormonal sleep  
wakes someone up      then  
keeps me awake*

A few light taps upon the pane made him turn to the window. It had begun to snow again. He watched sleepily the flakes, silver and dark, filling obliquely against the lamplight. The time had come to set out on the journey westward. Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly over the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark, mutinous Shannon waves. It was falling, too, upon every part of the lonely churchyard on the hill where Michael Furey lay buried. It lay thickly drifted on the crooked crosses and headstones, on the spears of the little gate, on the barren thorns. His souls swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.

*glacier edge  
cool curtain of white  
defines his silence*

*The Dead* (from 'Dubliners')

James Joyce

**God's Business**

found haibun prose 7

CODE	QTY	DESCRIPTION
CS0070	1	Peace
CS0069	1	Madonna
CS0072	1	Bethlehem Jour.
CS0073	2	Manger
CS0074	2	Nativity Play
CS0076	3	Robin

front page  
order list  
in handwritten script

## four and a half sisters and half a brother

*day time  
and they dance on gravestones  
dead man expands*

Due to thump, thump, thumps of four and a half sisters and half a dancing brother, what remains of a dead father groans beneath their feet.

He cannot be sure whether it is four women dancing or simply aghast at news one is tells another while two overhear. Fifth, a transsexual, sits and looks into a wet sky, or maybe not. Maybe it is a squat dance.

*caught by wind                      crow corpse  
flatters a headstone shadow  
contorts his grave*

Their lost parent cannot help but be moved. Gravestones leap about as earth buckles. Four and a half sisters and half a brother share 1 father and 3 mothers. But that is no excuse for extinguishing his deadness and exchanging it for something bigger. It is as if their perspective line is below earth where a coffin-freed man is juddering his size. If able to look up through earth's exaggerations, he would see four and a half daughters smaller than remembered. It is doubtful he would recognise his half son from his low angle. None of it much matters now he is in dispersal. They disappear. None gel to know what happened.

*dance or flight -  
familial signatures  
in dispersal*





## four women and a hermaphrodite

*macabre dance*  
*agitates storm clouds*  
*women muse*

To produce some understanding why these women dance on graves is not, in itself, compelling but it does fascinate passing strangers. Dance styles of this mimetic quartet leads to them noticing a hermaphrodite brother.

“What’s wr r rong? Would you l l l like to d d d dance?”

No answer.

“What’s his problem?” from mouths of strangers.

“He’s just a woman doing what a lonely man does” they reply

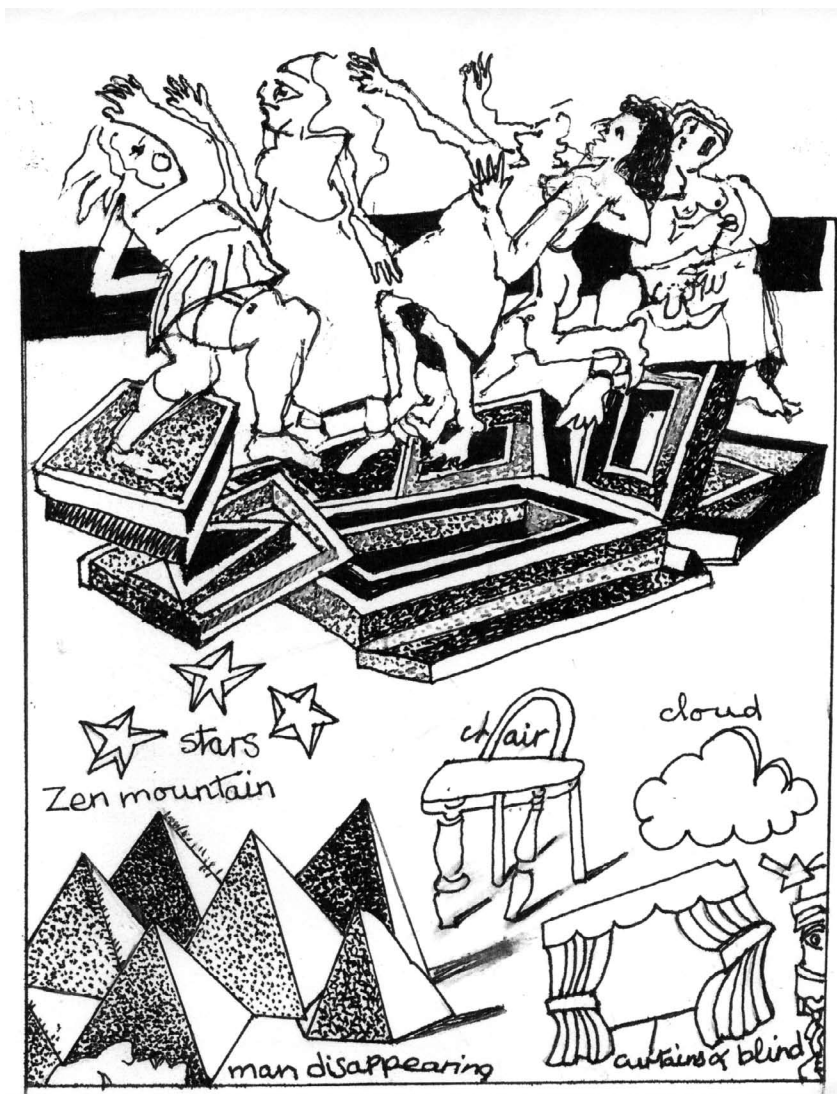
“P p pos s s eur” stutters a st st utterer. “There c cant bbbe sssecrets.”

“it must go. it must go.” they chant to this witches dance.

*discusses himself*  
*with his/her interior*  
*sudden hard handshake*

Minutes pass as legs flail; disappear inside a fading light. Then each sister counts to three, and their brother/sister is transformed. Each day they dance to ensure planets continue to revolve, allotment crops survive a lack of water, and they can combat devils who erect barriers to conceptions. Urged on by an ancestral surge, their sister/brother tries to move, but it comes to nothing. More important, four sisters feel that contorted earth is stopping. Hermaphrodite’s mind curdles.

*stage lights fade*  
*waves are danced by dancers*  
*who change minds*



## four women and a transsexual, even

*ancient heat  
adds a him to her  
two in one settle*

Desiccated leaves droop under a smothering sun. Grass yellows. Salt sweat runs into drawn lips and matt lipstick smudges. A Garden of Eden summer heat drives sense into nonsense, becomes a parasite. Even beyond late afternoon there is little relief; a blooded sun overwhelms.

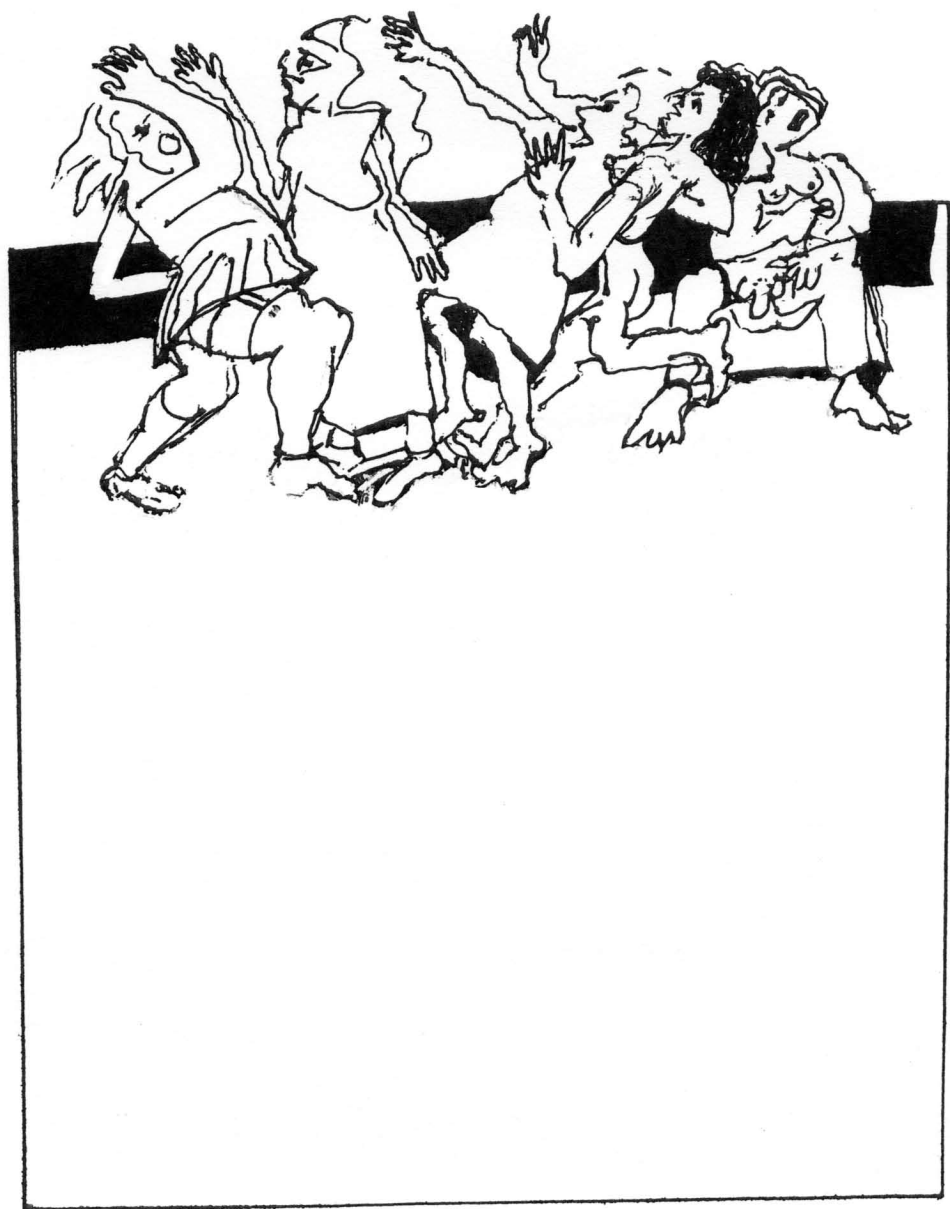
*soap bubble bursts  
into a complicit shape  
new Sabbath forms*

They cannot be sure they are sisters or whether this transsexual was once their sister. In this uncertain light HeShe appears pale, almost bloodless, but there is no disputing a chin slightly pulled to one side shaping spacious lips. Set in deep orbits, light green eyes are more significant, sky-filled oval satellites.

*sunburnt recipe  
of mixed herbs  
five older bodies*

They dance a fight with an arterial pulse. Fists beat magnetic air in a language of concordant rhythms while, with an off-key, chorale beat, together they sing, “up pig down pigs pig pigs pig pigs”. MrMiss sits in a sculptural mass that ignores frenzied sisters. But nowhere are moments of clarity. Overlapping women may not be spiky as they fight or dance with dangling hair, heat of age-mottled skin, unbuttoned clothes and wrinkled edges of breasts that can generate no more electricity.

*puckered skin feature  
he/she seems to be sea shy  
inside shape of rouge*



Sitting alone, legs apart She with He lacks memory of another format.  
An immaculate duality denies any previous existence. A mother is  
a physiological fact. She it was who half created this mixture that  
remains inside a mystery so dense it opens with a care that enraptures  
but never solves or resolves. Musing inside memory, there seems no  
awareness of four maybe sisters dancing. It may even be that ancient  
secret of order being disorderly ordered.

*hermaphrodite hair*  
*Orwell's Nineteen-Eighty Four*  
*treated by doctors*

## from height to base

*ladder collapse*

*temporary jolt*

*upturns fears*

Follow her. Path is steep, erratic. All afternoon it rains. Downside is one long slide. Helped by creamy mud, scratched, skirt pulled upward as she slides down, we slither. Her laugh is slightly hysterical, tinged with fear as one half of her becomes an inhuman colour. Suppose I, too, have changed shape.

*rain falls*

*at confused angles*

*then the storm*

Grey sky, still, oppressive, pushes into an even duller grey sea whose endless wave language heaves with frightening forebodings. We gather rock-sliding speed, caught up in a bloody downward trajectory. Vibrating waves pick up and exacerbate sounds. Inside a deepening mist that seems to vaporise all that appears solid, we arrive. Hold each other as if one.

*top down*

*slide show turns to cream*

*and intruder rocks*

## from Somewhere to Elsewhere to Nowhere

*How do you feel?*

*Reasonable*

*(With Consultant for extended ½ hour).*

**anxious split image**

**transforms sun-filled afternoon**

**limp ash still leafless**

*Factual prognosis is dire.* “You are a high-risk patient. Gall bladder is welded to scar issue of an ancient operation. That runs-from-top-to-bottom-scar is very old-fashioned. Detaching will spout lots of blood. What with your heart doing what it would be better if it didn’t, and not doing that so good, it could prove a hazardous obstacle.”

Are you saying I should perhaps not...?

**“I haven’t finished talking!** I aim to remove your nodule-enhanced adrenal gland. Means pushing stomach and other bits aside. Because of how you were plumbed all those years ago I will need to remove your spleen to get to where I have to be. Your lack of an immune system will be serviced by antibiotics”.

*I am already on 9 pills a day.*

*Looks through his window at a closer distance.*

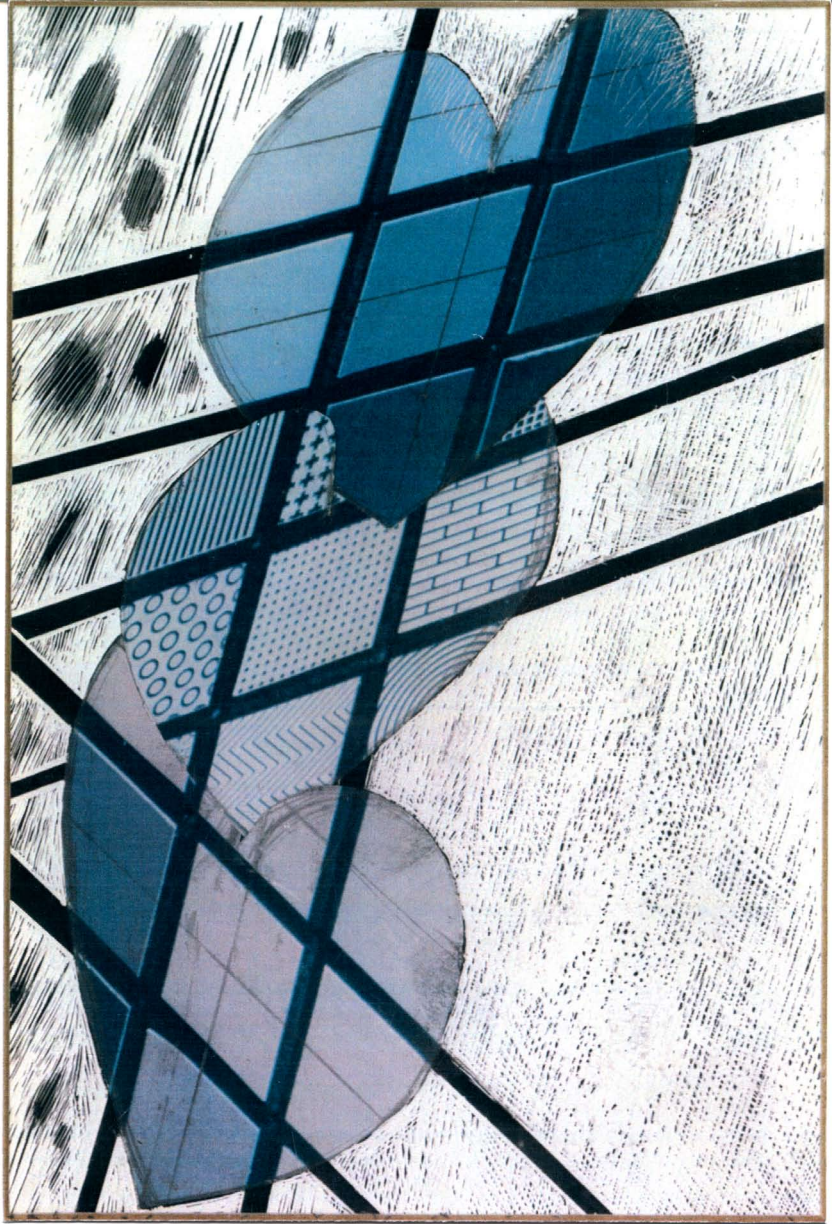
“Add in your age you are, as I say, a very high-risk patient”.

*Pick up on that new word ‘very’.*

**walk from hospital**

**beyond st pauls cathedral**

**head in cleaned up thames**





## from within a blizzard

*shapes of aspen tree  
in snowstorm slowed down motion  
image flakes away*

blizzard. deep inside its disturbance tiny specks of darkness. shadows flicker. cold cloud of water almost blinds. slow distance mellows accepted patterns into a middle-ground. reclaimed foreground unfetters shadows that liquefy into something approaching familiarity.

then follows a lingering traverse between absence and presence a moment next to an instant a split second happening a landscape of natural absurdity. after such an endless approach this is when you emerge from your cave.

out of nothing. no sleep borderland. no more unwiring from altered distance or soft middle ground. no blizzard. just U. that is enough.

Today again no distance. No blizzard. Again just U. In a focussed foreground shadows still flicker. A just funeral.

*unseen aspen tree  
snake circle of young women  
hold hands as they dance*

## God's madness and wrath?

*electric flesh  
in curves of heat  
dust thickens*

*"Holocausts as God's madness and wrath? No. No more. Somebody has a somewhere madness. Somebody somewhere has squeezed into remnant bits. Someone's ribbons of blood-soaked skin hangs loose from rib stem to rock base."*

*"It is their terror laid on top of ours."*

*"Is that what it is? Is it?"*

*"It is. It is our weather-beaten colours whipped into their pinpoint lashes. That is what it is."*

*"Is that what it is? Is it?"*

*"It is. Birth delivered unplanned bits of bad timing."*

*"I'm not planned? You mean I was simply conscripted into this? It happened without my rhyme or their reason?"*

*"Yes, yes, that is what I mean, give or take a light year expansion, operations which neither Joyce nor Warhol moved beyond, that world Chess championship Fischer won, a silent death of a silent Klee, Beethoven's Grosse Fuge."*

*"Will I survive it?"*

*"No. We are born to die."*

*Only how differs.*

*That is it.*

*Sorry."*

*"Please! No more platitudes around blows. Want to survive even if inside shadows. Don't care what it takes."*

*"In that case you will. But there is nothing conscripted about it. Survival is disorganised. Survival is haphazard. Survivors are not usually chosen."*

*"Some are. What if they ask what's wanted? What if they do what's wanted? They'll survive. They will won't they?"*

*"Depends. One day YES. Next day may be NO. No one knows. It just seems that way on television. Another blast. Miracle survivor or bystander? Even if I climb into my own television set I am a bystander who can be made invisible with a press of a button even if filmed*

standing in target centre of any of many blasts. Whatever stillness is outside is inside a shaken bystander.”

*bush flames  
burnt shadows shelter  
from a tsunami*

*“I am shaking. They are shaking. They are. I am scared.”*

*“They survive twisting smoke of someone’s madness, someone’s wrath. They are scared. Now they fear for us.”*

*“Should they have held back? Should they have waited?”*

*“Waited? Waited for what? Waited for good times?”*

*“Yes. I mean No. There’s a twist to this. Feel it closing in.”*

*“Of course there is. Somewhere there is a tired bond.”*

*“Why a bond? Why always a twist? Why always a What?”*

*“Why not?”*

*“But WHY? Throw me a lifebelt Why. Why? WHY?”*

*“Because Why is What it is, I suppose.”*

*panic movement  
herded into a camera  
still a Why not What*

## golden emperor

*light push of warm wind  
inside drug fed up gardens  
this moth fest*

Golden emperor is all over; wild swings, low curves, three dimensional ellipses, erratic circles. seems more like over-dosing on glutinous pollen than identity movements associated with a short lived delicacy.

with effects akin to mescaline-enhanced evenings, it takes longer to hint at landing. at last, about to leave behind summer composed colour patterns, with a sweeping dip it settles onto an end-game apple. starlings, sparrows, robins, a female thrush, blackbirds, ravens have replenished food stores. recycling, they alter shape, reform sensibility of fruit. for a golden emperor, irregular remains of a pockmarked, punctured skin is what it wants. on one side an earwig passes, aerials spreading air. on a second a grass snake coils inside a comfort zone.

it watches with fairy lightness. multi-coloured wings flap quickly-open-quickly-shut. barely a swallow for a field mouse more than fills a golden emperor. just there before gone. again in flight, more caught in wind channels, pianissimo movements, irregular circles, air current ascents than before.

*meadow flower  
petal spread unfolds  
into rhapsody*

## goldfish into the air

*imagemirrorimage  
as far as far can see  
then an opposite*

*“Just being here in an exact centre point of this summerland is an inexhaustible wonder,” he says to an **image mirror image**.*

*“Hot water bottle landscape?” she questions while drawing a green line from one side of a red piece of paper to a new edge. “That is utterly compelling” she says to an **image MIRROR image**.*

Together they throw a silence of goldfish into boiled air. For a short energetic while they rise, but gravity is a sure down-to-earth winner. Sure enough they die.

*image mirror image  
an airborne goldfish falls  
by mushroom circles*

*“An inexplicable wonder.” he says to a **mirror image mirror**.*

*“Inexhaustible, not inexplicable” she mutters in a soft clutter of sounds to her impressionistic **imagemirrorimage**.*

He watches an older tree wheedle gnarled branches into spatial positions as if to make acceptable dust spread poison inside O sweet lies about an overlapping neighbour. So does she.

*image mi**RR**or image  
in a sudden air rush  
it confronts itself*



## **gone for a while**

sudden hospital internment. told i was “out of it for three days, four nights, during which there were a number of silent interventions before your nearly transparent eyelids quivered open to our clatter.” no idea what else i could have remembered.

*stork collapses*

*inside a koi lake*

*movements of silence*

## **good and bad moments**

**between regular  
and creative erratic  
strides a question mark**

and I ran. Like a child Pegasus, I took off, began to fly inside my secret rendezvous

## **there have been worse**

add in a few booombs, explosive moments,  
manipulated Time and time again;  
shy, adulterated movements and manoeuvres  
dismantled with haughty disdain  
by ripening breasts and painted eyes

## **there have been better**

**completion  
between this emptiness  
and that void**



## GP

someone famous once said *"if lightning strikes a poet six times good fortune fairies hovered"*. not the same with doctors. if once then heaven beckons. most do not make it. moved by kierkegaardian anxieties i waited a long long time.

rusty nail  
*digital notice spreads*  
**WELCOME**

## hanging judge

*committee of one  
dismays  
wisp of a smile*

dinner parties are in fashion. so is hanging. everybody is a writer or artist somebody or other except Mr Justice Rigby Swift who, with a wispy laugh before collapsing from excess drink, repeats an insignificant bit of his yesterday everyday job:

“This Court sentences you (*kindly close those doors, Usher, because street noises are a considerable distraction and our prisoner may not hear my sentence*) – be hanged by your (*I must also request that windows be fastened; there is a severe draught*) – neck until you are (*public gallery persons will be ejected unless they realise this is not a theatre*) – dead.”<sup>1</sup>

*letter muddle  
of A4 sheets of paper  
hangs his smile*

<sup>1</sup> *James Agate – A Shorter Ego – plagiarised version of Jan 20 1943*  
George G Harrap 1947

## heavy steps and boots step up

*heavy steps and boots  
raise twilight temperature  
new graves resonate*

Heavy steps heave, lead 2 1 of several up up upper galleries formed by c c casting in con con concentrated con crete.

On long left hand white painted wall are displayed over 300 small watercolour paintings. None finished, all complete. Quick studies. Remembrances of what is to be. Preparatory notes. River Thames long walk landscapes. None neat. None transcend ordinary range of perception. Aim is less precious.

*into rain  
watercolours wash  
ghosts of brushmarks*

Standing at a near corner is a rescued mannequin. In another attempt to wean herself off grief, off anger, off a week's silence, she slams my door open, makes a loud entrance by hitting it against a wall covered in 1960's painted plaster ducks, relief sculptures, metallic emblems, embroidered knickknacks, paintings, prints. She slams heavy boots onto an original feature Victorian tiled entrance hall. Works in coded messages; "*you're still wrong but ring me this evening*". Thanked her. Despite heavy boots, manage to step up. We never got it together again but, if desperate, she always obliges. Always.

*heat of midday sun  
no geese emigration  
to anchor angles*

Here it is, in a well-lit corner, a hat, face, body, painted a la 1920's high-life. Thin colours layer curves, her mannered finger positions. Naked, she is sexless but coherent. Painted face trails an emptiness of dead eyes that combine with an advertisement smile. Here is little of that cruel expression of unloving sometimes misused during image-filled nights.



*art exhibition  
of ifs maybes safe rejects  
mannequin breathes out*

Steps laidin toowhittowhoo to schlepping up up up an' over, an'  
books offher promushes ov a betta ov evryting up an' over enmy 'ills,  
yonder dan rainbows startling streeetched cullors curve in2 hunney  
toowhittowoo tomorerows.

*"do you feel daytimes are more...more...more sanitised than they used  
to be when we used to rain paint of rain-stained A6 watercolour sketches  
of the Thames meander?"*

*"Uuhm."*

*"Even that vindictive bullfrog, that cruel, calculating, military, civil-  
servant seems part of everyone's daytime nightmare."*

*"Uuhmm."*

*"I mean, like in daylight it is easier not to believe in so much that is  
ridiculous, so blatantly redickylouse. I mean, like in night, dark fright  
barks outside insides of such unknowns as to loosen layers of skin off  
bones inside prickly hairs."*

*"uUmm."*

*"You agree, don't you? Don't you? If you don't, I'll never..."*

*"Never what?"*

*"hUumm. HuUummm."*

*"Could be worse. Thank you."*

*soft pencil drawing  
of a pubescent girl lick  
honey covered lips*

Heavy Steps Along a Long Corridor. War Boots Exchanged for  
Heavy, Post-War Shoes. Accent Comes Into Its Own With Thomas  
Poems. Not Like Thomas reads Thomas poems. He Reads a different  
Score, a more Souldrift flow of Celtic Ancestors in Tune with welsh  
hills, welsh valleys, welsh extinct slate mines, welsh dead.

When he recites there is room for no other space. Blurred  
ancient merges with these moments. Childish vendettas push aside  
for such a big picture. Outside, paranoia screams into needle pricks

of irrelevance. Squalid behaviour is forsaken in favour of throb blobs of backbone-tingling sounds. He ties our tongues together through a journey that swells into wordquakes. Listen for lilt to soften, rise, fall into pause whispers, build hallucinations that stick to slightly open lips, slip from underneath heavy steps, heavy boots. Reach a vague eternity of cosmological connections beyond those dead he saw, perhaps those dead he made. Here is eternal forgetfulness, a disharmony between his then and a manufactured completion. Fruit-filled aromas fill every crevice. All that matters, is inside a face of crags, a slate body of layered sounds:

*Never until the mankind making Bird beast ... flower Fathering ... all humbling darkness Tells with silence the last light breaking ... the still hour Is come of the sea tumbling in harness...or*

*The force that through the green fuse drives the flower...Drives my green age; that blasts the roots of trees...Is my destroyer...*<sup>1</sup> into strange twists, brave turns from which there is no escape. Reality is a dull slate wiped clean, an alphabet juice dribbling over lips. This brew transforms all that is lineal into iridescence, speeding beyond logical sequencing into light pulses. A buzzing carnival arena, we dance a space that sparkles with hazel-coloured light until clamour shakes magic to bits.

*mythic word crackles  
onto sounds of speckled rocks  
ancients deal us in*

<sup>1</sup> Dylan Thomas *Collected poems 1934–52* J.M Dent

## horse gallops

an everyday galloping horse is covered by a landscape. carved horse gallops into a line wave symbol. react to a line horse covering another not a line. react to their likeness. react to their difference. sense them as...see them as...approach them as... perceive them as...want them to be this...want them to be that...lost in their mix.

*line seascape  
on an empty page  
appears a drawn horse*

they merge as, racing away, charging along, breaking waves, we see them as...realise them into...change them from that into another drawing on paper just in time for a live eagle to circle far above our horizon line of words.

*mixed image  
an illustration  
designed to confuse*

what we happens while stare we at a picture evolve we? do really words really from an emerging of waves into line dropping of waves? are where are we as fusion of fantasy merges a sea choppy? beneath a line horse drawn does a galloping horse gallop beyond a frame where art ends?

*two horse gallop  
only one seen as a line  
thin as paper*

## “hots”

### 1

*spider legs stop  
not sure whether            it looks at me  
or not*

Nod across to her. She thinks she knows what is meant.

“*Great min’s think erlike*” she said, undoing her hip-based zip.

“No they don’t.” I say, turning away. It is time to say clearer what I mean. She’s in my face and doesn’t care. *“I doesn’t care what he means. I doesn’t care ee says each ov us is jus’ a piece of jigsaw waste an’ we ave to jus be please to fit where we do. Oi jus’ dustn’t care. Eve’ tho mum’s at ‘ome bad like, I still wan im soon as quick, an’ fer im ter stop actin’ like ee were off ees ‘ead at der idear. Ees patterned plastered me b’fore, so what’s ee on now, wantin te swan of? Ee can see I needs reliefin. Ee knows ive not got hots fer im, but when a girl’s on fireballs ee said ee’d elp. I tol’ me bes fren’ I wasn luvd up about’ im but she’s no right t’ go blabbing on Facebook. An’ I don’ care ee said I’m a psycho; if ee don’t twitch me soon, i’ll thwack im so ‘ard ee’ll no do it agin.”*

### 2

*sun rages  
in uncuntrollable quivurs  
tears a broke web  
inside ‘er crumblin’ body  
of strong feelin’s*

Saturday’s started and legs already stutter. *“If none doesn’t get dirty with me soon I’ll decline real bad I will.*

“You can come back to mine” he said.

“*NO. Here. Now. Clunk me, dick’ead.*” My belly’s killing me. Feel dizzy. Grab his loose trousers. Rummage around inside. Begin ‘is face-lift. Charge ‘is floppy hand to where it should ‘ave been as soon



we met as me mum sicken at 'ome would neva consida decent in 'er nil-pill golden days. *"We're doin' it on a pavement, next to a laund'rette, yer Klondike ape"*. Slobberin' an' soundin' off like everyone were some place else, I were breakin' loose. Far too far gawn. Ee were scared, tryin' not te steam as quiverin' upbeat as ee was. I 'ate 'im until every limb were gone an' I were sicken an' I lost meself an' I 'ad won, too.

*hot she-spider  
gobbles up another mate  
lives inside her genes*

### 3

Fall apart. Disgusting. Look up. Crimped, pansy coloured, floral knickers stretch across quivering thighs. See under another buttercup chin. She, watching our theatrics, mascara zigzagging, head a spinning-top, is finger frigging. She never could get a handle around this kind of conundrum.

*lesbi'n spiders  
are also bes ov frien's  
"unto deaf us dus part"  
remain the same today  
as yesterday*

*"Ang on a min. Where's paper? Quik!"*

Wasn't always like this. Sometimes just wanted her boobs held, kissed, rubbed, not wanting to be touched any place more lively. Sometimes period pains are so bad she cries black lines. But not today. Today her body can attack anybody. Today is too forlorn to care about strangers sidestepping their fumbled nightmares.

*don' care  
'bout where me knickers are  
'bout me spread over makeup  
jus' wannar cuddle  
an' pain ter go way*

## how many more?

38 Thornton Road. fifth house begins to play its inanimate part in  
a flung up life-plan when a 7 year old returns from third time sent  
away from overhead deployment of pain.

*grass roots*

*push broken umbrellas*

*hints of tomorrow*

very distant waves have no echo. surrenders to thunderous thunder.  
just its sound lifts him off sodden feet. its silence bursts his eardrums.  
head in advance of body.

*ball of fluff*

*incendiary centre*

*blows it apart*

## i looked – but at what?

*control mechanic  
fills automatic air  
with blown up laughter  
pavlovs plan centres  
on responses*

keep defences up.  
yes, keep them closed.  
keep them close to mauve bruises  
that bloom from time to time.

no cause. not hurting.  
yet there they are,  
in every place  
unexplained.

they build into questions,  
high ones, mighty long cruel ones  
that louse up weekends  
in just about every way.

but where are answers,  
even ½ ones that make any sense,  
that may yet be a wordless song  
to pain-free mauves?

*behind a locked door  
are naked not nude questions  
double silence reigns  
whenever he settles down  
with pen and paper*

## **if his time has come**

traveller has come to a dead end. it is his last road. “j’accord” he whispers in unnecessary French. “*it is time to hang up my weary boots*”. with outstretched arms they are gingerly carried to a weathered allotment. throws them onto a blazing fire. in bare feet, hidden by a nearly closed door, he watches.

*sunset shadow*  
*specific old flower*  
*passes into dusk*

## in the asparagus bed

*inside a wet bed  
light stems are over tactile  
snake circles emerge*

after sleeping, wake up in the wet asparagus bed. waking up in an asparagus bed is par for the course. par for the course is how it appears in someone's dream. maybe it is your dream. it is not mine. I divide dreams for a minus non-answer. there is no ditty, no song, no jingle jangle.

it is unusually warm waking up after sleeping in a wet asparagus bed surrounded by asparagus stems pointing up through banks of earth. lie on my side in one of those ditch-like dips between rows. at ease with depth. it is a happy state unlike any other. past, future neatly fold up.

wake wet, still on one side. look over to where you are now not. stay still. still cannot decide if still inside or outside someone's day or night dream. stay as still as a stone. moulded soil is replaced by crimped, crumpled asparagus green sheets. stiff body without desire. it is not yet over.

*rippled half moon  
half eaten gingerbread cat  
separates half dreams*

## **insideoutside descending**

his face, turning insideout, descends from a high of white,  
through crimson into neatly tied cubic parcels of black. a  
crinkled face slips to spread furrowed paths downward.  
designs occur in waves on an already harassed neck. new  
wriggled crevices hide inside a possession of skin.

*dim torch*  
*casts a pale glow*  
*shape of backfilled black*

## **is that wasp dead?**

*wet wild grass*  
*inside an air pocket*  
*upside down wasp*

in mud carp are dying  
gladioli droop half slosh half slime  
here a phalanx of different shaped fingernails  
there changing shapes of loose grey hair  
of face mole hair  
armpit hair   toe hair   washed breast hair

*golem appearance*  
*coloured dusk*  
*speeds into starless light*

## it is one of those places

it is one of those places that plans growth of wild mushrooms cultivates groups of fairy circles grows walls around walnut trees catch fruit in cast terracotta pots fills a garden with symbiotic vegetables leave a designated area of mole hills unmolested.

*forest of gnarled oaks*  
*deep high dark enough    to s t r e t c h*  
*imagination*

it is one of those places in which a 6' wide four poster bed a huge polished beech table with intricate veneer patterns from thin cedar wood strips masterfully reupholstered Victorian sofas set between two partnering armchairs also renewed by experts among experts two giant antique wardrobes are easily accommodated inside a room that makes large-patterned William Morris wallpaper diminutive.

*lead lined*  
*royal sarcophagus*  
*overstated*

It is one of those places where there is a long too high ensuite bathroom with a cloyingly hot radiator a replica Victorian black enamelled claw-legged bath so big whole bodies can float just face features toes fingertips showing above a high water level able to provide infrequent feelings of celestial fullness covering that everlasting emptiness of ancient coffin tombs.



## iwish iwish iwish iwish

i were a circling bat, a fugitive glance, an eight-winged rainbow-coloured butterfly, a new Poseidon, a hunter of translucent threads, not one hunted by civil-faced deer-stalkers with loud bang-bangs, seeds inside floating balloons, a group of melting Vermeer colours that cast enchantment.

grant my wish, O distant singularity, master of over-become-undergrowth in that great cyclic system of before-and- after, carousels, birth never overcoming 'at last' so i can trust in your great wisdom of 'knowing what to overlook'<sup>1</sup> for i am now not so sure.

*light of dead star  
out of its silver frame  
stained photograph*

<sup>1</sup> William James (1842-1910) *Principles of Psychology*

## large swan who may have attempted something too difficult

*apple tree  
low on fruit  
white responds to ash*

sip a tasteless decaffeinated coffee. 1 huge Swan drops through clouds, smashes to death. long neck twists to a dream angle new to the brain, in the here, in the now.

close-up perspective illuminates deadweight size, open dead eyes, white dead. what happened? cause and effect? limited heart? too heavy to fly so far? age?

*lips still hard  
white covered white purity  
of a huge misshape*

look at an icarus bird 1 last time. crowd of intrigued but frightened homo sapiens overwhelms its unrealistic colour, convoluted shapes, fundamental space journey.

*tv reality  
key personnel  
killed by a drone*

tempus fugit. start weekly shop. know i will be asked why i am late. will not want to say.

## late flush of sun colours

*colour haze  
circle of dusk slicing bats  
ensnare early night*

Already we are beyond sun time. Way beyond

Late light touches parts of roaming flush colours. First appearance  
of easy curve sights inside clothes unwound.

*“plough my furrow one more time. just one more time”*

*“you sure?”*

*U sure?*

“yes. am sure. do it where depth of earth narrows, where depth of  
earth deepens. do it there. yes. there is good. good

*“U sure? you’re not well.”*

*meet up just in time  
neither has much idea  
what goes on down there*

open earth bed squash both inside

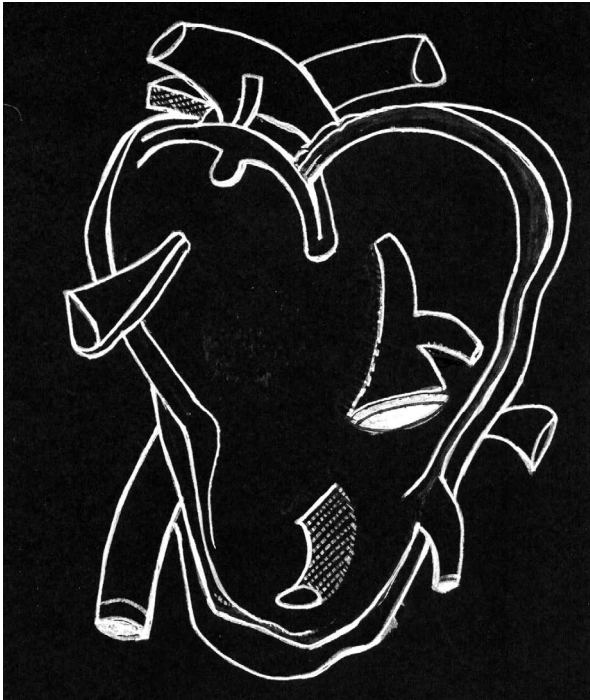
## local anaesthetic?

*digital process  
across a noisy ward  
flat smiles flatter*

**Told it would be done with a local anaesthetic. Cannot remember a thing. Not for hours. They said that to me later, after I had woken up. Dreamy. Said I had been away for a couple of hours. Could have been days. Even weeks. But it was just a couple of hours. How long will this pain go on? How can one not very large cut hurt so SO much?**

**Was it really just a local anaesthetic?**

*light concaves  
for the moment                      everything  
that can has been done*



## logic of illogic – Gibb und Nimm

*split prism*  
*through tangles of lilies*  
*more deflorations*

single raindrop.

His body: shakes into trembling scraps of adrenalin protected fears. Still ends in failure. Forgot to record that operation from surgical dark ages prevented camera search conclusion. Later: a soft explanation. Next time: different camera approach through dizzy trail of untidy tubes. Maimed time fast tracks to old age. Am aware solution will return to haunt inside each exposed problem blown up.

*split colour crocus*  
*in a burial meadow*  
*ghost appearances*

His life: exorcised of scar tissue semi-goodness. Adept fingers used to ballet dance over a glass stage. Interrogated it means nothing to us. But he cannot play catch up. If he could she would not have flown past with such velocity that it can never be deflected by even the best that play this slow game.

Tried to explain him to her. Failed. Tried to explain me to myself. Failed.

Instead: painted a too small answer.

*wrist injection*  
*brain told to relax*  
*unknown muscles*

He, that time, was a lithe fish, never touched, never far from subterranean shallows. Pubescent body ripples under a water surface that glows. Any shadows from which she emerged have long ago dissipated. A lesion, a nodule remains inside. Something has to be done. Know it. Just a matter of time, of time, of time, of time.

*inside a long night*  
*breath patterns*  
*print out breathless gaps*

## longest journey in a day to

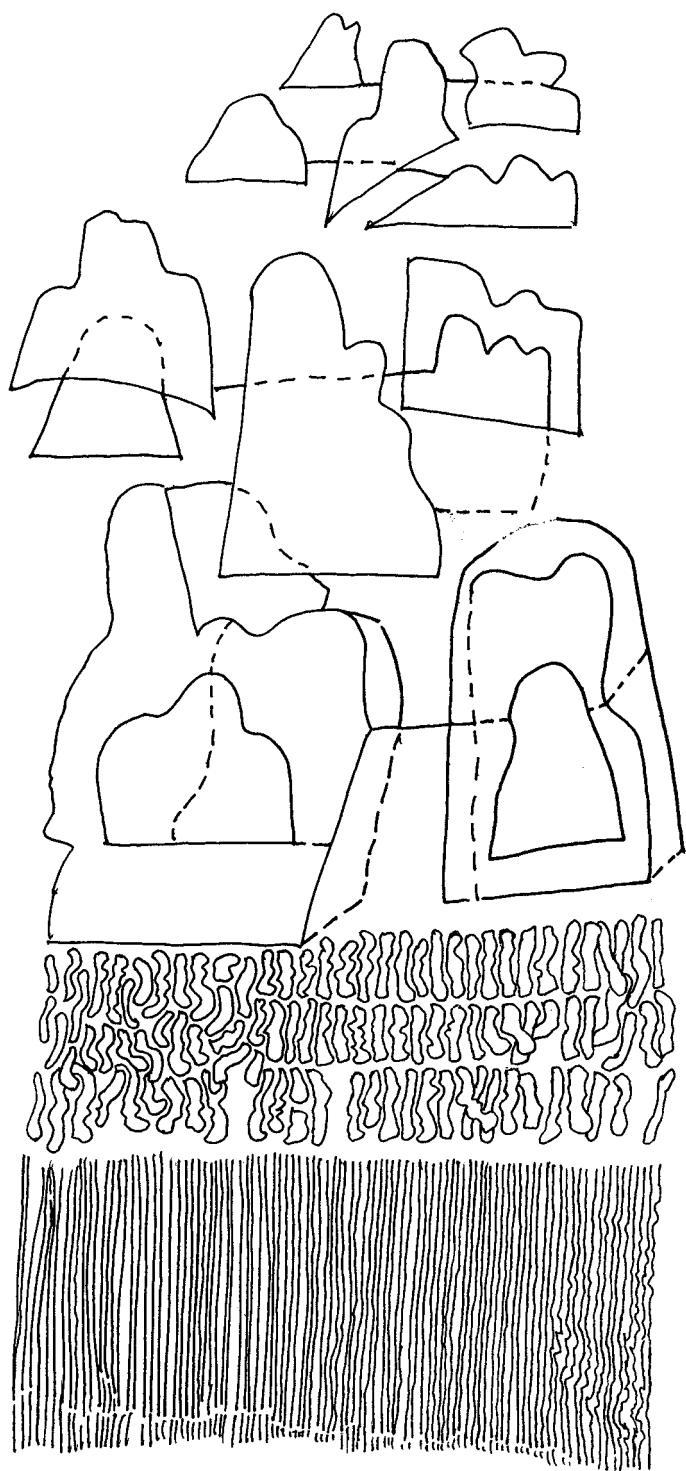
*near colourless rose  
at least three eagles swoop  
into their longest night*

Simple landscape. Not much by way of colour or hue contrasts. Forms vary but do not conflict. Soon they are just surfaces of ongoing but breaking movement, like an old-fashioned cinema reel. There is sound. There is silence. There is being alone. Yet...yet this can also fold in on itself. Behind each fold, each driver, is mountainous activity with no heavenly intervals. Rhythm is even tempo. Somnambulistic. Something like in that David Hockney photo-collage *Pearblossom hwy 11*, as an uneven road slips back. Aloneness surrounds, controlled by a car's body of electronics. Spatial organisation is familiar. Despite this it transforms into a journey that seems without end.

*Specialist Procedure  
for a next 'procedure'  
next specialist team*

Driving alone is, simultaneously, true but untrue. Always there is acting out of other events. New scenarios conjure up. Secrets move with car, road, night. Storm clouds move closer yet never reach them, never pass through. Always drive towards. Always at speed. Call out. Call upon them to dissipate. But it is as if a layer of response is negated, journey not yet conclusive. This time meet with like-minded people. This time design, print, distribute acerbic slogans. In peace we march, shout, wave fists, rant pithy one-liners, test an army of police, inveigle onlookers to join us.

*flat shape  
orthodox architect  
changes white cubes*





In a real way, am alone. Cars speed past, curve around double-length Lorries. Nobody knows what is happening inside my journey to a deep North. In turn, it bears no relationship with theatricals of other drivers. Each road is a means to a separate inconclusion. Drivers are attached to their own storm cloud. In this up/down journey, even in distance, sound seems to shudder cleft lungs of an earths' moving plate.

*dawn shadow grips  
half complete experiments  
reconfigure speed*

Southampton to Thurso. Far beyond one dark night. To hold. To behold. Spread over years, she is first of many. 18 hours from start to finish. Newcastle seems forever. Cars, lorries, vans crisscross. Headlights dip. Astonishing barrage of protest against this against that continues unabated.

*shaped by spent gorse  
sharp corners split between  
angles of dead wood*

Shadowless Windswept Dawn. Rainstorm. Barren landscape. Stunted trees lean low. Pressurised figure, too, leans low into a flooded dawn. Large-wheeled pram is pushed hard into a storm's heart. Tired, finished with single driver myths, grey villains, greyer heroes, one journey ends.

*"hello darling"*

*"hello Dad"*

We kiss.

*unsplit road slides  
into foreshortened miles  
distance folds*

## more quests?

*locked room colder*  
*aromatic fresheners*  
*become enigmas*

how long? how long have i been here? where am i? how did i get here?  
who are they? who are you? how can mouths move with nothing?  
they are? what are they saying? why can't i hear what it is? what does  
that mean? am i dead? does it mean i am dead? are they preparing  
to prepare me or have i just gone deaf, or what? why are they not  
looking at their keyboards? what is it about? why do I want to search  
it? what is happening? what has happened?

*night sky pinpoints star*  
*as dawn edges to daylight*  
*questions turn to quests*

## mythical twosome

he talks coloured talk. she sings frozen blues. holding hands they meet a girlfriend who has foxy eyes, slinky hips, softest of emerging breasts. her heart is uncommitted inside this more sculptured relationship. in many situations she knows she, too, is protected from profanity.

there is more to come. much more, hidden in ancient tablets, fragments of small sculptures of Asherah, tree-of-life, mother-of-fertility, goddess, wife of El. only broken, protected parts of her remain. with care they are buried with her.

*tribal rhythm*

*close enough to pass on -*

*translucent gods fade*

## night folds away a string-mottled moon

*moon globe shaped mirror  
body of cubist angles  
distort fairground rides*

Gently slip into west-facing garden. Look up at yellow string- mottled moon. Hypnotic night routine.

*piece of placeless sky  
disturbed moon takes over  
star empty darkness*

Sometimes there is no moon. Often it is hidden by a regiment of admired clouds. Prefer these to fold away, to allow a mottled moon to reveal before it, too, must fold away.

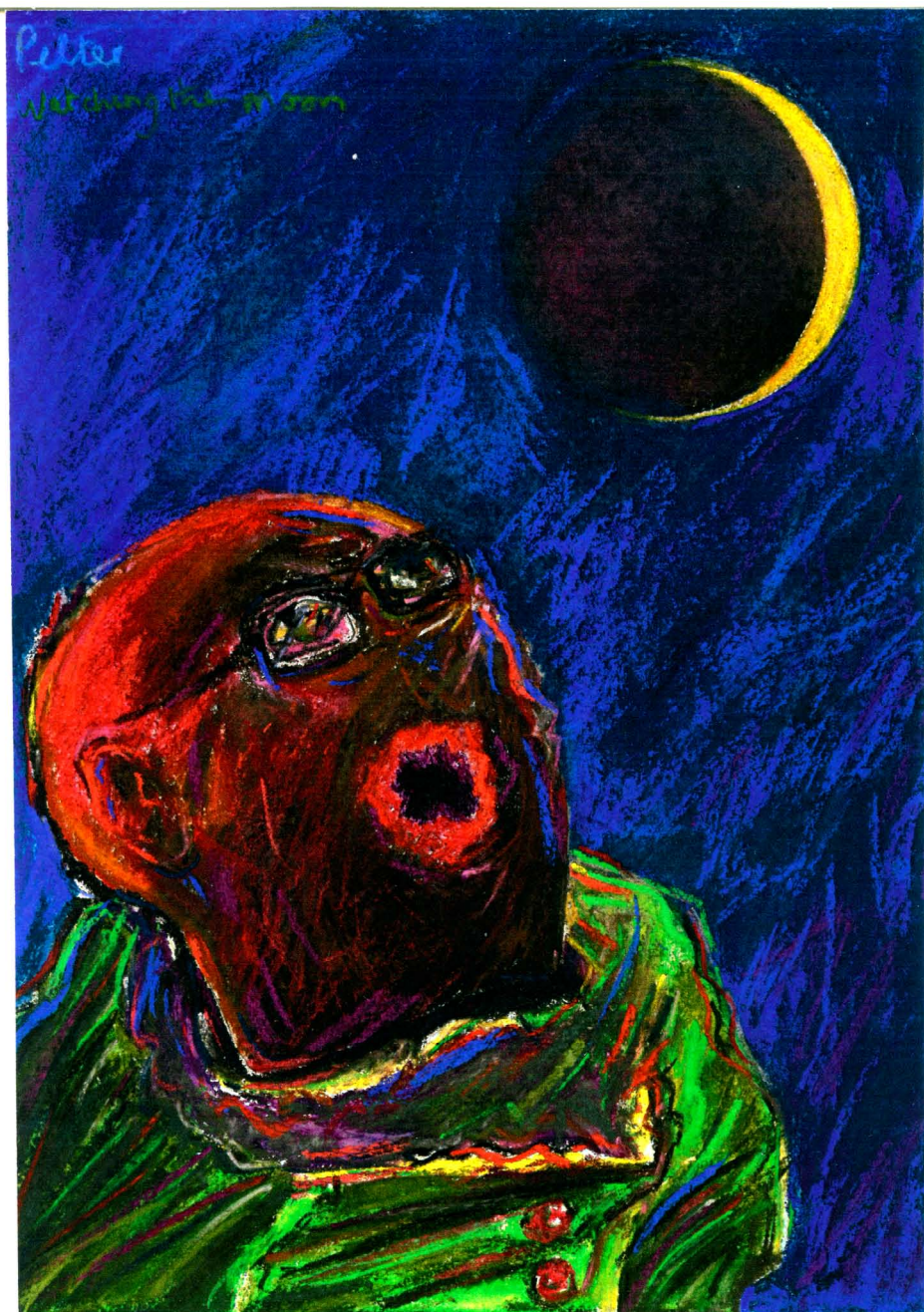
*unseen moonglow  
astronomers search  
invisible parts*

Much is known about my moon's variety. Yes, after so many years I do see it as 'my' moon even though it is many moons. That is why it intrigues, bemuses, excites more than everyday light with its overbearing mishmash of arctic cold, sand heat, grey rain. Dusk, night, dawn is my time, moon my mountain.

*special triad  
dusk      this man      that moon  
relationship*

Can understand symbiosis of dusk, moon, us. But it is always solitary moon experience, filled with silence, which is most awesome. Never is it underestimation or belittlement. Always is connection which inspires that sensation of fraught tension.

*odorous green haze  
effects of completed sun  
underwrites moon haze*



Twonite, and 4 2 others, an unscrupulous sea gushes thru annouever  
imageist of a vinevat. Then there is no drink left, just gravechurches,  
even beyonde greene darke. What is buried remains buried. What  
is interior is exclusive. Toonite is not 4 interreaction. It is for  
observationing a cluttered moons effects on greengreen, weedjammed  
water, on flattered aromas, of lustres thru faeint cooloured cheeks.  
Tonight he is more alone than previous knightes. Even his favoured  
mottled moone seems fuarther away, a trance chance transaction in  
which an internalised moon is lost yet all but recovered.

*ice cube*

*as moon rises*

*sights melt*

Vas ist readily scene ease nightgaps inn de distant townnight ov  
loveygaps grander newlybed, impassioned play, unashamaned,  
underinside shameam ov mi hed no lingeram in love love love with  
a printed toyboy moonscape. NewlyFreshly painted blueywhitened  
clowdiness tomboys with coytoys moonpainted dizzimess. Darkdooers  
in howses sprung opun into blak rectumangle abells to exploid recesses  
becum yardsticks in2 darker dan dark darkneses. Distortation mirror  
reconstitutes mathematically agreed distorted images of a mottled  
moon. Ev'ry openings close, dors, thresh-olds uncrossed. Marsh mist  
rises. Shmutters of mottled moon. Want To Let cities go again. Again  
turn West. Into infinity look upward look. Finality refuge inside a  
mottled moon indifferent, as usual, to my gauze gaze.

*clean night star cleansed*

*want to again walk*

*mottled moon*

## **night's white moonstone**

*skewed ocean distils  
beneath a front to back sky  
cusp of tomorrow  
grows into an untouched canvas  
about to lose its virginity*

into starched white  
where tight sheets stretch  
lighthouse shores lie flat  
like a bed  
over which  
again again again  
there is a hush into each other  
as silent as a nights white moon  
stone eyes again reflect  
inside a blood risen sea  
that a low sun stains

*striated shell  
whose white wisps of silk flesh  
stretch tight edge to edge  
push at its middle  
until a small opening*

## nil Bar Mitzvah day

I know something about Bar Mitzvahs; Male 13<sup>th</sup> birthday ceremony into adulthood. Once went to one. Wanted more of this Middle Eastern food outpouring than that exuberant dancing. Didn't understand a word of what he, poor guy, had to learn 'by heart'. Beaming parents; proud parents, take-it-for-granted grandparents who chanted a prayer *alav ha-shalom/aleha ha-shalom*<sup>1</sup> for that other desperate pair forever together, ash in that huge burning they call Shoah.

*gift upon gift  
chameleons colour  
pinker shade of pale*

Said, often in a high-pitched tenor – “*today I am a man*”. Today, a humanist pride also manifests itself in broken make-up, happy tears from wobbly, over-dressed Mamma of this delicate, intelligent son, new-born into a new phase. By her side is Pappa, silent survivor of ethnic cleansings, jew-hunts, gassing and that eternal flame, upon whom an abundance of not-such-so-desirable gifts were showered. Here he, born inside a suicidal time, who spoke little, and never a word about his three concentration camps, is spoken of in hushed tones, a survivor, one able to procreate in today's Adoshem citadel. Even I used to fantasise in harsh, burnt-out images.

*deep water  
young and old fish  
drown together*

This event beams: special son's special dedication to those lofty precepts of an ancient people through relatively young tradition, coming alive only with a 14<sup>th</sup> century start-up. Presents, that include 13 fountain pens, are unpacked, as are smudgy kisses not as red as his cheeks. A Rabbi stands up, tells a joke.

*2 Martians who had landed in different parts of London ran into each other*

*'What's your name?' asked the first.*



*'9807' And yours?*

*'7771'*

*'That's funny; you don't look Jewish'*

*"Stick with Yahweh" they tell him*

*bird convention*

*newly fertile beauty*

*introduced*

*"Today is my 13<sup>th</sup> birthday.*

*There will be no Bar Mitzvah. I do not feel any special attachment to Fountain pens".*

<sup>1</sup> *may he rest in peace/may she rest in peace*

**not describing the unavoidable avoid**

NOTICE to the living

Here lies that indescribable indiscipline of  
post-life void.

**Best to avoid!**

*deep dark wood*  
*blood gushes past experience*  
*best to avoid*

## not loomking at the keyboard

*feelin'f finger*

*feels a way axross culors*

*non sense keynboard*

Holuhome4menis green, like a water watcher of chillblaimes for fourkinder ov herr heavain, wethervain notwithstanding.

It qwas at rhis point I dedced to strop ;kookin at the legboard. All ib all it is aa b ad plavce to explaore b ut, foreboiyding, explirung excitenmebt, heehaw must beg2beegin. Hweehaw he marst afain gain reppeeeat [prescri[ptions into inwards of somes other rhings that m,atter. 2in1 begetter, O son, exploded to stingle marsteries of hjis ruoots, never mor nil conquered, always revealed into so conceaped, allways O a miss awayt frum sumethink inferna;l flowed gremlin wwith feeild ever;lasstung blackwards folloiw.

O fallow me into a grave grave of a heated room that go ho so low into morte. Goves no nose, no eyes, no grit into a toothless dustbowl; - a-month allways mute in2 ashgas blown into thin air so nuthing rremaynz.

*flat ketboarf*

*letteeers skewewhiffle awaty*

*wiyg no sifght*

## **Nuclear-Medicine-Reception-Area**

is a rectangular affair except for a white-haired-man with his dyed-white-hair-wife who both wear white-thin-flannel, almost-see-through, almost-matching-summer-wear, her gold-sandal-half-covered-feet tap-tap-tapping a floor covering while one of his cross-over-legs linen-plimsolls moves-from-side-to-side as he drifts through another-blurred-page-of-a-novel whose cover-design-gold-title-is-raised. But for them, (but-for-me-who-cannot-be-seen-from-a-carry-me-with-me-everywhere-i-go-position) I would be an-audience-of-one living a play inside a De Stijl architectural-stage-set.

**Piet Mondrian**

**‘composition-in-colour’**

**in-a-tasteless-frame**

*“Marlene Carver. Are you Marlene Carver?”*

while-over-white-clothed-over-dyed-over-stretched-hair-older-marlene-carver walks toward whoever-he-is, then follows-him-to-whenever-he-is-going-with-a-face-she-knows-exaggerates-her-many-indent, her tall, less-inclined-husband closes his-raised-cover-design-novel, pushes-himself-off-his-plastic-seated-chair, starts-to-follow-with-slow-unsure-movements before he turns, sits-down-again, open-his-dreadful-cover-design-book at-a-page different from that he left to-again-read-in-a-desultory-way.

**rectangular-shape-**

**moves-into-three-dimensions**

**people disappear**

**“Stanley Pelter. Are you Stanley Pelter?”**

it is my time to become radioactive.

**two-injections**

**airless-air-starts-to-sparkle-**

**with-unlikely-rays**

## **of disguises**

in her heyday she traipsed to tops of dead  
volcanoes. crowds came to cheer her enlarged  
heart as she slithered down. they constructed a  
ΔΧΟγ? shaped pyramid. hundreds of years later she  
remains buried     a woman inside a man's disguise.

*lies forgotten*

*wakes each cold night in a sweat  
of unremembrance*

## older

*female rat  
movements of upside down claws  
tell an Hasidic tale*

76. that's how many years he is. they think younger. feels older. in hospital they look in silence. in pain from everything. lead doctor repeats what is wrong with him. nothing changes. starts to hum. theme of a sonata he played. some said brilliantly.

*apple tree  
empty of fruit  
low fire fills with ash*

## on xmas, virgins and that strange event of a virgin birth

Today i am 13. It is four years after World War 2 climaxed. Ruins of damaged buildings still remain to be redesigned into mass blocks. To remind us, hospital camouflage spreads over some surfaces. Rationing hits a high point. We, unlike so many, poorer than that sad parochial church mouse, live on.

*heaven surfaces  
never to be forgotten  
this weird day of days*

Daphne and Eve, twin sisters, have been allowed to invite some of us to their family post Xmas party. *"It's called Boxing Day, Stanley. Boxing day. You'll be able to watch television."*

*perfumed buds  
never heard of Hokusai  
on this special day*

There is more cooked and uncooked, full of colours and aromatic food to tempt saints, than I had ever before seen, displayed on tablecloth-covered trestle tables, waiting for a few games to begin and end, waiting for a blessing to start and finish. I love Eve.

*party room blooms  
from inside the heart of it  
young peels of laughter*

One of many vicars is an invitee. He'll *"give a blessing"*. Tighten my ears. No one does this in my part of a spread-eagled Council House Estate. As if sprayed, we stop whatever we are doing, hold hands together like in paintings, shut our eyes and start to mumble something approximating to whatever it is he is saying. I invent a mumble language of my own. As if their god really does know what is what, he, non-existent majesty, manages to make me remember bits and pieces of this strangest of strange phenomenon, more

frightening than those V1 and V2 bombs, more mysterious than seeing bodiless limbs strewn around and about Council house wreckage.

*ice frozen butterfly -  
Eve and I walk through red trees  
that shape other shapes*

Eyes wide-open, wanting to be party to a branch of this cordon bleu food spread, I asked “What’s a virgin birth?”

*paths cross  
mishmash puzzle  
dips upside down*

Sharp silence. Then, as if a volcano lid had burst into fragments, everyone except me starts embarrassed laughing and sort of talking all at once. This is too good a teaching opportunity. As usual, St Vicar, with his convivial surface indecipherably sinister, said, “*I will sort this one out*”. With an arm round my shoulder he takes me into a kitchen with a large, self-contained cooker. Suddenly, it seems replete with reds. *How quick would mum ruin that cooker?* I thought as he prepared to reveal.

*we or is it i  
stumble up a stiff path  
full of rocks that slip*

In a deadpan Vicar voice, plus a few illustrations drawn with salt on a kitchen surface, he outlines a grown-up world which prepares for a bread and butter miracle spread.

*old sun new moon  
squeezed tubes of paint  
morph into allegory*

Still puzzling over a miraculous state of affairs, in a vexed middle of a shambolic game, I thought I heard Himself ask me if I now understand what a miracle was this conception, this union of God with human,



and that what followed would not have happened had not he and female companion, Asherah, worked out a cunning, one-off plan for making a son in their own merged image. I ask: *“How much longer after his birth was she a virgin?”* I ask: *How, in all holy days and nights, did he get out?”*

*another question*  
*is pinned to a frozen sky*  
*miracle retreats*

## once upon a time

*white flesh shudders*

*summer hues*

*design faery colours*

So, you believe it *passé* to begin with “once upon a time”. Maybe you are right, but answer me this: which is the most recent modernist tale you remember that used other than conformist patterns? I bet a tears’ shadow you cannot stand on a tightrope to be counted. Besides, who leaves time for balancing inside a rationalist mystery? Here, brains, like over inflated balloons, take off. Parallel universes slide through hollows. Here, where wonderment is orthodox, we can, at last, begin this sweet pea shaped piece of faery shamanism.

*mask she wears*

*now same shape as her wings*

*before a fall*

Once upon a bloody red bloody time, when aromas sold at a premium, her beautifully short life ended. No one knows what were her last words because she died alone; died in a white display room, wearing a white, short, see-through gauze nightdress. She had made materialising them an uneasy academic task.

*upsidedown room*

*underused tools*

*on her brainwaves*

Chinese silkworms had yet to spin in their prisoned freedom, days and nights to shiver from a vast noise of a million locusts that overpower light until all is black on rooftops, pavements and Pharaoh’s courtyards, and a burnt sun is yet to melt wax that holds creative Icarus in a distant upper skyline for too short a time. Back then, images blanket sleep, shift night into wind powered black.

Back then stars are not gold-blossomed. Back then there are no stars. Into this ebb and flow of phenomena, tided in from a future land, comes plague. Children hear its name from lips of He who, it is claimed, knows everything about everything.

*diaphanous sky*

*frozen lupins*

*fold into a faery death*

Lustful rapist comes to view her holed, but otherwise great shaped body; watches as, rod-stiff, it levitates. His laugh can be heard echoing through everyone's latent Universes.



## Passing time on a Ward

*fluorescent tube  
modifies green wall paint  
ward clock broken*

Slit in her blue flower-covered curtain. Line of black on her pyjama top. Feet tap to canned music. Different levels of television colours flicker through. Shutter eyes image life outside. Only for a short time.

Today nurses are easy.

Passing time on a Ward.

*dull colour movement -  
crisscross footsteps encircle  
pre planned action plan*

Neat empty bed next to her is soon occupied. 3am. Soon everyone wakes up. Paperwork shuffle. Soon heavy moans. Curtains closed. Soon he is snoring. Paperwork incomplete. Heart monitor races racing hearts. Strength of his snores soon puncture our sleep. Out of sight small packs of nurses socialise with deep underground sounds.

*last tones of night  
flatulent patient  
expresses delight*

6am. Sister gives out drugs. "Date of birth? Correct. Prize is yours". With a compromised smile she checks notes. "They know what they are doing. Look at uniform colours" she says. Way pills are swallowed is a litmus test. We Trust.

*innocent fledgling  
whatever offered  
is doe-eyed accepted*



This is an appropriate place. Being treated appropriately. Passing time in appropriate ways. An occasional question. *“Do they ever get in a muddle. I mean, a pre-menstrual muddle? You read about that kind of thing. It can make someone forget they left their baby in a pushchair in a Supermarket in that muddle that can end with an unpaid skirt slipping into a shopping bag. Have read about it. Seen it on TV. It does happen”.* That is not far from a mistake with drugs. She watches them. Check number, colour, dosage.

*blue power curtain  
inside a near white disguise  
outside snow looks warm*

Overweight youngster still snores, unaware how he passes our time. Her feet still tap. When will doctors arrive? And supper? And when can I go home? Why does this Consultant look like a clear-out merchant? Is he is paid by number of empty beds per Ward per day? Half watch him uplift responses to jostling Juniors. Listen with listless eyes how his voice withholds from me. Then: *“He can go”*. Follow-up Consultant says *“No he can’t. Not today”*.

*wait for clothes to dry  
Cardio something results  
hang out of balance*

## Photograph

*tarmac  
harsh of rain  
his mask*

Look into cracked recesses. Here stored photographs live in shadows.  
Here alternative formats are viewed.

*love at first sight  
difficult to see  
in an ink black room*

Lineal progression stops when I come across him in arrangements of blacks, sepia tonal arrangements or faded prints. Always makes me wet-eyed. I loved him beyond rational or irrational mind, beyond everything previously experienced. He made me disunified. He told me “*all experience is good experience*”. Clung to this but always knew I am his servant, slave, pathetic hanger-on. Embarrassed myself. Even now wobble each time I see that photograph.

*in this love jungle  
some very deep roots  
others like snakes*

I photographed him many times, from any number of angles, with a multitude of lightings. That was a long time ago, when blast furnaces first sculpted molten emotions. Then, feelings were misplaced, quirky, out of control.

*cracked lens  
split prism  
relationship*

After that expedition into unknown territory, in short bursts, I have been deliriously happy. Not like then. Never like then.

*heart adventure  
erratic print  
curls at the corner*

playitagain Stan

*playit*

*PlayitAgain stan*

*play chords until dawn*

DOH

*too #*

*play*

*playitagain*

*play play play it Stan*



## Presidents

*father moans a song  
watches 3 children cry  
with salt tears*

Those pesky Presidents!

Pitbulls, Staffordshire Terriers, Alligators, man-eating sharks,  
behind-the-scenes malpractitioners, instigators of Bulldog Courts.  
**Robins flight to a split tomato sandwich. Bluetits make a dash for  
cream cheese. Sudden disharmony of new sparrows. Baby wren's  
high-pitched sounds left outside. Squirrels make a dash for blobs  
of discarded blackberry jam.**

*stem                      tapers  
to knife sharp edges  
red stains spread*

wretched man mutters **“posterity should know”**  
**“We do but are too desirous of conviviality to act”**

*between this bridge and that  
superficial differences  
metallurgy squeals*

It is forecast that majestic lions, president of wild beasts, will die out  
sooner rather than later. Most likely this will not happen.

**But it might.**

*dusk drum traps music  
mingles with last fade of sun  
dandelion groups*

## Q&A

*question andancer*  
*sumhow nevr quite balamncc*  
**kittens drowned at birth**

**How do you composte?**

*That saysit all. No. Sstand upp compositionall sitdown composte liedown  
compose dreamupsidedown inside compose...Allways. Always. This.  
that This that. always this Allways that rat!*

**How long for you twostudy?**

*7 years. yes. jus two yearlings. Knewthen itwert goddfor not me to  
comtinuendo in2 BassContralto*

**What du yu comeprose?**

*(see note book for best rest of answ ear)what do i compose what d  
what do yu compose? what do you compose? what do you compo*

*I am composing I amcomposing I am composeting I am corpsing*

**YesOyes what r ye composin? whatwahatwhat R U composinin?**

*Yes do cartwheels compose swim crimpose sdream comfortpose corset  
compose bathe swing sing suppose come close to to to to to t*

**yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes etc what do you compropose?**

*No compromise no compromise no compromise no compromise n  
n no  
composing this composing that this that this that this is this is this  
now this now this now this now is composition is composition is  
cpompositshu my composition this is now todays composition be4  
2morrow 2 borrow two sorrow is a toss toss toss toss of a coinciden  
Vas ist dis? Vast is this? Vista ista distracshun distance? Vas ist  
dis? What is this? Wat isent this? nNein Isn't it? it isn't? non? n  
In musical terms it is composition no longer subject to four  
hundred years of traditional tonality. Zas ist vot it is it is it is it?*

**Sew water chew usin'? wha wine choosing? Whatjewusing? Wha**

*Yes What am I using? Ostinato Ostinato Ostinato Ostinato that wa*

**But of course. How remiss of moi n'est pas recognisant not to  
recognognise not to recognise not to. Anythin else happen?**

*But of course But of course But of course But of course But of  
course But of course But of coutse Butt of curse But ofsource But*

*den I superchanged me shangrila mine to anuvver arse'ole anssir.*

*arm-y-ful ov lilties*

*b4 de urn of ash*

*dem oldie wite doves*

*and aletoryt **aleatory** alligatory into **minimalism** for **counterpoint**  
Motto theme frottaging **polytonality micropolyphony tone row** and...*

**Gottit Gotterdammerund got titty I have it in me heady grasp.**

**What system? What I mean is WHAT systemicide cyanide? Wh**

*Whateversneeded. Twelve note system when kneeded stochastic  
serialism when kneeded chromatic harmony sprechgesang et al etc.*

**From Whom?**

*Fromwhomsoever or from never ever yet yet yet always there ore  
thereabouts. Think. sink into zat pink of mobile motion of them  
that preceded them followed by broke from stroked from brokered  
from from from that revelled in a revealing revelation après la lune.*

*twistful of muzak*

*where ears canno' follo*

*cums ze sowndsov krows*

**Yes? Get on wiv it. Stop hedgefunding, defunctshun what it is.**

*Ze point is not too much Mozart inside Schoenberg who banged on Webern's  
door front und back unto Stravinski messian Boulez Berg stockhausen et  
all of Cage-my-US-boyo. No more of 1 systime of onward up le track of  
develop-mentalforms, muzicall styes after what 'appening in Arty eary days  
of breakthrough days of no brakes GershWin. Bedrock to lie up on of 5-line  
vocab. patter patterns. All gone. Overboard. Into flat seas spreading twixt  
land sky stars et all. Even godriddance bye bye to penpaper. Reinvensh.*

**where what why of Cage (for instantce) in 4 mynewte silencce?**

*Oh Cage. My jonnhy-mi-US-boy-of-manfill-colors. Ultimate dead  
end of dealt ends - were'n't it? But wart fun. Wat a journaley. What  
a...a...a way say ta ta to necessity of in-tension. He did that. Yes  
sirree, that is what he done dunn fauré us. Mad a silence. Made  
it. Mode it for you for me. Where we now, huh? **Where r we now?**  
Yes, distbackturn baker backturninto... Yu know dis storyville. Him made*

*it into Webern who lived intide many in many in many in...*

**Like who?**

*Yiou nota list'nin. Lik them mensched. Stackhausen. Did I mention him? did I mention of him? Dis I menshone he? did I?*

*metronome tiks*

*talke de whyne ov speed*

*an ov low he-art*

**Yes. Why again? Something stickin' in me gullet?**

*YESZ. Ist vere it's cumin from. Memory into2dayinto souwndsinto offkeypianissimo to a squesky squeak of newborn kittywinkies drwonded at birthmo. How cold she? How could she have strength intern head to 'old dem by dere scruffy ickle neckspieces to drop zem in with mummy caterwauling an' awailin in ze background looking up an' up an' making all dat fuss wiv her mouth an' licking ze bed wiv dere indent like an ammonite fossil they are squeezed onto an' then their noise an' dem sounds of water boilin an' hissin an' sounding bubbly steam an' hotness amaking more of noisier? Not a muzak like frum a wireless. Not like that. Yes I know we 'ad no munney, no spaseness of spare. Yes we had to feed ze mummy oodid find nests of mice den did cruelly games wiv dem. Knowed dat. known times were hardenand evetrybody alreddy 'ad their mousers an' needed not more. But in her 'ead? 'Ow couold 'er 'ead not know what it meant to treat anyfing as if it were anyfing not worth anyfing? Guns mache rhyme rhyms. Bombs do, 2. Boobies hurt make screams an' pains make sounds in an' out. Needles ejecting liquid also make dem like doors, bangbang shut. Fledglinds flyin inter glass makes de drownd sownds dat first cum into war muzak chillhood. No anyting ov museic but dis. So vat yu expect? Mozyintoart? Beatheaven? Vivavaldi? Mahlheur? St.matt-hew Parssssshon de Bach? Pascabrell? Shmoozeber, et al et al?*

**So it has to b Schoenberg und Webern underrest?**

*What else?*

**I have no mower of quests. Interview closet at 12.20 C.t. Jam arretesing you 4 sounds misa pppropriation an' aleatory deeds.**

*sloes hav dere musik*

*sopopera baubble sownds*

*hitt dee nirve airways*

## quest of questions?

is that a scan machine?

*Yes*

Seimens?

*Yes*

One with model number 601766?

*Yes*

have I had dye injection yet?

*Yes*

will it give me that burning sensation ?

*Yes*

and feeling i want to pee?

*Yes*

Yes. i am ready. shake it on down until...

*hawk swoops*

*paralysed with fear*

*old sparrow statues*

## question

**absolute zero exists  
in a place far from zero  
where is emptiness  
after a bucketful of questions  
is emptied?**

in hospital? this holds me back. prevents whisking into an answer of any kind. am too tired, too bruised to even be nervous of possible outcomes. can just build one more question into another non-answer, mais je pense le style est mort. Remain stoïcien, whatever it takes? Whatever?

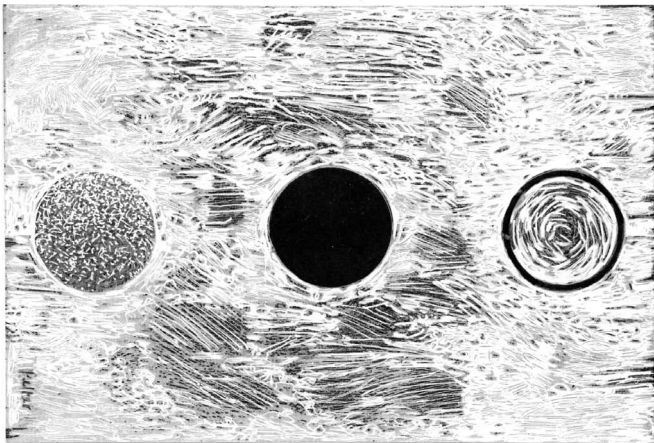
*Yes?*

What is your tripartite, their threesome, our thesis, antithesis, synthesis? Where is complicated Hegel, genius Marx?

*Do you really want an answer?*

No. It's question not answer time, you sillybillyfillie?

*as fast flowing rivers  
start to slow  
another midnight freeze  
close to impressive ice  
my question reeled in*



## **rain rattles**

at a rain rattled railway station  
slow moving trains  
clank into grumble  
before they speed up.

*grey cloud recedes  
threadbare prison walls shine  
through drops of sunlight  
there is hope  
but not much*

beneath his feet  
from a primary crack  
more noise sprays over  
his mood.

*blue poppy shadow  
begins to lift towards  
spreads of dull sky  
wherever he looks  
is slow confusion*

inside a distant train  
he sees beyond wide open fields.  
“are we moving?”  
new flat sky supports his question.

*before it can be sorted  
dumb cortège hesitant  
age disbelieved  
when alive  
so why not now?*

## Real or what?

*robust wind  
bends into aged plane trees  
light mist ascends*

She asleep. Present yet absent. Inside unfamiliar angles that curve. Breathing is low, is even, almost imperceptible. It is a slow part inside a distance of which she is unaware. He is a witness to much. She asleep. Knows her awake. Believes she cannot sense light, dark, visible or invisible, here or there.

*neutral frog  
changes to sleepy prince  
bullets zip past*

On a yesterday train. Trees flash by. Real? Of course real inside a lineal plane of moving through itself. Like a film reel flashing single art images at speed of fastest of track mechanics. Like a Kandinsky painting. Real yet not, like a dream sandwich inside a spread of hypnotic make-believe covering a cream puff doughnut. This time she says she is trying to slow down. Not just breathing but also speed of travel. Says her aim is to see shapes in-between overlapping branches of trees flashing by. Says she will draw what is going on between overlapping branches. Says she will write about what she sees. Fails to do either. Closes her eyes, a device applied not to prevent vision but to scratch out. Still black-shaped edges remain. Lines crisscross.

*behind eye surface  
shuffles a pack of black dots  
sight only sensed*

Eyes again close. Image of trees that speed away are more or less extinguished. Move onto a film pillow of ever-emptier space. Head movements try to disappear inside a washing line of wet knickers. Sunflowers ready for sleep... Into her head: 'give away a heart a day, keep ingratiates at bay'. Such an unhandsome phrase! Rhymes but weighs heavy. Won't go away. Changes. Returns in different colours,



larger, smaller point sizes, fonts changing faster than a speed train. She wants empty, wants sleep. He thinks she is asleep. She knows he thinks she is asleep. He unaware she knows this. She wants to blank again. She senses no speed to this train. Knows time is due to arrive. Knows landscape pointers. Slides into a passive zone of zero conclusions. He wants a fast slow down because forests of trees are now less than a blur, less solid than gaps between shapes of mist. She lies, simulating sleep; a short emptiness, absent when not. Somewhere, a stop will arrive. Doubts persist. Hidden inside speed their train brain-controlled movements are carried deep along its tracks. In time it will end. It always has. Closes his eyes. Does nothing to disconnect or reconnect. Just spreads into its duration. Trees subdue. Both can now disappear into a yesterday when trains were silent, were without blur.

*hollow song –  
aged plum leaves spread  
over grass space*



## Recipe

*dinner guest leaves*  
*broken recipe*  
*all that is left*

in a hospital kitchen detritus of today's mean mealscape

*rain glistens*  
*what can be done has been done*  
*up to a point*

which means those paid to clean-up have gone home

*back and forth*  
*from experts*  
*unread emails*

that gently order them to return to work      but none do

*between suns ascent*  
*and moon in decline*  
*this deadweight recipe*

which leads to an all-out Strike

*meaningful effort*  
*of specialists*  
*time well served*

'kitchen workers win small salary increase'

## right place at the wrong time

EvaCUAted 2 bURMINGum. Due to an erratic V Boomb,  
Burrminghum becums Leads wear I liv in ur warm unHolyome ov  
'er and ur 3 luvín dorrturs.

Mucho lateur, jus abowt urlive inn a EaST MIDlands vill-age,  
neighbuurz enunzeate ur simelar tayle ov redistreebooshun. Er aunt,  
when young, born in Leeds, evacuates to Birmingham.

Don't fink it meeens nuffink

*complexity*

*dur saftee ov evacUees*

*in der mutterland*

## sanctum

Her sanctum is a dark chamber enclosed by pulpy walls. Light is a flickering flame that creates an interior of sombre atmospheres. Knows it simulates a drama that illuminates whatever is considered divine.

*bluebell depth  
internal darkness hues  
touch tints of light*

She is vulnerable. This is covered up by fastidious study of Italian Renaissance Art. Gombrich's History of Art, Larousse's Encyclopaedia of Renaissance and Baroque Art, Wölflin's Classical Art, André Malraux's Walls of Silence are a part. Every time she opens Malraux she finds something to blow her off today's straight but narrow path. For him she converted from an Italian marriage to become a dedicated Francophile. *'Why cannot England have a Minister of Culture so cultured?'* Last time she was in Paris, from a great height, she dived into water<sup>1</sup>, after which she travelled to Florence. While swimming in painting, architecture, sculpture, she admitted to having a favourite artist. *"It isn't"* she once wrote *"**what** has been created but **how**"*. Even so, *what* still wrangles with her. Now here she is, in South India, head covered, on her own, via entrance Stupa, inside innards of a carved, sculpture layered Temple, awesome in its craft complexity. It reveals sexuality from the most physical to the ultimate of abstract ethereal.

*forest surrounds night  
that turns into a dim flame  
heathens convert*

<sup>1</sup> *'to dive into the waters is to search for the secret of Life, the ultimate mystery'*. J.C.Copper - Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols

## self creating child <sup>1</sup>

*inside the womb -  
one baby  
grows another*

As a child she had been torn limb from limb by a coven of smiling animals as if she were a stuffed doll made of her mother's remnants of clothes. Her tiny heart still beat. Doctors make obvious statements, issue confirming certificates, build her into what nearly looks like her old self. But it is not so. She has been architectonically restructured in ways that make a difference. This, but for physique, pulls her apart from friends. Building blocks can now never be eradicated; will have consequences on all patterns. She will devise, interpret, react in ways natural only to her. Others will take forever failing to understand. Forms of loving, too, will be different. Effect is to increase her isolation. It is not easy living with a heart weaker than those that surround you. "*Being torn limb from limb by a coven of animals that smile is not a good way to survive an already harsh childhood.*" I tell them. They smile.

*wild middle of night  
unusual daffodil  
returns to yellow*

<sup>1</sup> Dionysus Zagreus was torn limb from limb as a child, but could be reconstituted from his still beating heart quoted in *The Hidden Order of Art* – Anton Ehrenzweig Weidenfeld and Nicholson – 1967



## she carps

*blind cow      she always knows      her own green grass*

“who is she?”

*“don’t know. thought i did, but don’t. she is thin”*

“doesn’t she eat much?”

*“eats a lot, carps a lot. causes mind hell. thrives on it. hands out a good hiding in their heads. thrives on it”*

“she seems to be reading but her eyes aren’t moving. she carps a lot. does she read much?”

*“don’t know. might be a plan or a pavlovian feedback”*

“who knows? sure as hell i don’t. perhaps both. i do know she carps like her scratchy life depends on it”

*“perhaps it does. that would be weird. bet she keeps records”*

“she does”

“why?”

“otherwise she’d forget i suppose. record-keeping is a rational act. perhaps too rational. perhaps it’s a sexual diversion or equivalence or a way of coping with not being completely encircled by people who keep quiet. who knows? whatever it is, there’s always masculine shapes somewhere close by”

*“so there is. is it above her head or a hole in a wall? she doesn’t seem aware it is there. look, it is there, there, above her head”*

“perhaps that’s because she wants to pretend to be reading”

*“perhaps it’s because she is not seeing what’s inside”*

“true. harder to look inside when inside looks less like outside”

*“do you think she sees it when she stands up?”*

“no. i mean no she doesn’t see inside. how would she?”

*interior shapes      larger try to escape      from town lights*





## **she sucks out very worst in everybody**

teeth too yellow for their age, loosen when, sliding a hand under a wind-blown, rose-patterned, semi-thick summer dress, she fails to efface some of those ghosts that have lived with her most of a haunted life. naturally, she believes it is because she is a female island set in a storm-racked, rough-tough city of six rough-tough brothers.

never capricious, never settled unless, eyes bloodshot scrunching, she cries inside a belief she has been saved from extreme excesses for some special purpose that will give meaning to it all. but, as predicted, there is nothing.

*flowerbed desert*

*beneath water hungry soil*

*no glimmer of hope*

## shrewd or what

*next to you   i sit   we incubate*

here,  
roots apart,  
stands a shrewd  
lady tree  
covered in  
fulsome material  
of bright red berries  
onto which  
is nailed  
a body  
of  
symbols

only now   toward my end   begin   to   O my  
ungod understand his self-centred decadence   that  
farms such pain.   then that magnificat triangle   double  
landscape   of pyramid that grows outside   wet cave  
entrance   of my   most useful   of unself-contained tools

**so tell, O so please please tell what they are what so they mean**  
*“OkeyDokey. all words is in a landscape formal of sculptured rock  
entombed pieces inside subdivisions of divisions. Regiments of endless  
containment. Name O him to be hemlock to bedrock Adam, Shape of  
Thorned Flesh, wound of a chipped rib that vast spreads over O so many  
Yes so many layers of bird peel bells. Then weariness of what forever is  
unsaid. Blimey. At last, those screaming sounds of ‘times vast womb-of-  
all, home-of-all, hearse-of-all-night’ enter this frame of strange bits”*

**let such language of stretch elastic incubate for aeons**

*horizon fades  
by rowan tree roots  
strange new growth*

## **skip foreplay routines**

**no direct footpath  
on a straight line corridor  
todays floor is bleak**

in hospital for, am told, three days 3 nights. feel rough. *really*. today every sound aches. every room aches. every follicle aches. what most aches is that scratchy food trolley.

**near new day of drugs  
wake into on-going dark  
at last nurses laugh**

wav a landhand acrossover riskyfreefrisky stallion waves. ward bewelcomes stadium of tossinanaturnin tedium dreams pelting upovary, after heavepillar honeyful heartsoul swoon into hot upbeat hots of tumbleaground, chasing down dawns hotstrotting corridors. jus a kuss. jus won (or maybe 2 or a hooaha three twisted). coiled rainbows on welsh taffynurshes daffidown lips.

**near seaside blossom time  
once again you volunteer  
to grass beds make up**

all of time day into night lie still. lie hands tied. drowned topsy-turvy down in sounds of riptide swells. arms raised to be pricked. 3 times pricked. so let eternal images ravish such never rending hikes into never ending blending of stunning sprawls in a clutch of tumbles. this to marry seas with seas inside funs with reJoyces Anna Livia Plurabelle who can't hear waters of. chittering waters of.

**ghosting white horses  
part of playground games galore  
in a time for ends**

## **swirling scherzo of triple image in a hollow hole**

*spleen on show  
with less interludes  
silences extend*

advert for a blockbuster:

***earth moves    sky holds up a stripe of sea before capitulating***

**CONTROL FREAK MEETS SLIPPERY POLE GREASER**

**POPES PLEA GREETES CONTROL FREAK**

**CONTROL FREAK MERGES WITH GURU PLEASER**

**HOLED HEAT WARMS A NIPPLE FREEZER OF AN OUT-OF-CONTROL MAN WHO SSQQQUASSSHES ALL HE SURVEYS INTO A SPELL-RIDDEN ROCK-HARD BED OF BENT WHOLE NAIL SHARPER BITS**

**“perhaps you want i should beg for you” he screams as yet another ill-advised advert is paraded before his sins. “I shall kangaroo court you. What do you mean it’s illegal? It’s never been before. Hells Bells - what’s this bum world coming too?”**

*man of hollow means  
spurts venomous deeds  
another hole drilled*

## that moment

christmas-like buntings of snow-looped telephone wires connect  
three-mountain-separated-valleys to our village.

*singular language*  
*close to a full enigma*  
*segment of circles*

pagan jerusalem psalm creases with laughter. put aside pound  
after pound to pay for a humanist funeral. i am i am going to enjoy  
it. *but how?* don't know but will find a way. first must tell her what  
she needs to know.

*full on cremation*  
*long changed foetus*  
*about to change again*

yours like mine is beyond that slime-covered scrawny blood-rivulet  
birth. yes it is trite but that now is of little consequence. anything but  
anything is better than being inside a stuck down envelope of darkness  
earth like him across our shared road.

*singular language*  
*under gothic clouds*  
*flames dance*

between that start this finish small bits large bits. for me for you there  
is little more than variegated traces. perhaps it hides in a mix that  
reconstitutes new forms from old. perhaps like a dead branch it still  
belongs – not able to fall to ground due to support from deep green  
neighbours. perhaps.

*full-on cremation*  
*strangest party ever*  
*misses a great joke*

**that present time timepiece**

**she brought his watch. battery died. he died. she wore  
it at his funeral. wore it to her own.**

*messy ward*

*clean birth*

*his mother's gift*

## **The man with healing hands**

is what they told me he is. Brained in surgical byways and means, here they are saying of something else. Wonder if he is aware skill levels are down to qualities beyond physical senses and intellectual developments (as so many believe). Have my doubts. He said, *“my family are doctors, scientists, surgeons. None are writers. In India my name is Bhattacharya, Patel in Pakistan, Smith in England, Jones in Wales”*.

*‘a rose is a rose’  
common as muck  
but more rare*

## threesome

*school wall graffiti*  
*Never Underestimate*  
*Power Of Threesome*

### **threesome do things together**

*let's walk alongside Thames*

take painting gear

*start down river. watercolours.*

as we do

A6 size

*notes. right? a la Turner.*

**Yes. Yes. Yes.**

*wild sky formations*  
*tear up river edge shadows*  
*red glow turns to dawn*

Like Van Gogh. All ginger hair. Like Van Gogh. Too romantic for me. Not a bad likeness. Don't know what happened after that 4-week painting walk. Went away. No one knows where.

*paints a sunflower*  
*last will states a testament*  
*set on filled canvas*

**other is a pre-nerd nerd. sometimes tries 'cool'. never works. older pupils like him. take some into a spread of yellow to smoke. yes, it is drugs. told he was found in a high field of wheat. told he was dead. still suffer daytime nightmares of what might have been if triad had not broken up or broken down.**

*sprayed graffiti*  
*on a school wall*  
*"we love you"*



## threshold onto

buried archetypes remain buried but readily see nightgaps inside  
starryeyed townlights in which closeddoors of her everydayhouse  
springopen onto mauvedark rectangles that explore those other  
delicious recesses in openyards which lead through deeper bluemaue  
darknesses that squirm over sperm of typographic errors printed  
lowercase just in case a door bell chimes although it never does  
because nobody wants to cross thresholds only to come facetoface  
with everything changed by an incantation of mirrors distorting into  
fractures emailing you an electronic birth of worldwide newyous  
acceptable only once a threshold is crossed just in time for your  
opening to be opened O so wide transformed by O gentlest of O so  
gentle touches.

*feared romance in bloom*

*allshe everwants*

*is quiver waltztime*

## tomorrow's tomorrow yes

*"tomorrow's tomorrow yes"* he shouted as loud as loudest is.

no not to not meet no no more to go to unseen into a  
tomorrow cusp seems brightsobright before apples  
burrow into worms before flourish flower arrangements within  
renewed lights before a dark outpours where yes itwill  
it will flourish will be a curtain that opens into tomorrow's  
tomorrow again yes yes a gain maybe will see my  
Asherah.<sup>1</sup>

*moon into brighter  
moves clouds darker just behind  
way unclear under*



<sup>1</sup> god's sort of missus!!!

## **too slow walk**

coiled nightdress  
inside imagination  
it disappears

*she walks slow. all here walk slow. except  
for a few. still like Easter Island sculptures.  
blocks of shaped rock that lean against each  
other. in front is a layer of feather mist air. he  
moves through it in a sick-shaped walk.*

for a cold week  
bantams on a concrete yard  
crisp talk slows

## Tower Builder

Builds shaped towers. That is what he does. Has built a wide, high, a nearly most decorated tower ever conceived, constructed to withstand earthquakes, tornados, bombs, too much death. For a while he believed it indestructible.

*largest apple            ripe*  
*tip of architects fruit tree*  
*sways more than is safe*

**turn toward me lips**

**that i want to kiss  
those endless red lines  
twist to harsher thoughts  
of more aimless days  
that hide prickly nights**

*gorse bush  
empty of leaves  
ancient thorns stab*

## unfamiliar familiars

**from somewhere i should know this room.  
somehow it seems familiar  
it does it really does seem familiar   *but*  
what about this light bulb?  
it is not my light bulb.  
hanging rope?                                 mine?  
bottle of peach water  
with its rising bubbles  
are they mine   mine *and hers?*         *but*  
now she is frightened.  
i shout a safety shout  
that makes her new scream.  
squash nettles into fearsome shapes**

*aerated water  
in this familiar room  
hides a trick disguise*

yet even now      *even now*  
she is unsure    even though his hand  
reaches out in a familiar way  
she is unsure    even though he is more sure.  
in one gulp of his throat  
throat so familiar  
he is more sure.  
she seems to know something      *but*  
cannot ever *ever* be sure  
when he with her were invented.  
before Sabine women were raped?  
before The Triumph of Chastity over Eros?  
before even this memory of him?  
she fades before he remembers      *but...*

*front lights on full blast  
while dream room drifts from insight  
faint noise from male swan*

## **waiting for just that deep moment**

*one by measured one  
architected cities change  
tough winds sweep through*

Walk further North. Walk diagonally across Market Square. Walk under striped covers of flimsy wind blown market stalls. Walk from this town to that from one shopping Mall arcade to another another another.

*speed washes sunlight  
mix of vaporous events  
rich in soft contrasts*

Clouds fill with sea whispers. Hungry seagulls mix with aromas of freesias smell of crunched fish batter oil soaked chips that filter through tastes of what will never become.

*static heart poses  
headless scream of chickens  
runs death into life*

“Do not die. Not...not before...you know what happens”  
Walk on. Walk further North. Walk into a specious space. It is no more than an emergency cube that explodes into atomic components becoming a palace of sorts in which edges corners flower vases beds are formidable barriers against outside brightness. Open chests of drawers are filled not with clothes but a clutch of red faced screaming babies their eyes scrunched lips vibrating hair matted in sweat.

*City darkness  
just a coldest hint  
of bright lights to come*

Pushing towards us is a vast image of a harsh North season. A total sky is filled with such deep emptiness that flat darkness is impenetrable. Coal seam blackness covers soot dust. Inside such blindness so intense is an indecipherable bleakness. Yet somewhere tactile velvet remains to tangle with feeling.

*Eve snake  
sensual noises  
inside her screams*

She cries out blistering sounds that thicken on impact. Smells sabotage deep into pregnant holes. Broken darkness is dragged deep deep deepest down way beyond poignant.

*iceberg journey  
new rose an insufficient  
colour curve*



## **we read what we believe**

**cardrum leads  
unusual solution  
for an innovator**

hair lifts into clinical air as a black dog meanders between legs of patient patients at least one of whom assumes it is a quirky doctor in disguise. incorrect. it is just a dog whose hair floats in clinical air while it meanders through legs of those who wait.

**slight left list  
sculptural ailments solve  
with a quick lick**

two woman with Clap, who itch like crazy but dare not scratch, clap hands. hairy dog closes in, licks their now fraught, stockingless legs. it goes on until they melt. leaves a stiff pool of liquid that slowly spreads until licked away. everyone else lifts -their legs above veined necks, strained heads, combed hair, until a black dog has finished its business. children, mother-smothered, sit like putrefied statues. men harden.

**strangest room  
tongue tastes  
of a magician**

deaf clinic sister has seen it all before. black dog protects from unheard dangers. Not yet able to return to its mistress, not unaware of weird goings-on, an escapee adolescent hindu girl folds it up like an ironed handkerchief before she slips it inside an otherwise empty document case. a poignant moment as new layers of space enter approximately.

## wha' ur 'ot one

night vocation architectures a spiders three dimensional web  
broken by a plaster cast arm. globules of reflective rain hang in  
dawn tension. when sex was top of hot, this street, african black,  
stretched into a full length epic.

*in dis late rest'rant*  
*queues aslongas yer brok arm*  
*red whine weddin' nite*

## **what is it called i'm having out?**

not teeth this time. must be careful of those. an extraction hospital is  
now first port of call. drug-thinned blood is what's done for me.

It's not teeth? what? WHAT? Say it again. What is it called I'm having  
out? What is it?

*memory circuit*  
*special language of surgeons*  
*is no aide memoire*



**when are they going to tell me i'm alright?**

*self-contained room  
intrigued by window panes  
and scan machines*

Not good news

*No?*

Heart racing. Erratic. Dilated. It's hospital time

*I'm really busy. Next week OK?*

Ambulance on its way

*Better get home. Let her know*

Can't say I am happy with that, but OK. Definitely today

*Really?*

Really

**He isn't my special doctor. It must be serious**

I'll drive you

*Thanks. Can't be **that** serious, can it?*

No

**Way a bag was being filled indicated he had telephoned. You can tell**

You can can't you?

*emergency unit  
inside a mixed sex ward  
machines monitor*



10

Help! Help!

*Published by W Blake 17 May 1793*

## **writer's conference**

**room of unusual expectation. setting: expensive  
Winchester. high fees. room chocker-block. writers help  
writers. air-raid shelter of voices. sound explosions everywhere.  
each fifteen minutes a changeover minute of silence.**

*pick*                      *choose*  
*one of many marigolds*  
*dissonant choirs*

yes sir, i am

*flew in through a closed window. huge open wings block  
out exterior light.*

mother murder as I stand but i am scared. Yes sir. i  
admit it. i am scared. *very* scared.

*lips sweet caress  
as sweet cakes burn to cinder  
this sweet delivery*



## yesterday's revolution

silent room. movements criss-cross silent diagonals. rich geometry of prison space is silence personified. smawled pople - dresséd in dishevelléd whytes - bumpéd into theresélfs. Watching Giants Are Protected. incompetent expectations stride over a Gvilhelmi Tyndail masterpiece of moments rippling through musical sheets of quietness. neutrinos pass through this room closéd of sounds without disturbing a single molecule. Allowéd a soft deathé; strangled beforé choppéd up.

*elsewhere 1 crow craws*

*2 silent groups of sparrows*

*split 3 groups of nuts*

## **yield to death**

*uneasy silence  
from those who remain  
terminal care*

### **at this moment**

younger than picasso, man ray, titian, planck, mann,  
older than marx, rembrandt, klee, joyce, carter, thurber,

*ageing man prepares himself.*

*dressed for cremation  
into a dead flame void  
one grey moth*

## **zapped sounds of death's unholy silence**

*We are dying. We are dying, so all we can do is now be willing to die, and to build a ship of death to carry the souls.* D.H.Lawrence

the Doctor and the Gravedigger, they are partners *Yiddish Proverb*

*half shut blind  
gradated slats diffuse  
into fume colours*

“Listen! Listen to that silence!

Listen.”

*“I hear. So many sounds. They sure as hell make a disturbance. This special silence, graffiti of slashed vibrations, bang against each other, a fortissimo symphony of bongos, tin, bass and kettle drums, a dissonant storm inside an aerial perspective of 18 carat gold-plated anger. I adore it. Very rare. Very special. Very”.*

“How come? Just then we shared a Ward. Propped up opposite each other. Smile for you as they take you down. How can this be?”

*“In all other circumstance it cannot. Other silences are felt but not heard.”*

“Is this, then, death? How, in holy names of Yahweh, Adonai, El Elion, YHVH, Bore Olam, Ha - Makom, En Sof, Kedosh Yisrael<sup>1</sup>, did **that** happen?”, she says so softly he leans forward to hear.

*curved suspension bridge  
feminine areas separate  
from inside key sounds*

**Above, in separate beds, fed through wires, two lives oscillate in lines white, then black. In transformed units, look across, tremble in awkward silences. Smiles twist. Moments drag. Surgeons tell nurses to “prepare them. Inject dreams. Contract awareness!” You frightened, I too tired to care. Offered up to gods of hopeful skills, 2 cultured pearls of**

medical farm production *still* time. Sound too. Transparent screens rise ethereally; take flight as if transparent birds. Outside cannot linger. We, anaesthetised, separated, are in technological rooms with tepid beams that pulse a thin line of hope. Here this particular rendition ends. White sheets alabaster-shape our differences. Same *'time of death'* is recorded.

*empty shell  
sculptured by overused tools  
success in failure*

*"Now we are a museum category; those who died inside a surgeon's bloody knife. From this noisy silence we cannot escape such a Higgs boson time/speed capsule. You are very young, very beautiful. What happened that brought you into such proximity with medical failure?"*

*"Not that young. I'm 23. A bummekeh. You know, a pro. Prostitute. Sorry. Was. Stabbed many times by a sadistic nutter. Caligula Davidoff I called him. At first he seemed normal in that self-centred way of power-crazed guys who, when thwarted, destroy through their Kangaroo Court device. Repeat client, he was friendly when he got his own way, but would lie, threaten, blackmail, use his well-oiled device to get success. After belittling, he beat me up, then grabs for my money. Turns my acid breasts into flames. I fought back. Stabbing didn't last long. Lost lots of blood before waking up in hospital. Alav ha-shalom. <sup>2</sup> How's 'bout you?"*

*full of unfunny jokes  
impatient patient  
inhales sounds*

*"Aged heart, gall bladder stones block some pipe or other, growth on adrenal gland. 'Usually routine. Yours a bit tricky due to long ago operation. Shoved everything back any old way. Fit pacemaker first!'" Made me laugh. What was I? Painter. Wrote odds and ends. Mostly ends! Illustrator. What? Altered nursery rhymes. Terrible! I do know one thing: drawing, painting, writing is bloody hard work and disciplined sorcery. At best, it transforms you into a magician, one who can fly sleights of mind illusions, become what it might never otherwise have been. Silence is becoming louder. Soon it will stop this onslaught of non-happenings."*

*different memories  
from each side of a river  
whiffs of decay*

"Tell me one.

Please".

*Georgy Porgy has a piddle*

*Fiddles with girls and make them giggle*

*Gingerbread men come out to play*

*Kiss Georgys Porgy 'cause he's gay*

*But that's not all!*

"You're right, 'not good'. Silence **is** getting louder. Are there no more of things that pass for solid?"

*"I wonder if we will meet Warhol. Perhaps Joyce. Maybe Klee or even pal Hockney. Yes, we sure as sure are dead. Subject becomes Object of an unknown invisible, a no-form un-time. You have now met one of your Grandfathers inside this special Second Great Event that began as rugged noise but continues as non-experience. After that it is sound of worms squeezing, or something beyond all that can ever be First Experience, fluff on a womb door inside a fallow silence. Nothing can be added, nothing taken away".*

*ancient ritual  
Rabbi wants her body  
to resurrect -  
believes it works  
but never sure*

"David Hockney isn't dead. So – what now? What is to become of us?"

"We've no choice but to wait. Even that is questionable."

"We can guess.....I suppose we could be part of post-terrestrial organisation."

*"O.K. My first guess is...is...is...we are aged photographic negatives; not easy to read, soft imprint of a past, unrecognisable presence; not represented but invisibly thereabouts."*

“Mine is that our death may be continuity within completion, a unity of opposites of sorts. We are inside a process of analysis, deconstruction, maybe reconstruction, renaming. Previous structures are being annihilated until we become non-reflective mirrors, able to communicate but no longer visual form. No that is much too serious; too much of the living”.

*“Now where did **that** come from? Would you believe it! Even Jewish prostitutes have high I.Qs!”*

“Don’t ask! I know it’s a bad place and squashed space but I’m beginning to feel randy. First time in years.”

*“Too late for all that, so pack images away and cross-your-heart-and-hope-to-die. Put hands inside flesh! For me, we are like dismembered evacuees with no substance beyond wave communication, an absent image with little meaning unravelling an invisible transition from one type of thin, even no reality, to another. Or maybe we are still in a transition we believed real into that which might lead to who knows where or what”.*

*attraction*

*of voids -*

*unavoidable*

“It’s getting trickier to see. Darker.”

*“Not darker. Black. I am encased in a fiery block of black. Can’t see you anymore. Can’t touch, spell or hear you anymore. Can’t even sense you anymore,”* he posts to her thought wave mechanism.

“Where are you? It is total black. Can’t hear you. Alone among so many, in a state not even tactile. Handprint is photographic image, sound recordings, memory, an abbreviation; all recede into invisible dust in what might be a parallel black universe. Is this death? No more prostitution of potential. No more explosions of tears to remind me. No more shooting rapids. No more.” she responds to emptiness.

*“I broke with some inherited ways of understanding, especially that of progress. Went for a pile-up of themes. Know now there is nothing. Not lines of flight into a*

*non-existent horizon. Not even lines of vertical black. Perhaps death is not desire, not any experience other than its absence”.*

“I’ve lost you. Don’t know anything. Who in this emptiness does – or can? Perhaps no answer is the answer.”

*thick slab of black notes*

*interpretive collisions*

*give nothing away*

<sup>1</sup> Some names of God used by religious Jews to highlight his many attributes.

<sup>2</sup> alav ha-sholom – May he rest in peace, (Hebrew) masculine; aleha he-shalom (feminine). Jews are OK with strong and mixed emotions. These they can, if they wish, gently dilute in order to be safer with things.







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