Juveni... Doesn’t Matter (The Grey-Salmon Book)

By Ashley Dunn

just cos

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just cos!

“I never thought I’d need so many people”
—David Bowie, ‘Five Years’

“The day of wrath, the day of wrath, that day
Will break up the world into ash”
—Dies Irae

“The words that oscillate between nonsense and supreme meaning are the oldest and truest.”
—Carl Jung, ‘The Desert’, The Red Book

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Harmony

The singular thread
Of the sound in my head
Is the noise from my pen
Being what they all said.

Early Looks at Himself

Each mini death
Creates a mini you
A new one to fall in love with
To fall out with, too

It maybe means you aren't
The devil, a nutjob, a sham...
They were just things I made up
In childish efforts to find the man

So could we try again one day
When I've changed, grown—been born
Because I'm starting to admit, slowly
That it was me all along after all

It's Actually Spice

She calls her cat Lesley
And knits with real zeal

But really

She loves riding the bus
And sitting over the wheel.

A Time

I have watched my body do things it has not wanted
But has needed, venturing with me into sickness

And madness, darkness and despair with violent love
And falsity, beating its way into minds through too-hard logic

Guising itself as care and God, victim and misjudged,
Holding me at a distance, carefree, careless, unable

To watch in intoxication with myself and other
Tormentors, participating in my own epiphenomenal child's play

With a word lurking now: confession—used pathetically
As a scapegoat around a veiled and cowardly vocabulary, a pitiful cry

From the dead of night, the worst of me and my body
Not remembering (it has allowed me

A continued distance)——yours

Not needing deliverance to be healthily beat
And rid; for we are held safely in turmoil—and we must

See it as reasoned: for the predetermined sinners—sinned—
To disappear. For all our dirty bodies to be worth something.

Pneumatic Skips With a Purse

Long things with pumps—
They all fall down—
Still ride steady—
Pneumatic skips with a purse—
The whole world in bones and sealed paint—
You make it all move, you know.

O what a show!
A spectacular show of smoke and mirrors—
The words and the tap in her act.
All the marks: they must *mean* something—
The public is desperate for it to *mean* something.
Bed goes up, bed goes down,
Cheap, quiet and ahead.

I Won't Go to Work Today

up
shower
eat
stretch

coffee coffee coffee. pen. lines lines lines

lid closed out loud out loud out grit spit read
coffee talk closed my very easy method. seat

seat. credentials. barcode.
empty
if there are no commitments to the existences then our theories can be discarded
(my word she's here again)
the clock! every eeny meeny miny moe
emergency stop
this is your destination

drained and full of lines that will go in the bin
marked out mark
remove the tubes from the nose and lose the following hours
in this instance, it looks better lowercased

Someone Else's Noise

My fictional mother said to me—she said, "Find you a man
That does nothing and is content with it, because then
You can do whatever you want with your life unquestioningly, and when you change

Your interests or are in
A bad mood and don't love him anymore—for remember

My baby: it is always contingent—then it will not

Matter, and it will allow you both to live in peace, potentially."
The moral I took from my fictional mother

And sexual orientation is that we can make up
Whatever we want that helps, and that there seems
To be something
About the words moving down the lines

At the right time (it could have really
Been the next) and that it is tough
To experience the world absolutely as your own
When you are transfixed in finding it
In someone else's noise.

The Opening Italics Can Be Sung to the Tune of 'Lord of the Dance'

he, he, whoever he may be
doesn't exist metaphysically, and he cannot seem
to decide whether he believes we should be
where we are now or where we are going.

are we (we! where does *he*
consistently get that from?) are we to be
present here reading his words, or should we be
far out in future without them?

there is no separation, but he wants us
to understand this through the very
same gaps? the... the...
O what constants can we even find to criticise him?

do recall, that the Buddha had everything before
he was able to find nothing; so don't trust any of it
don't go after any of it. or go after all of it?
either way, you'll lose? win? already have?

you are not going to get this. none of this
can be grasped. we cannot write the question
let alone answer it, and at the end of the day
it was distinct food poisoning that won.

<u>Headless</u>

The redundant tiler
Comes to the king's floor
To petition him
For the hand of his one daughter.

"King! My glorious King!
You are my Master, me
Your servant. I am not worthy, but I am
Without canvas.

If I could have one night
With your daughter, not for
That, but for her
To feel my warmth and work,

She would know, and you would see,
That my being is not done, and I could exist
To fulfil her life
And love her."

All the king's men
Begin to laugh in the chamber, but the king

Hushes them.
“You fools. You fools!

Can you not see: he is
The redundant tiler
Finally, and it is he
That my daughter seeks and loves!”

The king leaves his throne, with
His arms raised in the air,
And strides over
To the tiler.

“King!” shouts the tiler, and, “Redundant
Tiler!” shouts the king.
And the king
Drops to his knees

And they embrace
And cry in each other’s arms, before the king
Breaks away
To bellow again.

“Guard! You—guard!” The king points
To the nearest guard.
“Bring me my daughter!”
The guard

Looks confused, but the jester
Creeps past and taps
The guard’s right blazer
Pocket, the guard, relieved, putting

His hand inside
And pulling the king’s daughter from inside.
But as the guard
Walks towards the king and the tiler with the princess

She jumps from the guard’s hand,
And as she runs
Out the chamber
On her hands, the king

Releases the tiler, shouting, “Never!
Never!

Guard! Kill this
Redundant tiler

Before I change my mind!”
And the king
Backs away from the tiler.
“And so it goes,” says the

Tiler, and the guard
Removes his sword
And runs it through
The tiler’s neck.

Early Diss (Ghosts & Tray)

I’ll love you always, but you won’t feel any of it,
Will you?
You’ll lie with others, no rhythm
Or reason
And neither of you will get it
And only one of you
Will ever come.

The boys, the boys:
They’ll look anything but your father.

I’m aware it might not hit you until they hit you.
I wanted to feel free and loved, but our games
Were not exclusive.
And how many rules did *you* change?
Then your child’s play would act up—mine too;
But I want a badge
For at least feeling guilty.

Your type: they are a debut muse.
People leave towns for you and make it big.
My spiritualisation will be televised, but I’m worried

You will only have ghosts
And tray.

Delusional Content Trying to Be Stanzaic

O my god, flashed and splashed in dreams
And number plates: you dash off

For I am not quite ready to be baptized.

The word is wrong—the world is wrong:
You are showing us spirit, not psychosis, aren't you?
Stop those smiles! I... are they...? If not

Come back, because you are true now.
Why do you make us scream and read wrong?
Priest, analyst, body: you have done

What you can,
But this is my own villainous expedition now:
I am sure that car... that car... him... me...

It is not abstract or popper: we are our own
Theory of anything, and right now, that symbol
Is beeping damage at me.

God? Goddddd? Are you in here? Am I out there?
Because it's me: your son.
The walls are coming down

But I am a bit too much
Of everything
For the time being, big guy.

<u>It Is a Cliché</u>

And I do not even want to look at you right now.
I will go to my room
To write, and I will come back when I am ready and re-sweet on you.

That's better. I am rested for more sessions.
My future children are dead for us. My own child
Lives on instead and he is sick and hot

From this troubled and patterned relationship
With both of you while I pretend it's me in charge, that someone
Could ever be in charge as I smile

At the puzzle of who conceived who in this triangle, for it is unfamiliar
And lifelike and no way to be, yet I relish
The rising and falling valleys of home that leave me soaked

In discharge still, consenting sometimes, this feeling

Being poetic and lonesome with you always, you who is amusing—or
A muse—for a man who cannot cut that cord, these strings; and that is

All better again now—accepted, weathered, cried;
Thank you!—and I am finally growing up, making love
For all my girls and girls like a good boy.

<u>do not write anything concrete</u>

the next line should leave space ambiguity
movement
and it is here that growth truth
being
exist

but don't conclude it
don't put it if you can
the longer the better

then capture
small bits
silently in the night
and only release
the good stuff
the helpful stuff

it is sickening maddening conceited
confusing
but it chips away somewhere in them like that
so we need to keep putting it out
those that need
will find and take

there are negated rules that can be followed
do not use growth
do not pose upside down
do not sound
serious
so serious

in fact don't even talk at all
if you can handle it there could be no lines
or space
or growth at all
just lead by example taking the flack

until they miss you
get you

or don't

Cry if Want To, Need To, You Will

If it isn't my birthday
And I'm not doing this right in the middle of tears
Then what was it all for?
I hate my body missing any of it
That the reason gets missed when you come back up
Circle back down

That love gets questioned
Friends get lost
Life falls far
Reality leaves you
And all you have left is yourself
And a pen.

I'll take this down here though
Wrecked, screaming, shaking
Empty, alone, stripped
Because I feel the links breaking
And life keeps appearing
More and more each time.

But I won't close the door completely.
I'll be here when you're dying
On the floor
On your birthday
When you realise dramatics don't exist—
When you reach your own wreck, penless.

What Are They Good For?

I have not heard
Any words
That are not adaptive.

I have not heard
Any words—
Any, anywhere words—
That are not adaptive

For the speaker. Author.

All that space. All those papers.
Attempts at universal order, meaning, truth,
Identity, experience, shaming,
Legitimacy, parenting, love,
With no awareness
Of the limitations
Of our words—the adaption
Of our whole life sentences.

I could not, surely,
Have just heard him say,
"I love my wife." I know what he does at the weekend!
And I know
Her book club
On Tuesday evenings
Does not exist (they sometimes
Meet on Thursdays too).

O our beautiful words!
You make all this around us
Look meaningful and safe. I love you!

(A version of this poem was first published as 'Adaptive Words, I Love You' in A New Ulster*, Issue 116, August 2022 (https://issuu.com/amosgreig/docs/anu116))*

Blog Post!

If you read one more blog
About how to write
Or play or create you might just find out
How to write
A blog and not feel anything.

Early, Early History

Don't respect history at all. I read somewhere else
And it changed. I dreamt something else
And it got very, very weird: the boys
Scrambled over the top and it just looked really stupid!

And when I told a friend, all they said was, "Don't rest
On your books, as you've got to know
When to listen to yourself."

He moved out of my mind as the rain came
With four-thousand boats holed up on my shore—infinite other ways
To set sail. But I was stuck on the same beach

In the same story as my ancestors, and I couldn't
Budge my siblings. And I couldn't remove
The anchor. And I fear another is willing

To repeat the same in a pointless and structureless bar
Somewhere again. So no—I don't respect it.

Maybe Check on Him

Don't make me go back to them. I like it
Here. I can make up whatever I want
And that was always enough. I didn't even care
If anyone saw me in the grass, on the hill, at the hospital,
And the food tasted like nothing, and the girls
Weren't strong around my crotch and I could just
Buzz buzz buzz. So what if that wasn't real:
Have you seen anything of note
In the papers? It doesn't top out. It don't
Square off neatly. It don't not sound too good to be
Jarred back like
Buck bang buck. And it ain't so, not *smooth*, but,
You know—like the wipe of a hand on a hand—
Known lips licked and stringy indoors.
"Is he still on his own then?
Is everything alright?"
Hmm. Yes and no.
The girls are back.

formative

yeah yeah write write—it's
writing, isn't it—isn't it
good—only I think it's
good and important and
verbose—do not be
verbose—be here in the
sex and stink—shyness is
hidden—what do you mean—i
mean being careful, explicit,
direct during the formative

antithesose. then careless
carefree loose—unconcerned by your rhyme
or movements

Tuesday Afternoon Group

"Teacher, teacher:
I will not psychoanalyse the chair!
It will not burst into flames!"
(It could! It could!)
Here is one hand; here are ten thousand in agreement.
I think I understand the appeal, but we need
To get on with our lives.

I am late for work.
This wasn't meaningless, but abstract:
Only good for the first six months of a relationship.
We were simply different: that is enough.

"Philosophy in a vacuum. I cannot see it selling."

Can't Remember Writing This

I'm going to keep running and creating
As that seems to be the universal condition
Let alone the human
Let alone this human

Absolutely obsessed with himself
And different lines
For no good reason
(As if on an arrogant cloud, in hindsight)

And there's never enough time to go back
Over it all, cover all the senses, misstake
My Edits; but this is so much better
Than flashbacks
And drugs
Most of the time

Absolutely obsessed with oneself
For good reason
(As if on an arrogant cloud, in hindsight,
In editing)

<u>long stream!</u>

“I went to war last night
With an automatic weapon, don't nobody call a medic
I'ma do it 'til I get it right”
—Kendrick Lamar, ‘i’

“You've broken a seal
What will they think of me”
—Tom Vek, ‘How Am I Meant To Know’

just doing the next thought as it comes to him
telling himself it’s gold, it’s gold, then it’s
gold; if he don’t exist then nor do you then
who can say otherwise? scream into the night
without stopping for months or years or
infinity, feeling it and breaking (no braking)
touch the bottom and nothing is left then;
then he can really go on—and they stare on

and on; and they will say (the masses;
millions of them; you): *don’t try; that’s silly;*
you can’t do that; i’m normal; i’m normal; i
don’t want someone that takes themselves
too seriously; but why—but why would they
even try that; i’m too old; i’m too young; how
weird; how strange; i wouldn’t bother; why
bother; i can’t be bothered; but why; but why;
but why

and then they’ll be dead

but he’s broke apart—existing nowhere; and
the concepts can just be free about all things
and himself—and itself—with no cares for it
when it’s just a feeling and the stanzas might
stretch but you can use the right indent (you
see; you see) so don’t surround yourself with
any of that old noise from people still gorging
and spoilt and buying into someone else’s
structure

(you see;
            you see)

he that is is not his real name: he can tell fake
truth and good stories and it's like, *what is it;*
what is it, with no separation between what's
here because it ain't here; but he's hesitating
—he's hesitating; so he's still a bit here too
much; takes a breath; you aren't ill or manic
or problematic—you're listening to what you
heard and it's too bad—too bad—too theirs—

ease in—add and edit later; what he did (he
told me) is wrote "no doubt" over and over
every night while he was screaming and
crying and changed his number and stopped
listening to the average toxicity and it hurt—
bad, bad, bad; not even pain—but it was
sense making and then poof the tablets are
gone and he realises, "hang on; hang on," and
he's writing whatever he likes

then he feels the insecurity and hesitation
and sees it here—in all the supposed others—
and the reasons on top of bodies, and
reasons on top of animals: the incongruence
between what they want and think and do
and say: the ingenuity and incredulity: the
contradictions are too vast and easy: it is a
conditional state of being and he never was—

not going to hospital for them no more—
no way:
quit your talking to them;

and the rhythm comes to him then as a little
pulse—like a bop—like a head nod—a thrust;
and what's that but uninterrupted feeling—
who's in control of that; he hears them still
talking about "choice" in everything they do
unless they need a different narrative after:
he is too much to be around, when alive; but
he dies? *oh my god i loved his brain and miss*
him so much

so he's bop nod thrust and creating and you
be doing something creative—the semi-
colons diminish, but don't edit the tempo lift

—and they be pretending to be interested
and not confused and mistaking confusion for
bemusement but they don't sleep and get ill
and wonder behind beers and food and bad
sex bodies and schopenhauerean irritability—

o o o and he remembers, inconsistently,
paradoxically, for he exists nowhere and has
done metaphysically open-ended calculations
of oz (which is nowhere too—still semis
gone): *they don't exist, and none of it is here,
for i have decided they do not whilst also
deciding their mindsets, or set minds, but they
shall not exist going forward, as i do not
wan-*

and it is like... and it's like... anditslike...
annitike... there is nothing to really pull out
that he can pull out, and no need to put it
now, or to worry about it, because it firmly
and concret- (he can't have that either); it is
like that self and that nonsense that begs for
the coherence but bad life: it is absolutely
nothing to worry about, and there is no form
to any of this, to him; and he'll bring back
semi-colons, as every piece is not flawless,
and he has looked, and he is judging perfectly
and objectively; and we can do whatever we
want; and you can really get out and tell a
story to feel better (*because that is it: feeling!*
o they get that), so you *do* build yourself up
and up and up, wanting to do something,
trying to do something, but the flat, perverse,
humanitarian inversion surrounding you—
don't try; don't speak; don't be—baulks you;
they stop you; but you clock that it's one big
ruse, finally: doctors, teachers, friends,
lovers, writers; and you got to say—he got to
say: they will touch every part of your body,
and stare at you without your consent, and
tell you not to try anything, and that you
didn't climb the mountain, and that such
words are cringe, and that they really do love
you and are there for you whilst they laugh at
you in kitchens behind your back

and he gives them a little bit to go on: *listen*
to my different voices; listen to this noise
(bop); here is a funny dance; i'm not serious;
we can all die like this together—and that
might be enough to hide their lies for them
more—concede that gold can feel poor *and*
therapeutic; that no one can count (they!
aren't! there!); no one can remember

the mind (come on; come on; o i'm just
giving in and leaving myself on my own up
here now)—who does all the work for... us?

we live in dissonance, and you can say and
make whatever you want, and it can be bold
truth or nonsense, and we have no choice
over whether to take it in *or just ignore it*

(just ignore it
        if you think you can);

but some will still sit there and say,
        well,
                i didn't really enjoy
                that at all

<u>The Announcer Presenting to the Circus</u>

"Do not feel guilty for all those things
That are needed to stop our sight: the beers, the dances,
The bitters the books. Embrace them all, be
Drunk on them! And may you enjoy your circus."
The circus clapped itself, clapped itself, taking the
Seamless blinds of the trapeze artist

And the juggler. The puppets and the ringmaster!

And they clapped and clapped and clapped again
All the way home.

<u>Time to Leave the Capsule</u>

There is a tone to being in the covers surrounded by
Mucused tissues and empty thoughts

And empty thoughts,

Longing for the last mother,
Wanting sex with the next, not considering
The causes, the sacrifices, the syllables. The sneezes the illness the sickness.

Picture an ill child as they get it out their system
Necessarily, silent spurts forging life for them, discovering
The art of manipulation

And fried egg sandwiches, it not having to be like anything
For the poor thing but patterns
Desperate to be stimulated: viewers—look

At the kid, faceless and ungendered,
Alone
And unknown and free

In the sticky: do you think he cares
What this all is? Do you think he'll consider what's being released?
His is a flowing out

Of depth, for sure, but not so very big
Or clever or bleak, for now.
Though it might just be another lift, sunshine.

(A version of this poem was first published in The Poetry Lighthouse*, January 2025 (https://www.thepoetrylighthouse.com/poems?author=67895f97e13a9f080f97d21f))*

Early Doors Before the Committee Took Charge

"(We've got much to discuss)"
—Arctic Monkeys, 'Batphone'

"Quem Iuppiter vult perdere, dementat prius"
—Who knows

I'm on one and loveless like all the best, refusing
The tablets, the therapy, the rest. Let's see

What they say about that one! Let's see
If they trust my method—my very easy method—

Of just, "Making things up!" (yeah right OK)
And skating out of it with no knee pads. I could make a career out of this

If only I will. And what they going to say about *that*, too? How they going to package
"I am centuries old, here, I suppose. And I am

Well, maybe an old grandfather clock in a wood cabin in Utah, say,
Left to the second cousins through Aunt Gina. Not all that grand, really,

But visually something, at least—something for the grandkids, at least!—if
They find that necessary, that is. At least something for them to fight over!"

And they'll still say I should, "Get out the house!"
And see someone. My very easy method indeed.

Do Be Do

He's hung himself and
He's been shot and
He's locked himself in the cupboard.

The same patterns and felt cycles, those progressions
Moved through with
Comparable compositions: the threes and the taps and the
Coming back:
This wasn't going to feel this good again.

Delete it all—everything. The floor: here; the body: oh boy:
Like a pixie! To think they were talking
Nonsense in the pub—desperate for poor, poor relations—
Threatening an augmented fifth.

There is something settling about suicide, murder,
Voyeurism; though as long as there are textures—as long as we feel
Significant
And innocent, just once.

Writer's Club

If you're going to join Writer's Club, you must be willing
To silence social function. We sit around unpretending
With pretence and tension. But you know what? Masterful aloofness
Is us. How'd you like them pears?

We have a few unwritten rules (honestly) and you must tolerate
Our classless classlessness operating
Unironically and quick

Even if it can sound clunky right now.

And sometimes—when we aren't all men—
We move startled around the room gathering ideas
Facelessly masked: Sir (picture him) shouts, "I need another word
For humour!" Dame (picture her): ""Synonym"?"

Early Psychoanalytic Poem

O my so-
O my boy, my child—
My sweet, sweet ruse!
You are better doing what you do
There in your crib—your cot—
For the audience shall think what they want; so why
Hold it in (and he kicks and he kicks and he kicks
And changes tact) when you need not mask
The glory, the light,
The unmasked bushel of you (scores!); and why
Be down and insecurely fastened
When you can fan your arms (for are you not
Flapping now?) and not give two flyings?

You will curb yourself, blessed one,
Looking at all that guff, you will,
You will; but it is not your drama
To play out: the multiplicity of this thing
Is freeing! Why bother to bother? The distinctive art
Is phony, too, itself, you know; so do not pain
Oneself for the ultimate enclosure. Still

Covered up though, aren't you. You psychoanalytic
Feast you: stop hiding! I know you aren't
Really
In that little bed. You know it's never really been made (but something
Is being so).

Ode to the Beauty of Orwellian-Themed Theatrics

I'm feeling very venomous and angry

How dare she vote for me
She doesn't even know me
She doesn't even know who I am
What I like

She’s never even spoken to me
Wouldn’t even give me the chance
She wouldn’t even look at me

What have I fucking done

I would have actually taken this… if… if it had come from the other housemates
To be honest
Because I took it last week
And actually
If they’d have voted for me again this week: fair do’s
Fucking right
Because I moan and whinge and all the other reasons why they nominated me last week
Erm
But she does not know me
And she’s just come in here
Marched in, in her golden gown
And fucking ousted me out
And it’s not fair
It’s not fair
I don’t get it

You lot have made a damn well good decision
I hope you’re pleased with yourselves
Let me out

Can you let me out
I’m too angry to talk
I want to smash someone’s head in

Who is she?
Who is she?
Who is she?
Where did you find her?

I can feel the venom pouring out of me as I breathe

I hate her
I tell you now

I’m going to find it very difficult to be pleasant to it for the rest of this week
I’m afraid
Very difficult

I don’t even want to look at it

Early Wind-up

“In dense jungle foliage, a constant, repetitive, and brief signal within a narrow frequency works best”
—*David Byrne,* How Music Works

Hello?
Yes I’m ringing about the-
OK yes I’ll hold

Hello?
Yes I’m ringing about the-
OK yes I’ll hold

Hello?
Yes I’m ringing about the-
OK yes I’ll hold

Hello?
Yes I’m ringing about the-
OK yes I’ll hold

Hello?
Yes I’m ringing about the-
OK yes I’ll hold

Hello?
Yes I’m ringing about the-
OK yes I’ll hold

Hello?
Yes I’m ringing about the-
OK yes I’ll hold

Etch A Sketch

There’s all those boys again with their heroin chic
That the magic girls want; but I want

Those girls to be dysregulated with me. With me!
Yet who would be jealous

Of such phony orgasms? He would be, look—over
Here: he’s got the Etch A Sketch

And extremely deep lines.

It's the Drugs that Get in the Way, Actually

Far out man in the space of punch-drunk nouns.
You've got to give it him: he's on something;
And he knows the drugs are for the weak.

Strive after everything that annoys you:
That's how you find your tormentors;
And he licks his boons only after his Bada Bings.

They're all just learning
To be very very serious;
And they're all just yearning
To be very very mysterious—
Bulky and pike:
onetwo three four.

He rejects labels for measured distance,
For sudden departures:
They'll rip back in in no time, those streets.

Come on: it's glitter:
You won't get it out with the opposite wine:
Keep on chugging, cats!

What a performance—
What a performance!
If only it was all like this: magic and dust.
I would well come again though, babe!
O I most certainly would not:
Did you not taste the sweetness?

Better Put Your Quid In

"They don't want pinnacles they want
Pinches and prods and just something

Pointing about—poking at stuff—
Giving it some bluster—shaking it up!

At least something not in
C major," said

My piano
On non-uniform day.

Suffering & Awake

He does not want the dates or the laughs
Or the conversation or the interest or the women

Or the sex anymore so he wishes he was her: all of this could be bad bad bad then.
He is going to fulfil

All her requests including that easy
But degrading thing which he always meets

Incredibly with bitterness so he wishes he was her: all of this would be sad
Sad sad then. He will let them

Pick his place again and he is supreme
In drinks and tunes and beatings and he wishes he was her: all of this seems bad bad bad then.
        He does not feel

Any of it. He wipes himself afterward.
She rings for a week. He is suffering and awake.

You Don't Know What You're Doing

How do you want me to be? I was born
Nowhere and typically
Unfeeling, pretending to enjoy sunsets, wellness
And, *whilst seeking shade*, plus a grazed knee: I acknowledge our curses.

The likes of me—the like of my type—
Will not be found again until they—the wanderers
Of in-sickness-and-in-health stop with their
Social graces and let us get on with our surface vocabulary.

It is fun—and there is no guarantee for how it stirs; but
Believe me:
this is the same
as the old centuries.
They again (the imagined! The hidden! Ref!): they cannot stop you.

TRWGIM (More Than I Want To Think)

There was a book and an album

And a slave and a whore
And a teacher and prophet
And a cynic and a bore

And they sat around thinking
"What to do in the zoo?"
And not one of them said
"I believe it's important to

Read all these books
And all the nonsense chatter
So let's prance with them
And..." And nothing was said after.

Because you see, they were cut off
As there were no more things to analyse!
Said The Red Wine God In Me
Tonight.

<u>CBT (Cocaine Before Typing)</u>

"Stop tripping, I'm tripping off the powder
...
(21st-century schizoid man)"
—Kanye West, 'POWER'

My ex-girlfriend...
She... she took my heart again
Outside the eye hospital...

...But now she's nothing but a forgotten line
That I've just written; so use all your truth, follow your path,
And listen to the signs from the universe; though only to get a reader provoked. I am as honest
As the day is long
Until I'm making it up for someone else, spreading every inch
Of myself across the bar for a pioneering exploration
Of toxic masculinity, traversing over the capped peaks
Of my gender: "I
Can be a vulnerable, emotionally intelligent man, woman"; or,
"I'll pull my heart out my chest, stick it on my sleeve,
Then spread it all over you, woman." Then you can really spread it over them, can't ya—gu'on
then, my son!

(I don't know she was just walking past the eye hospital. It doesn't really mean anything.)

“I am the Dalai Lama with good dick.”
Doc! By writing it down I now feel I got good dick!
Thoughts that are challenging. My cognition’s behaving terribly!
Though I am creating what I want.
“But… but sometimes, Doc, I… I really feel…”
No! No way, my son—no doubt! You want good dick, you tell yourself you got good dick.
I got good dick. Meditate on that.

The boy was cocky and had irritating energy—I never understood him. But such a hunk! A sight for sore eyes when we crossed paths the other day. It’d been what, four months? I’m still resentful.
And wet.
And fascinated by his ability to make up meaningless interjections from me. I mean, I’m obviously still in his hea-

Stop listening to other people. *Hearing* other people. Your days are short and there’s no truth.
Slick syntactic relationships to create sophisticated semantic tricks? These are redundant
If you don’t have your own good diction.

But I don’t half write some drivel when I’m only in second gear after a night on the gear
Playing with lines (*“Certainly don’t listen to me!”*) in the kitchen
Never sure which one to arbitrarily start
Or end with: “My ex-girlfriend…”? Nah.

“My pen…
…Is nearly as mighty as my sword.”

<u>Early Yoga</u>

“The sleep was not deep, but the waking is slow”
—Theodore Roethke, ‘The Gentle’

ta-daaaa
suh-nah
and swing your arms wide and up
and sweep forward and down
and hang in
uttanasana
i drink too much
this instructor is irritating
bend your knees and place your hands flat either side of your feet
my knees were bent already
and step back into plank
i am so good at plank
stay here for three more breaths. what is coming up for you?

that i am so good at plank
and push back into
and i am so good at adho mukha svanasana
adho mukha svanasana: downward facing dog
downward facing dog
now take your right leg through your hands and land your foot
that is very specific
and take your right hand inside your right foot. you may need to shimmy your foot out
this feels airy
and you can rest your forearms down here to go deep into your glutes
the simpsons
and quads
ex-girlfriends
and groin
everything blocked out
and hips
the opening in my hip brings things up
and if you like, you can pulse in this pose going up to whatever edges you find
ex-girlfriends are my edge. what is the time?
every false memory is possible. this instructor is irritating and not an ex-girlfriend
and whilst playing in the pose, do as you wish in
i feel like some sort of reptile
lizard pose: utthan pristhasana
ha!
and breathe here
...
...
i wish i'd doubled over my mat as my
knees hurt, be sure to come out of the pose and double over your mat. i have quite boney
glutes knees legs thighs. that one ex-girlfriend had such delicious
hips may feel at an edge here. many of us have tight
hips are throbbing. i am drinking
too much, remember to
breathe and my breath are where i get confused and i think about breathing but do not breathe naturally, rhythmically, in my poses and then i cannot spell rhythmically—is it even a word?
now move back into downward facing dog however you wish to
i am there. i'm already there. i am one of those students
and take your lizard pose on the other side
breathe here
...
...
the simpsons. why the simpsons? they are going to wonder why the simpsons
they would not want to know
that this is your practice today as

always so many things flashing through at once how is
your breathing, experience, mind? are you
presence is not something i believe in presently here
today, in the room, with your practice?
perpetual sex works wonders for presence but that ex's knees got me in a right pickle after a
    while
...
...
now move back
through downward facing dog
and plank
into child's pose
the simpsons
flashes
girlfriend
breathing
breathe
...
...
memories as distractions as unpresent-ers, not exactly in front of my eyes or on my mind but
    they exist non-spatially and temporally but with persistent casual efficacy to take me off
    somewhere else and can be distracting and unpleasant at best. and this trauma
    bubbles out if you stretch your hips too much, but that is too much for a crowd
...
...
come back to your breath
and the distractions are sporadic
and your body
and unconnected
and the mat
but use any means to get away from what is deep and terrified and terrifying within
and the sensations of the room. and try and stay here
look, but stay far enough away from what is difficult
what might be taking you away today?
i know she is not really irritating. girlfriend's—ex-girlfriend's—knees are less and less present
    but they might be the best i'll ever have. she was just a bond for a younger me
balasana: child's pose
and why include the sanskrit at all if it only makes it hard for yourself to read?
well, what is the simpsons reference all about?
...
...
...
...
sometimes i am pulled about and confused. i am not in the room i drink too much i am losing
    track of what is happening

and let's stay rested here for as long as we need then
if i am writing about what is happening and then practising reading it out to a crowd i am not
present or yoga-ing

<u>Veiled!</u>

The boy—that royal epithet,
Princely designator,
Superbly poignant moniker
Of entrapment—
Is finally coming out.

He doubly distances in distributive pronoun
In a separate debate worriless.

It was all a joke for many years—
In many many
Many girls—
Until the game's laugh bit him:
Look back desexed and incredulous, lad.

There was no suggestion for that:
They don't want it to be here.
But it is; and that boy:
He rode safety-capped rhythms;
Found another word for queen, babe.

A little like Prince, he digs away in beret (yellow)
Giving out mixed messages and slights of biro—
Brutus stabs in ignorance and cockiness.
But he knows, he knows:
Every myth is a run from that capped cop.

Settling in feels disingenuous, but very easy:
Rolling symbols and comedy, less tragic,
Less Titus; and references and anything other than
Getting to the point—the sad fictions.
But real! Real! Veiled!

And he plays and plays with the subconscious—
There is no giving it another word—
There is no hiding from it...

...And drums and tall tales from a drinking hole, still;
And substitutes and associations and goalposts;

And itching and itching and just twinging behind the cheek:
Just speak of one girl
—One girl!—
And strip it back with a couplet
For all the naughtied Pans...

A zealous fairy piper!
A changed whistle pointing the way!

The final aces coming out in bits.

Something, Nothing

O I wanted the girl
And the boat and pearl
And I wanted some peace
And a sky full of geese
And I wanted the love
My own touch from above
(And if I'm honest, for her to keep her promise)

But what would they say
If I didn't obey
And what would they think
If I tried my own ink
And how would they act
If I stopped with the act
And did what I wanted—*risked* being faulted?

O I rest assured
That for sure
They'd probably say
Think
Act—not do—
Something
Nothing

Misanthroped Movie Nut

Distanced sprinkle.
Be less thinkle.
Must be careful:
Travis Bickle!

Some of the questions they ask:

“Where do they come from?”
That’s what *you* should be asking *you*, you
Misanthroped movie nut, you!

What an age for all this, too:
Should we not go back to the woods?
At least there it be less pressing.
Nothing to scream and shoot about.

<u>The Vision (A Saviour’s Dream)</u>

Prancing and strutting and buck buck
Bucking around the round pen, a white horse
Carries The Vision us sorry directors
Long to free.

She screams wildly. We stare and starve
In desperation for a chance, kick,
Snort, brush—anything
To keep us quite for a while: a blind chippy tea; while the dust

Doesn’t land much on her: we keep throwing in
New dresses and kerchiefs. One of the extras (truly
Us lot) runs in
To sweep up. Gets stamped on. We swoon.

A few of them then lose interest. “She just goes ‘round
And ‘round, mate,’ they say. Cowards. Me,
Matthew, Mark, Luke and John: we find an axe
Instead to break the pen’s lock.

“Don’t you boys
Dare now!” Her father. “You really want to see that again?”
We leave

The stands with her fate
All but accepted. Only
I need dragging.

*

Yet here I am, not quite leaving it alone.
And so this is gospel:

I went back later that night, found the axe

And smashed the lock and shot her father

And the horse in ill temple. I then took The Vision
Far away from her pen—from blind dirt

To sight—and for centuries, we broke our cages
Against each other

Before running
Around in our own good heavens forever.

Sid on the Ceiling

Sid on the ceiling is stuck in such feeling
And not very rounded but still somehow grounded.

He said to us, “Look! Up here in this nook!”
But we couldn’t see as perfect as he: we

Poked him with a broom, saying, “You can’t assume
That there in that corner is anything for ya!

It might be a trick, for we are not thick!”
But he said, “Don’t poke! For this is no joke—hark!:

When you live up here, the world does appear
With bells on and music and you’d not refuse it!

I wish you could see. I wish… O dear me.”
And then he went quiet, and thought in his silence:

I don’t want to wish; they just think I’m mad.
But they come find me when they’re feeling sad!

But up here this high, I can change
Their structure! I pass them
Some joy, saying, “This here will sort ya!”

And then they dance off, all glee
For a week. Then it’s back to the broom
And jabbing at me!

They don’t see. They don’t! Except
What I drop from the ceiling
Or sky—from my magic pot.

And that gets them high, which then
Stops them
From poking my hind! Left safe in my spot.

*

Sid on the ceiling is stuck in such feeling
And not really meaning the mad things he's mumbling,

"Cuz he knows it all, and he'll never fall
Or falter on us—just sprinkle his dust."

Silent Dreams

you're in your sleep and you're talking
and it's loud and clear—to you—what it is but not to them
to them here
else there'd be hell to pay

you're in your sleep and it's elaborate and X-rated
each word they said in the past
telling them what they needed to know
but no no no: they ran off

you're in your sleep and she's still here—
playing with plants, jutting tempo—
not listening to your truth. you're with new love
now, but you dream and talk blindly

you're in your sleep with your risqué
though silent dreams. she ain't here
when you wake; but someone else is—feeding greens, bad strutting—
not understanding you either

It Gets Everywhere!

Someone walked past me
On their way to the bar, their beautiful scent
From 2019

And I am going to feel very low tomorrow

So I am leaving this pub...

*

...To get an early night to make pancakes this morning! As that will cheer me up.
But I've just

Looked: no flour! I'm searching far back
In the cupboard. And

Ah ha! There is a handmade pot
With a label stuck on it saying "Almond Flour"—great!

Though...

*

...I did not make that pot. And that was not my beautiful handwriting.

Get Rid of Bile Slowly

There is an unseen, unfelt, unacknowledged gap
In self, meaning, experience
Produced when food is withheld
From an organism by taking away the insides that are already there.

The organism and its gap remain unquenched of good fruit.
It has to negotiate, navigate, exist with bad
Bile to fill itself
Instead. The bad bile churns out chaos unnoticed.

The chaos becomes self, meaning, experience—
Love, life, truth—rejecting all that
Threatens it
With more chaos. More bad bile.

But once seen—over a lifetime, generation, species—
Organisms can methodically and relentlessly
Make themselves sick
To quit the bad bile leaving fresh gaps to fill as we choose.

*

You're allowed the good fruit. Make space for it slowly.
You can hold on to truth. Let yourself see it slowly.
You can be yourself, loved and full. But first, get rid of the bad bile
Slowly.

(A version of this poem was first published in The Poetry Lighthouse*, January 2025 (https://www.thepoetrylighthouse.com/poems?author=67895f97e13a9f080f97d21f))*

Limericks

Rumpodous, pumpodous Sally
Was always showing her belly.
The girls shouted, "Rude!
She's incredibly crude!"
But the boys just thought, "Sally—she's naughty."

And then did nothing about it.

Alex was turning his mill
Planning a carnivalled kill:
His ex from the circus
Had sent him *berserkous*.
Use your pen, milled Alex—be still.

Giverny Mattel, the inverted incel,
Equally hated and fancied her pal:
She longed to fuck her
For her friend was a looker!
But Giv hadn't faced her own mother.

Arjun—he had a great passion:
To take over the world with his fashion.
But under his bed
His drawings lay dead
Too stuck in his head to make it happen.

Tilly, the secretive bully,
Found tricking her lover was funny.
Until one day he snapped—said,
"I'll get you back!"
And off he went to go lick her friend's cunny.

Cecile lay down in the bath
Thinking, "I know what'll make them all laugh!"
And she burped and she farted
And her long legs she parted
And she started to… O you do the math.

Mo Mo was a gogo in the Congo: he lost his

Mind when he won his 12th MOBO.
Pranced and danced on his own
Shouting, “Just leave me alone!”
To his agent and fans, who were too slow.

Picture Swingin—with no end “g”—blending
Up smoothies for the boys in The Engine.
They’d rather drink pints
But Swingin hated fights!
And the fruit would help their digestion.

Sid Elaborate bought an elaborate French parrot
Because, “With all the little people, I’ve had it!
They moan and they trick
And they talk awwwwwfully thick!”
So I fed his bird carrot and killed it.

Sonique Blush made a fuss on the bus.
Told the driver, “Hurry up! I’m in a rush!”
So he turned to Miss Blush
Saying, “’Ang on a minute, love—
I’ve got all these new roadworks to suss.”

Debbie China’s with a builder in The Fiddler.
She needs an “Awww”: her ex twice bonked her sister. (Awww!)
So she’s with this lad Dean… or Danny… or Frank…
O but she don’t care about his name: she just wants a good spank!
And her sister? She can keep the vanilla fucker.

Quitting therapy, Riz found a new lover,
And they quickly got lost in one another.
But after two months she was shouting (again)
And off a-shagging and a-flouting (again)
With new boys, as she’d not healed her trauma.

Joseph said to Jesus, “Look, son—
If I was you, I’d really reign it in.
Masturbate. Focus on your health.
You’re just manic: stop running your mouth! Else
They’ll kill you. And then make up sin.”

Sinbad was in a bin bag: he felt sad.
He’d lost his friends: he’d been a right weird lad (apparently).
Because he told Gus that he loved him
And Gus said, “Fuck off, mate—I ain’t bent!”

Get out your bag, Sinbad. I'd be glad.

Nowhere Sir never heard a single word
Of the other boys' jokes, insults or slurs.
As he knew he'd never cure
Why they were insecure.
Instead, he just fucked their girls forever more.

Quite contrary, half-story Mary
Covered her falsehoods by flashing her fairy.
The boys were so glad: "Look, lads—
Check out this gal's nads!"
Not knowing her history was scary.

Joyless Moyles tried to foil
Any bit of love I'd try soil.
He'd pull up my plants, put ants
In my pants. So I said,
"I wish your mum had got the coil!"

Lonely Gavin, wanking in a cabin.
Rubbing his... lamp... like he was Aladdin.
And you'll never guess what shot out...
Robin Williams—who else?!
And Gav's wish? For someone to love him.

Super Charlie, what a darling, we all love him.
He hired a car and went abroad to fetch my cousin!
Brought her back on the rack
When she'd had a heart attack!
I'm not why she couldn't sit in the car with him.

Even before her christening
Hatty had trouble listening.
Her parents would rage:
They weren't on the same page!
So Hatty changed her number and ditched them.

Hakim—lost in a world of his own—
Made it hard for himself
To find someone to bone: trapped
In his own words... Though truly, he didn't have time for birds.
For in his head he needed to roam.

Lee Taft was a daft empath.

I told him, “You gotta stop with all that crap!
You need boundaries, self-care—
Not perpetual love affairs!
Trying to save all the women on that app.”

Boozy Lucy, the tragic floozy. The one
The motherless do love to see.
She reminds them of home, of the voice
That would moan
Constantly, not realising their love for her was pity.

Drishti Sanchita, my yoga teacher,
Had changed her name from Leslie Piper.
She practiced her dog,
Said, “Ohmmmm!” an awful lot.
But hadn’t once read the Bhagavad Gita.

Clever Monkey, climbing high up in the academy
By reading all the books in his clever tree. Until he
Realised he had it all wrong: he’d been
Trapped in thought for too long.
So he climbed down to his feelings and body.

I told him, “Hey, you! Self-deprecating performer!
That act: you know it ain’t gonna do anything for ya.
Instead, you should shout: “About
Myself, there will be no doubt!”
And after that, things can only get better.”

Wally Woodward just couldn’t move forward.
He’d get so far, then fall apart as he always would.
And then one day he realised,
“It’s in my body the blocks lie!”
And so he shook, and then he cried, and then he could.

Ludwig Wittgenstein sat in a pub
Feeling duff, because, “He’s only using me
To make himself look good! And my language games
Were nonsense. I only wrote them because I was tense! But this
Boy? On second thoughts—which I wouldn’t recommend
At all: I actually quite like his stuff.”

The boy wrote a limerick for Hinge.
And as he recorded it, he thought, “This is cringe.”

The Masonic

Chat shit get banged
For the tattoos only, mate
And who's paying for it?

"I'm not mugging you off!
This is the most beautiful thing I've ever seen!"

She's never seen *Only Fools*

"I Know Him So Wellllll"

Slagging him right off
Both as bad as each other, you pair

There's a scream from a bandit or a phone

He's on the bag
He's on the windup
Both just about get through

"Pussy hole: cherry bomb!"

He slides his finger against the bandit with skill. And it's random
"It's a machine. We're cleverer!"
He knows too much

On Your Marks

in your body
on the mind
in your words
out the mind
in your mind
on the page
in your marks
out the mind

in any order, in your order

out your mind
in the page
out your marks
in the world

out your body
in the body
out your words
in the bin

all the best and worst of it
in the bin
all that above
in the bin

Now, on your marks.

<u>Ish</u>

I quit
The docs
And found
A pen

And then
I felt
All good
Again.

<u>Rats</u>

"And my reign as the 'king of fools'
Is solidified as the 'king of rats'"
—Varials, 'Empire of Dirt'

For Frankie

I have been treated like a rat
My whole life—my whole life!—and a feeling
About one's whole life
Is one to be taken seriously, especially
When it applies more widely, as I have met
Many rats—many many rats; in fact
I have met *only* rats
In different suits and perfumed masks, while in our homes
We exist as the same filthy, all of us
So-called "different" rats.
But where are the best rats? The real rats?
The *authentic* rats? Those rats
That reek of rat hood

And come from no good—no love—but still
Make the pub, those
Rats
Only seen as louts, who get spat on
As soon as they leave the house. Have you ever seen
Anything as brave
As a dirty, beaten, authentic(!),
Unshaved rat
Still drinking at the bar, perfumeless
Right under your nose? Their
Filthiness—their *gorgeousness*—
Making everyone's skin crawl
Underneath their feeble fur?

I bet we all feel like rats. I bet...
I bet we are all even rats
Beneath it all.

But me letting anyone treat me like their droppings
For being a true, filthy, authentic rat?

Fellow rats: even if you do not intentionally
Poke my nest, I could still
Be forced to chew through your drywalls.

"U"

The middle of this "O":
That's where you wanna be.
Actually, no!
The middle of a "U":
That's you;
That's me.
We'll stay open then
But held in a gap.
Safe, but in space,
Like a moon
In a lap.
U can sit in it as nothing
Then fly off into more.
Into the open, open,
Upen!
Higher higher;
Soar soar.
Let it not be too defined.

Let it stand for “Undefined”!
An “O”: it’s just too tight
Like a hug that’s too unkind.
But a “U”s a good place holder
For a poem
Or a nothing.
For a got
And get going,
Up and out
Into

(A version of this poem was first published in The Writers Club*, August 2022 (https://greythoughts.info/clubpieces/u))*

Manic Rambling in Spoons 2

Him there—across from me—with the depth and the pint
(It is always ourselves):
I should pull his ontology from under him with my anti-realism.
If only I had something to hold on to though.
But I don’t want humour and hyphens, if I can help it.
I’d prefer
(For the poetry, of course):
Soft cupid;
Doves and Fairy Liquid adverts.

I don’t truly care for metaphysics either.
That means “nothing” to me.
(That’s the closest I’ve got to that!
Decent.)

Not a single point—that’s what it feels,
Looks,
Reads like if you stop chewing the fat:
Get the memories out the body.
While I’m at “it” (nothing, I know—yes:
See!),
I need to get the top and the bottom together
(No ontology but hierarchy; all transie-);
Formalised madness, but it’s just
Feeling.
Try it:
He just so simply says to me.
I’m nowhere near it, but there’s something in it itself—
I’m only getting a coffee.

(This might be the closest
(—Furthest—)
Someone can go; I could do with more
Italics, brackets—consciousness-identifiers —really.)
Honestly, someone just walked out a shop,
Stepped blindly into my pave,
And I bet she has to write nothing.
Think nothing.
Must be bliss for her:
Lovely new nails:
No judgement.
I'm anti-realing her now though, too—
Be gone!
O auto-correct:
Be fine?
I wish.
Clever mind, though, channelling it out like this.
Nowt to do with me.
If anything
I have to get out the way.

So will I go through this and then be,
What is it,
Reorganised—
Reintegrated—
In some way afterwards?
Will I then be able to
Poetisize
Myself, my words, my world,
Correctly?
(Not sure why these ones have shoulder chips.)

(Bold font! Great!
I hadn't thought of that.
For what it's worth, I'm just getting it out here.
It says nothing about me—what exists, what we know,
How to live.
It makes me more amiable at the bar, that's all.
I hope you hear the different voices, too.
Maybe talk to a freak in the street more now?
The communication helps—brings things back together,
Else you get this.)

Completely inaccessible?
Like what,

The reason you don't like it?
(And it ain't no academic reason, I'm telling ya.
If only.)
It's no craft this then, no,
I agree O so very deeply and emptily.
More a spaceship.

O.L.I.V.I.A.

"I need a heart abyssal in its depth"
—Charles Baudelaire, 'The Ideal'

"O" is for the "O" at the start of her name.
"L" is for the love that will drive me insa-

Fuck that. I can feel her rolling her eyes already.
But "Liv": the intoxicating bitc...

...Bewitcher; whose eyes
Just stopped me thinking up "IVIA."

Against Poems About Birds

I was walking along and I saw a sparrow
But I realised quickly that I needed a fellow
And although that rhymes it's still not quite clear
What it is I need to be walking near

'Cause I need a voice not a winged metaphor
Who can say to me what this poem is for
And of course, a proper bloke! is what I need for this
Who can tell me straight what my one point is

So take the "O!" off "fellow"
And add an "a"
And now I have my "fella"
And he did say

"Fucking hell, pal—stop writing poems about birds, yeah?"

Dear Mother, I Have News

"If mama knew now
How you turned out, you too wild
You too wild, you too wild

You too wild, I need you now"
—Kanye West, 'Wolves'

~~Dear Mother, we talk and message~~
~~But a letter in this instance must be used, for I have~~
~~Some twisting news, and it needs presenting in print. To begin with, I am fine~~
~~In my new city—studying, young and pretty; and I am getting~~

O Mummy! I know… I know I'm only putting it off. My letter is just a means
For something else—to only tell you something else. I saw a sight in the city today, and so
Brilliant a sight it was! They were doing a shooting in the park. Shooting
An advert in the park. Then some glorious being from the margins—or the
Sky?—jumped in front of the camera and wouldn't let them shoot the film.
Refused to let them! So they had to stop the shoot until the police took him.
And he told my close friend's friend that he did it, "To even things out," alone. That he
Worked only alone, too, and that, "Even the rise in food critics and child poverty
Are causally linked." That was enough for me. I got it. I understood him.
And so… O Mummy: be patient and loving! And so, Mummy, I have quit.
I am no longer studying, young or pretty. I am now *wild*. I do not read or think.
I jump in front of shoots and silliness—adverts and frivolousness—and this'll be
The life for me; and also my last letter. I hope, sincerely, Mummy… O
Mummy! I hope that you read and read and read, but only this letter
From me. Or just until you feel it all, too? Then read what you like.
I'm silly to the cameras, but
History might see things, and me, differently. And then forget me, I think?
I hope.

O Mummy, do you see why I used a letter
One final time? Because please,
Mummy—you must.

<u>The State of Me, Love, This</u>

It has been ~~22~~ 3 months
And I wake up incredulous with you again
(Like you used to, actually)
But I'll love you again
By lunch
Then they'll be a tossing confusion
(This is stronger when I'm hungover)
But after a sandwich it'll be greeting card love again: tidy and ignorant.

Then I'll talk to you in my head
Or argue with
Laugh at

Torment you (but you're really
Tormenting me, aren't you?)
Then it'll be that bottom-line love again
And it's testing and toing and froing
And it ain't achieving a lot
And it ain't poetic

And it's probably unhealthy (probably
Medicalisable, too

Along with all the rest of me—I mean

Look at the state of this)

(A version of this poem was first published in Roi Faineant Press*, August 2022 (https://roifaineantarchive.wixsite.com/rf-arc-hive/post/the-state-of-me-love-this-by-ashley-dunn))*

Talking to Salmon Trousers

"And I wrote and wrote and wrote and wrote
And wrote and wrote and wrote.

And I ain't got me no money
And I ain't me got no boat."

Top bloke! Took me on his boat!

And he slapped my back just right.
And bought me beer all night.

Good. Bad. Living. Hungry. In Love.

But if I was truly [insert word or phrase here
From title] I do not think
I would write a single thing about it (but this is only me

Now: please read my other poems).

Awareness of the Space, Apparently

...As if it's in the middle of a meditation in the middle of a poem.
Can't just be looking around the room for it anymore:
My bike of thought is too sharp. We need rhythm.
And they won't read it how I wrote it. Slightly removed is better,

But what isn't? No—that's too sharp of a word to use: I won't.
This all sounds too much though—the next and the next and the next.
But how will they know to say it like that school visitor?
And this is your problem: it's completely inaccessible.
You flirt with this obtuseness and madness choosing to say it… how?
What? She reduced to, *she*? They reduced to they. It flies past;
And what is grabbed at: the middle of an "ayyyy"? Nearly halfway down now—
There's rhymes: you're so predictable (I'm watching this abuse,
Don't worry). The arrogance he just smiled at me too: it makes reality all silly.
And you know what's coming now, like, a sort of a twinge
Of a needle in the big right toe, which is now below the heel.
And—after studying it much—what's there? All that graft graft
Grafting with your pen. Honestly? Really. It's completely inaccessible,
And you cannot hide by repeating it again, or by diverting into bars.
And I walked past one bar; and I- (I'm not there yet, so I've just deleted it.
It's not even interesting). I'm nothing to do with this. Ask him—are you?
(No.) Maybe I've started something. I need to do one about stage, performance
And anti-realism but I won't. (That's too sharp. Best to…) Doesn't make sense
To bracket a speech interruption now though, does it. *But if he'd had*
The bottle he'd have kept that to one line. Inconsistent formatting
Per voice, too. O and if she knew what they'd…

<u>Not Quite Pixar</u>

"I spoke
To a man down at the tracks
And I ask him
How he don't go mad"
—Television, 'Marquee Moon'

Kid—it ain't quite Sid—it ain't quite Woody.
But if you can ride this out

Ignoring their noise, penning
Some calm and balance

And poise: well, it can be half
Not bad—half not good.

Like a falling together
Between charged and pretty

Perhaps. A dog
In and out a worn basket

Captures it: homely; steady.

(A version of this poem was first published in A New Ulster*, Issue 116, August 2022 (https://issuu.com/amosgreig/docs/anu116))*

Authenticity Exercise in a Workshop When You Probably Shouldn't Be Out the House

...And so now, try to write a piece
That authentically *represents you—one that speaks foremost*
To *you—and you will slowly see that...*

Surely the sporadic nature of my words
Makes it obvious that I broke myself and now exist in parts?
Surely that demonstrates that I am both here *and* enlightened?
And I know how to not mention that

In the formal, indirect way, too.
So where's *my The Power of Now*? Where's *my* only seeing it
From the top of the psychiatric wards
Up, while they get ignored?

It is so grossly unfair and I cannot bear it.
Of course, I do and can, as I can separate myself
Just
About fine. But still! (O I bloody well am

"Still". Bloody horizontal, I am!
"Stop talking to yourself!")
"Wow! This stuff really works!

Sorry! I didn't mean to shout!
(Although

They didn't say to write it
In silence

Up there. "Yeah!") Yeah!

Sorry again."

In the Waves

"And here I am
Standing in your sad arrest
Trying to do my very best"

—Van Morrison, 'Astral Weeks'

Wants on a roadmap astrally placed by talk before we faced forms.
Girl on a beach—on a beach. On *my* beach asleep with all red lines
And duck feathers: I have the rock, I swear. "It is the best ever!" I swore to her.

We didn't fall where our child couldn't.
We looked from the window resistant but we slowly relented
Resenting with them.

I wish the band would play—I think your slips would hear that:
A boy dying in an armchair; a long long race: "Look, girl!"
Not enough for anyone from a closed view.

I am going through too many fields these past ~~two~~ five years
And I see him standing in yours; and you are going home to a house
Where that movie whistles to you—I know. To that maddening, I know.

I cannot tell you though: the looping and looping and looping
Of your scenes; the rubbing of finger and thumb and I tricking I:
Duck feathers; wrong flavour. Will you smoke them?

I hope one of us doesn't kill the other. I don't want to finish
The words now: I feel here. I absolutely know
This is not what to say, only how to say it.

Girl on a beach. Weeks ago I had the girl on a beach all my lines
And slips and feathers—a closed window—a fast house in the clouds—
Too small a rock on my map. But you were on mine:

The bands played you all the time without a notice from me:
I don't want it to get to the slow song and this is the last album
Of our venture, surely. It pointed to you before form, so long ago

In a studio before us. He surely couldn't have known: I have to be vague
But it is going through something it must be going
Through something as I am, *"Car sick*

Only now. Not at sea alone please.
Mapped before us in our own free field, I swear,
I swear—please..."

Still not here nor there—nowhere—
But gone past.
A boy waiting in the waves.

Not Quite Set

I wish I could still lie in the lies of funding and foreigners
And would've accepted the closed spectrums of materialism and mates
But it was in solipsism that I first found dusted top—calculated crowd—
Distracting me in my symbolic belief of whatever I needed—
Of whatever kept me acadeemed and drunk: I fingered
Feigned and forgot; I stayed at the edge of periodically emptied sets.
And I continue to fine grain them with a thinner and thinner hammer
But a hammer it still be: stop judging me.

I don't know what to say about it all, let alone myself now:
Could I put my hand on their stomach without anyone flinching?
Could I make it sound like a necessary second bullet?
My heart beats ignorantly, but I feel

Something different, so while I ready my hands
A few more times my
Words might show something more

Only once in a while—certainly not like this—

As I keep readying myself.

Nahhhhh

"Bro that is some sickkkkk, spellbound shit, man—you should tell them!"
"O! I... I...

I said something like "If even one person
is still having to use even a single poem
to get through this thing, then we're all
still going wrong somewhere." But it's just... you know...
It's jus-"

"Nahhhhh, bro! What you said is some deeeeeep, eternal truth, man!
And you should definitely tel-"

"O! I... well... I know!
And it's fine... but...

...It's fine... but...

...It's just that... that I was going to say...

that they'll probably disregard it
because of our voices, mate."

<u>That Keeps Him in the Corner</u>

Man in the corner:
He's gena bore ya; or,
Be very freaky—
Let's have a peek... he

Is writing or reading or riotously sounding better
So he can have longer tries at analysing all this before they all
Turn around
To look at him; or, it is in the
Question of
This this this
That stops them turning—
That keeps him in the corner a-creeping(?
Sneaking?)
Faking: a phoney area of the world conscious of
Deliberate looks and bare thought.
He looks magnificent for the century though, for sure,
But that's about it, I doubt.

Still uses the cutlery witho-
(Don't question again);
But unfazed, now, as he is, there's all the,
Who put that there?
Who put all the lessons to learn from along the way there?
And that's a lot of work, that, even if he explored it all
Unemotionally
Without teacher, hand, band minus 3-lettered Morrisons.

This storm rider here though—
This viaductee—
Is off non-metaphorically to a mirror.
It is still him in a bar edged—
Still etching;
Him solo—hollow—with a lone pen for a reality drawn out;
Him in a rhyming cap
Staring back

Only daring to be impenetrably alone—
Solely so boring and freaky;
And away from the point.

Two Man in Milan

"Who's driving this anyway?"
—White Lies, 'Death'

We bend around the road. She crosses
The lanes. The white flash flash flash
Does not concern her: her alien
Style; her foreign land. I am going to mine
Alone. I am losing alone again.
But could this be profitable?

I watch words on the tip of my mind's lips
Go by; and I hate those kinds of lines.
But when I am bored
And dumb, I record some,

Because when I am more capitalistic I will sell.
I should be
An especially better Buddha though. But can I force...

...What is it? This is exactly the nothing of me currently, as I am not
Even up today

Yet, and it all seems

Already lively: she must not
Have thought that, surely? Was that me?
But fine don't

Turn with the road, my lover—go straight

Through all the railings and take our wanderings
Away so we can stop
Wondering about...

...Her hand on my leg, which is very
Steadying
Before a flight. Bravo.

(A version of this poem was first published in The Poetry Lighthouse*, January 2025 (https://www.thepoetrylighthouse.com/poems?author=67895f97e13a9f080f97d21f))*

It Stinks (Time Takes a Cigarette)

I keep catching planes
And steam trains away from you, but you still
Linger in my air, as I try
To relight myself, after us.

And after all my criticism
Of your smoking, guess
What area of the airport
I'm putting this out in?

Land of the Long White Cloud

The covers end, they all go home—
You lift my seams unseen and there'll

Be countless more scores, like this, that are
Big, bad, exhausting seas but I'm
Not alive there: how lovely for me.

Cry away to your island now, please.
This life is duller, but I'll only get a poorly head.

I Hate Him

Nothing walked into a writing class
Didn't sit down
Gave us nothing
Went on its merry way
We all gave up: Jenny
Brought in hemlock the following week (I left this note).

A Poetic Distraction

As I glance
Skyward
The top of a church
Meets
A seagull
Which seems to hang in the air
On the sun-soaked nebulations of our heights
The seagull
Appearing
Poised

And ready to swoop
And feed
On a strewn mash of cheese and onion
Crisps
With a metaphor
I didn't measure
With enough
Care

And do you ever see me walking the streets muttering to myself about you?

[insert enemy here]

"They shovel dirt in your face.
You should thank them. And thank them again"
—Duo Duo, 'Looking Out From Death'

I have not rolled around in filth
And bore and eaten and clawed
At horror, for your encompassing doom—which

I now master, with both sight
And description—to have its way with me; as I am laughing
At you now—at you in me—and I am wailing

And screaming in your face as you will go
Before I do. You see that speck
Miles away? It could take me

Lifetimes again—and it may not be for me
In the end; but I am getting back to that
So I can move more words and wilderness

And whatever it takes to pull others
Away from you; as I know your playgrounds
And ways, and I can disappear

And trick too. And you will know
Nothing about me until it's too late.

Rocna

"I fly above you, yes I do"
—Syd Barrett, 'Terrapin'

Screaming at me, it was: “What are you saying?!”
But the anchor
Couldn’t reach
My ceiling.

I tried to pull it up, but it wouldn’t
Let go; so I stayed

With “Stupid thoughts!”
And godly glow.

Was Struggling

Everything I do
Is not ringing you
It’s poo
(This too)

An Abundance Of Love

“I couldn’t ever bring myself to hate you as I’d like”
—The Stone Roses, ‘I Am the Resurrection’

You can stand on my toes you can
Spit on my feet you can
Make my mind twist you can
Bad nice bad sweet; but you’ll get no bite
From me
No more. I’ll love you
And send you the warmest, brightest,
Kindest regards—even if
You chewed up my heart for a sixty-third time; because you’re no sweat
For a saviour like me: you’re small fry;
And it’s nothing for me to love
Love love you
And say bye (or to revisit

This later for edits;
And to leave matters open
With an abundance of love

(A version of this poem was first published as ‘Won’t Get Fooled Again (With Love)’ in A New Ulster*, Issue 116, August 2022 (https://issuu.com/amosgreig/docs/anu116))*

Aftermath of a Much Longer Title

Baby, it went: you were baby
no more. The shaking and sliding

and whatever it was
remained, that's all.

I can't remember the verb—it was a wild day—
all left on the page where it should be.

Now, just me
on the path without cares

or paper; and I'm dancing
free of you and that syntaxed

mood, baby.

Dance, as They Can't Look Now

Dance like no one is watching—
Existing at all—
Or pretend they all are
To keep them watching

And if they continue to stare
Dance more
Go berserk
Make them wince

Keep spinning
Dance near them
Bump into them
Poison their quiche

Advance further
Get them out their seats
Pour questions over them
Enforce anxiety

Provide aftercare
Burn the dance floor
Spit on the carpet
Piss in the complimentary wine

Sleep with their partner
Show them a nameless god in your crotch
Tickle their pet
Burn all their books and shadow puppet a rework

Dribble in their mouths
Offer to touch them right, well, correctly
Sing the wrong words and shrug
Stand still staring at the wall

Eat meat and reveal your favourite football team
Ask yourself what you're willing to do with them when you're both furious
Notice them sweating, hard, wet
Spin off making them chase

Point them back to their chair
Reference mummy watching over them
Suggest a slow one first
Stare at them until they choose whose arms they'll die in tonight—forever.

Or pretend

They are all gone—
That you dance alone.
That was back then; they can't look now.
They can't look now at all.

(A version of this poem was first published as 'Dance Like It Was Back Then And It's Gone' in A New Ulster*, Issue 116, August 2022 (https://issuu.com/amosgreig/docs/anu116))*

Outside Workshop

"I do not know who I think I am, but I will scan it
All first (and it better be on one page, or three
At most, if the look of it *feels* worthy) and if there is a word
I do not know I will not read it. They are making
No effort with me, so let them stay
Unread and skint in hysteria and compounded compounds. I am rich
And sexed and chipped and delusional. I make up
What I want to and I barely know
Who I am, but it is a flying and unputdownable
Piece of work. Hardly consistent, me, I am. Angry
And unpoetic; unruly and unmeasurable. But at least

I am not unnecessary and inaccessible. And I am unserious
Too, which is what I like, unless I'm the one writing it."

Apparently

I am getting much better
At writing and deleting
When it is shit; which keeps

My head out my arse—the oven.

Not Me With All These Sins, About to Cast All These Stones

"I was lost, I was lost
Crossed lines I shouldn't have crossed
...
How long must you pay for it?"
—Coldplay, 'In My Place'

These past few years I have relived everything (we once met an old couple
In Corfu, I think it was, the "we" being me and my first girlfriend. God I was cruel to her
(They'd worked together at Clarks shoes and had lived in the low-cost housing on the site of the factory
In Street. They dumped so much on us that holiday! They were reliving everything too)); and

It can be so innocuous, what comes back, though it has been a thorough,
Thorough bombardment of memories for me, at times, and I have felt quite guilty
(And annoyed! They simply would *not* be quiet! And they were on that terrace
Every! bloody! evening! I just wanted to speak to my girlfriend

But I couldn't (and now, an hour or so later, at least two
Other holidays have come back to me (along with other pettiness
And cruelty) as I still
Only discard my days in the sun here

Vaguely—cowardly—as I write
And peel away more and more vacant memories
That seem only to highlight others)) while they
Ruined our whole trip for us!

(A version of this poem was first published in The Poetry Lighthouse, January 2025 (https://www.thepoetrylighthouse.com/poems?author=67895f97e13a9f080f97d21f) and was longlisted for The Poetry Lighthouse Prize. It appears in The Poetry Lighthouse Anthology: Volume II, July 2025 (https://www.thepoetrylighthouse.com/books-tpl-1/the-poetry-lighthouse-anthology-volume-ii))

He Didn’t Want This One

You do not know what I am going to do.
You have no idea where I am going

And who I am dragging up.
Get with my history

Or mourn. Get with my poetry
Or perish. Me and my

Piped: we don’t like the semantics
No more.

Poets, At Times

I wander about
On my own
Because I am an adult poet. It is

Cloudy. The mystic of my life
Has gone. I

Cling to the whimsical
And *Astral Weeks*. I

Drift through the park
Trying to find...

There’s a teenage couple kissing on a bench in the park after school!!!
They can’t stop!!!
They stop and look around before carrying on again!!!
There is nothing else for them to do!!!
It is such an urgent act for them!!!
Their bodies hardly move!!!
They may not even be moving their *lips*!!!

It looks mechanical
Like it always was, but it is loud and
Electric and not cloudy and

I want to be like him! No! Not like...
Not like *that*! But...

I want to be like her! No! Not like...

Not like *that*! But…

I want to be them
In my school uniform
Trapped on a bench
Absorbed crushed broken chained to the mystic

And whimsical

Without any of this.

(A version of this poem was first published as 'Grow Up' in A New Ulster*, Issue 116, August 2022 (https://issuu.com/amosgreig/docs/anu116))*

Discreet Service at Prices You Can Afford

"You could be an escort!
Actually, don't do that.
Actually, do what you want!
Or I could do that actually!"

She was sliding over all the options, bouncing
From branch to branch: "Escort me! Escort me!"

And all I could do
Was keep up with it: attentive, erect,

Free.

A Fantastic Daydream of Personal Triumph

Pity pity this ditty ditty
My phone wanted "dirty dirty"
It knows how to write bad poetry
Using words so world don't hurt me
Creating—attending—new tea party
Dreaming I'm up high like Lucy
Lazy, really: rhymes of just "e"
Not quite Whitman; more like Mitty

Train Wreck

I once had a lover
who stole my literature: she stormed

out with *Anna Karenina*, the protagonist
lost in her.

To Be Sung to the Tune of 'My Favourite Things'

Ignoring our trauma, gaslighting each other.
Hating your girlfriend 'cuz she's like your mother.
Stories we play out like puppets on strings
Deluded in thinking we're choosing these things.

When my love shouts,
When tension mounts,
When we say, "You're fucking mad!"

I simply remember we don't choose a thing, and then I don't feel
Sooooo bad.

(A version of this poem was first published in my pamphlet L'etoile*, October 2024. Redacted copy available here: https://ashleydunn.co.uk/letoile-redacted/)*

Opposite McDonald's

A lot of books—"highly addictive: don't start" cut out on top.
"I'm none of those things!": my head.

You sure? she said across me—
felt me—

"Don't read into them."

House Rules (Should Have Been Albert)

In this house
Before we shout
We say, "I love you!"
Then let it out

On our own
With a scream
In a pillow.
Then we snog.

A Putter at the Golf Range – Chained to the Green So It Can Be Used by the Public, but Not Stolen – With a Plan to Escape

I'm having so much fun for them
But they'll never notice
My long game.

Corridor

Went in the bar
Might have been a hotel or hospital
A car boot sale
Mostly silent—some artists
A child spinning around in the corner
Glazing at the two inches before his eyes
Some whistles
Some kisses and laughs
An actor screaming from the back in practice
Mostly floor looking but enough
"I'm not very visual, so I just listened"
From the front
There was a shop
No one mentioned the queue around it
Each slipping past unnoticed for dinner
Bed
The rhythm was there—it built up
But there was not a teacher
Must've been put out

And it grew—that was felt
Then someone cried and left

A man walked up open mouthed to speak
Last minute closure as he went by
He left the child behind revealed and deconstructed
He smiled at each tune

Getting himself down to a one-inch stare

On his way to a corridor he liked

Bank Holiday Shenanigans

It's the Sunday afternoon of the Jubilee weekend
I'm behind the bar polishing the same glass

The Dalai Lama walks in holding a gun to his head
He stops in the middle of the bar, the celebrations on the TV going past
He nods at the TV and walks to the bar
And sits down. “Usual please, barman.” He doesn’t remove
The gun from his head. Sylvia looks up from the corner to check.
“No. Not yet.” She bends back down to the oven
And waits. Dalai sits nursing his drink. A gambler walks in
And stretches next to him. They make eye contact. They consider each other.
“Why not,” Dalai says. The gambler runs outside. He sets himself
On fire. A new girl is piling up empties in the back. “Another,” I shout.
“I didn’t sign up for this.”
The next two years are quiet. Only Sylvia
Checking. I polish the same glass. A professor
From the ***Doctorised Collective of Everything Knowable***® walks in
With seventeen suits on, his eyes narrow.
He’s got sick on all his layers. Everyone ignores him.
He points at me.
“I don’t get you: that’s clean!” “Finally!” says
Dalai. “You can take a seat now, Doc.” He’s still holding his gun. I’m still polishing
The same glass. “That took a while!” from the back.
“Can I take one of your jackets for you?” from me.

Near the Start After a Trip to Waitrose

“I feel there’s something missing”
—Squeeze, ‘Up The Junction’

Cheers to the mirror with a beer.
A knockdown rotisserie chicken for dinner.
I am all of the things

For myself now, and probably will be
For some time to come. But if I’m being honest
With myself, I have been

In my own world for what seems
Like all of time, only now
I have the space to autotune

My own reflection, whilst undoing
Every past lesson.
And so

This wish bone is all mine! As are all my

David Chase dissections

And analytic
Observations, judgements

For me to deliver and assess as I see them
Alone, this all

Much better than being asked, “What oil would you like,
Babe?”—argh!

He seemed
Undeserving of her attention

And shopping trolley
In the supermarket just now

As I got my chicken, the mummy’s boy.
But

Somebody’s boy
Nonetheless, wasn’t he (though too shy

To climb in the trolley for her, weren’t you—to jump about
For her like I would). And who am I

To anyone
Now that I only sit alone, drinking

With my silent phone? But that’s right! I am the ever-so
Ever-so good boy

Waving at myself in the mirror, that’s who: “How do, big lad!”
And I am ever-so

Ever-so clever with it all, as I only
Get to answer back (for now)

As I redraft.

I Told My Therapist I Was…

"'Tant poëte que je sois, je ne suis pas aussi dupe que vous voudriez le croire, et si vous me fatiguez trop souvent de vos precieuses *pleurnicheries, je vous traiterai en* femme sauvage*, ou je vous jetterai par la fenêtre, comme une bouteille vide.'"*
—Charles Baudelaire, 'La Femme sauvage et la Petite-Maîtresse'

…the only thing that existed
She said this was a problem
I said it was a useful fiction
She said this was a problem

I instrumentally conceded it was a problem in a poem
She suggested a role-playing exercise
I threw her out the window
She read this poem

I sent it to her before our first session
She wrote me a poem
I said it was a useful fiction
She said to imagine people, not as naked, but as non-existent

I said this was unethical
She said it was a useful fiction
I threw her out this poem
She threw me out the window

I added this instrumentally to a poem
She said her non-existence was a useful fiction
I sent this poem to myself before our first session
She told me I was the only thing that existed

I read out a poem
She said this was absurd, delusional, schizophrenic
I said this was better than actually being so
She said, she said, "Go."

Accusations

"I believe it was Robert D. Hare, was it not?"
I was on a cliff edge as they scrambled for the past.
Fascinating insights; but Jesus Christ, faking empathy?

All of my lovers have adored petting dogs, but do I judge?
I'm always the other side of the street anyway, as a constant, that's all,

Drawing parallel lines
Unaware—unseen—in the bushes.

Heavy Workout (Christmas Day)

I would not strangle anyone
In real life (without consent), but if I could
Do it to one person, smushing
All of them into the paper

For a poem, it would be you. Get right into your neck
I would. Proper wring it out, like

Nails digging into your neck severing a few things even
Chewing on what flopped out biting into the
Tubes and veins getting covered in blood gorging
On the brains guts bone b-

O my god—I'm so sorry!
It's just the gym's closed.

The Point, For Now

Where is my voice
If this is poetic?
Where is my voice
Behind dashes and edits?
Where is my voice
If there's only this page?
Where is my voice
If I exist only staged?

It is nowhere.
I have made myself fictions alone.
I am distinct from memory and matter.
I am only the chiming of words at all times.

This works thinly for me
Just fine.

And of course, I get to be anything
You want
On paper.

Early Listening Is Key

"But I am so self-aware
So how could I ever hurt you?"
Excellent thing to say.
Held your stance just right.
Held your forehead muscles just right.

1720-Week Marathon Training Plan for a Beginner, Day One, Minute One

I can'-
We can.
I can't get up
We can. We a bit open already.
It's too hard
We aren't going anywhere. We'll get up.
I can't. It's too hard. I'll neve-
We aren't going anywhere.
I can't begin
We a piece of shit. It's fantastic. We own it. We'll get up.
I can't
Put our foot on the floor.
No
We think we consciously decide? Put our foot on the floor.
Fuck you
Did it though, didn't we: put our foot down. Now, get u-
I'm up. So what. I feel-
Fucking rotten. Yes fucking rotten. What a rotten piece of shit we are. Glorious.
Why do this
It's not us. Bad birth or something. Who cares.
I care
Tricked you! We knew we cared. How quick was that this time?
I fucking hat-
And I doff our cap to us. We brilliant and hilarious. Now, shower time.
No
We fucking stink. We a dirty rat. We opening up.
No
Look what we did though. Look what we did.
Whatever you say next, we can go to the beginning and see we can do it. We see we're going to win.
I can't make the shower. I can't
Our shoulders are back. We know it. We did that.
We are winning, even if we don't see it now. We are telling we: we win.
I can't-
We a fucking rat. We going to shower eventually.

I can'-
We going to win eventually.
I can-
OK great let's go

Creepy Fox in the Style of Billy Joel

In the middle of the night
I go searching in your bins
Finding empty beer cans
And your crisp packet sins

You must be searching for something
In all that junk you eat
And why lie to your friends
About not eating meat

In the middle of the nightttttt.

I Dread to Think

Vera and Jack
Or Hughes and Plath?
The problem is
Both of us dread *and* think.

O how I wish my head was full of pigeons
And not poetry.

Please Let Him In: It's for All Our Sakes

I am a very different animal today I can just about feel that;
Though when I was at the madhouse
Yesterday, I nearly went off again
With all that. Again. Nearly. But right at the end—and it was tight—
I brought myself back with a walk and a rum
And a sad poem, and I took the poem back to the madhouse
To try my best with the staff; but it was of no use: they would not let me in;
They would not let them out. I tried screaming at them,
Banging on the windows and climbing on the roof; but that too—
No use; and I went back to my walk and rum
And sad poem, all alone in my wildness again. A man with a hat
Came at me then when he saw me walking along with my rum
And poem. He assessed it (he said he was formally introduced) and he did not
Find my poem sad, though he did say it was...

Now what were his words?...
“Surreal. Comic. Absurd!
Poorly placed.”
“Well, formal my foot,” I thought.
“He hasn’t even acknowledged my haughty metanarrative.”

Stock Take

He edits his poems
And reads them back
And thinks to himself, “No wonder—

No bloody wonder!—

She didn’t put up with him
In the clouds
Like that.”

Sex Work Architecture

Built me
And they did come.

Event Horizon

Went t’ end of all this, me.
“Wow! Really?! What was there?”

Nowt.
“Nothing?”
Nah.
“No... things?”
Nah.
“No people?”
Ha! Nah.
“No world?”
Nah. No planets or owt.
“No

Poetry?”
Kinell! Need clip ‘round ear you do, ked!

“What about accents? Any of those?”
Nah. No accents or owt.

Just bits ah that, lark,
Homogenised southern noise.

Slugs

"And this is why I sojourn here"
—John Keats, 'La Belle Dame sans Merci'

I was finally leaving the woods
When I saw, a slug
Waving at me
Quietly softly sweetly, then loudly
In an odd tone, though I was one to enjoy such oddities
Back then. I nearly
Stood on it, the slug,
It putting itself right at my feet, but then it repeated
Its sweetness at me, as it seemed
To know I enjoyed such oddities
Back then.
After all, I'd returned its wave!
Only it was that
That sent me back to the woods
And my wild for a while as the slug
Kept me talking and sharing, which was getting me
Lost again as I
Did not notice the slug slowly getting
Away from the woods, me
More lost in its tangle of weeds that
The slug was freed
From the slug
With a new voice, the voice not so sweet, the slug
Leaving now with their wave
At the end a bye
This time, as they shouted
Back to me
In their wild
Wood, "No no no no no! Are you
Sure? Because, you see, *I* am sure
I never did wave at you."

(A version of this poem was first published in The Poetry Lighthouse, January 2025 (https://www.thepoetrylighthouse.com/poems?author=67895f97e13a9f080f97d21f) and was shortlisted for The Poetry Lighthouse Prize. It appears in The Poetry Lighthouse Anthology: Volume II, July 2025 (https://www.thepoetrylighthouse.com/books-tpl-1/the-poetry-lighthouse-anthology-volume-ii))

Love's Young Dream

We drove each other around our hometowns: "This

Is the house that Jack built. This is one place we got stoned
And stoned
And stoned and stoned and so

Wasted. We were always so wasted! Why was that? Why did I...
O you too? Mad, isn't it—wanting
To be off our faces all the time when we were

So young!" Showing, not telling each other—ourselves.
Not listening
To each other ourselves still very much

Children, together—in the car,
In the dark—at each other's

Throats all the time, screaming, only into our
Own voids echoes: please see this.

Any Takers?

"And it's a hard logic to follow and the girls get lost"
—Talking Heads, 'Tentative Decisions'

There are only negations in this life but I am too old and out of time.
Therefore, I am seeking a son to collect the data to confirm this for me.

From the beginning I will teach him theorems in the morning.
I will then deconstruct them in the afternoons and evenings to prove my point.

Through this approach, I hope to make him see completely what this existence really is.
But of course, on paper, this project already demonstrates some contradictions.

Firstly, by having offspring, I would actually be *adding* to my self-diagnosed world of negations.
This would mean I would be negating my own conclusion in the first place, of there being only negations.

Secondly, I will no doubt die before I can demonstrate to my son the overall point I am required to make to him.
This would only leave him stranded in the same pickle I find myself in now. And what a pickle it is.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly—at my age, with my views
And with my voice—I will probably struggle to find anyone willing to participate in the act of son production with me.

Bad Signal

The right side of my back hurts
Inside my shoulder blade.
I know exactly what it is
Even though you don't
(You never did accept it)
But it relates to what you cannot feel yet
What has not been permitted to you yet

What has not foamed
To your consciousness yet.
I do not think I am a prophet again yet.
Nor is this vindictive or malicious: no blame
Or shame is in sight between us we are past it.
I know you cannot speak of it yet, what is there.
But I also know something beneath you

Feels it forming—and so for now, I'll take it for you.
The right side of my back hurts
Inside my shoulder blade as I hold
All you need to share—I bear

What quietly builds within you; and I do
What is required with it, silently
And willingly, without absolving you completely:
I will not be enabling you again. I certainly

Will not be drilling into you myself anymore, no. I only
Monitor your waters as they edge—as waves
Indifferently slap your shores; and when they bubble
And break—or I pop some low hanging splashes

Of yours—I will put them on my back again; which
Will hurt, as it always does. Though I'll take that, and you will not
Have to notice a thing: you will
Only be left feeling better. You see

There was never any need for you to worry, as your waves
Are delightful visual auras for me: they blind me
Across all my cortexes. And I love the work: the challenge,

The pressure, the pain you always gave me. But

Of course—as I am now
Fully aware—visual auras can also signal the start of a migraine.

For Your Sake?

"...to mould a genius?"
—Charles Baudelaire, "'You'd entertain the universe...'"

I re-met the love of my life
To whom I was toxically attached. "It's up to you,"
I said. "Like God, I have so much power
And love in me that I could save

Either you, or the entire universe. You might still believe
That all my grandiosity is funny, but it could be the making
Of you and me. Or quite simply, everybody! So
Are we giving it another shot, for your sake?"

And we left together! Back to hers! I couldn't believe it!
And we made the type of love that only certain bonds
Can make (if you know, you know) and went off
To other worlds. And it was... otherworldly! Then I slept

Like a baby. Unfortunately, when I woke up
She'd left me! She had also left me
This note: "It was either me
Or the entire universe, right? You and me

Or everybody? Come on then, boy, as you must surely know
What I have decided now? As I am off
For a new life on my own, for if you save
Everybody, you'll obviously save poor old me too? Lunatic! Goodbye."

"How's He Doing Now?"

"'You are not worthy to lift
From your wretched slavery'"
—Charles Baudelaire, 'The Vampire'

It takes all my cognitive power so I cannot think. It takes all my cognitive power so I
Cannot be creative—I cannot write poetry. But that was only keeping me up at night, so what
Use was all that? Whereas this *love* that consumes me
Meaningfully now: I can put my hard work

Into that—into something in the flesh—and not be at the mercy of my pen. This means
I now practice *applied* poetry, there being nothing left
In wasted ink that no one gets to read—that *she*
Doesn't get to read—with all my time, all my mind being taken up by something
In the flesh instead. And by *her* flesh, too! *For* her flesh.
And I love it. I love it.
And although I believe all poetic output goes out into the universe in some way—that it has
Some impact, even from far away; it is also true
That I do have an ego, this meaning
My efforts must be known in the flesh, this meaning
That she must know that it is *me*
Transforming her being—that it is she
That has me and my pen at her mercy; and that I am devoted
To unpacking her poetic truth—*our*
Poetic truth—as I always see it
All the time, especially when it is keeping me up at night. So perhaps this love does not take all
my cognitive power
After all, because I am still
Writing this, which means we must—clearly—be an excellent fit, me
Her and this. And my ego is all for that, as I can still write an alright
Poem whilst anxiously and eagerly waiting to see if she'll pick *me* this time. Pick *me*
This week! With her maybe even reading one of my poems! And that is so
So creatively consuming and inspiring
To write about—to be kept up all night over.

<u>fulloflove</u>

"And I shall drive my chariot down your streets and cry
'Well, it's me, I'm dynamite and I don't know why'"
—Van Morrison, 'Sweet Thing'

The rules do not apply to me I am beyond reproach and fulloflove
So fulloflove and full*on*love (my love can be quite full on) that nothing lands
On or in me except love, and I pass that out and out and out
And mostly still to her. But should I have an occupation for show? If so, I'll say something like

I went to the mill yesterday! They grind boulders into stones into pebbles
Into gravel into very fine sand, and it's a grand ol' show, the breaking down
Of big old lumps of things like that… I love foxes (they are
Irreproachable like me!) and it's as beautiful as

A sleeping fox, the breaking down and down
Of rocks until you're left with just dust. But you must excuse me—a mill?
Of *course* there's no mill! I live in the clouds! (He lives in the clouds.)
But there's always Fantastic Mr Foxes and rocks

To see and you should see its ears prick up! Can you feel my *heart* pricking up? Can hear it?
Could you really see me working in a mill? I am so fulloflove (and full on it)
That I just say anything here quite dizzyingly. I am going to send her a belated birthday card
today!
I am manic and unemployed; this love I have for her and thinking up

Whatever I like: *that's* my occupation; for why not! I do anything
I want now—I feel beyond reproach; so who needs
A silly old job to break down with
When you exist so fulloflove?

(A version of this poem was first published in my pamphlet L'etoile*, October 2024. Redacted copy available here: https://ashleydunn.co.uk/letoile-redacted/)*

I Am Not Losing It and the Cicada Is Talking To Me

"If I could just figure out what the old woman wearing that salmon-pink snakeskin jacket wants from me"
—Headache, 'The Beginning of the End'

I am not losing it and the cicada is talking to me.
I am in the desert or the swamp or my room
And this is not me unravelling, no way. I have been
Worse. You should have seen me when I was extremely malnourished.
I was extremely skinny. My friends sang to me
From the stairs asking me over and over, "Are you sure
Your thinking is not impaired? Are you falling again?" They are not
My friends. They trick or tease me only and I have been
One of those constant appeasers I am done with them.
The cicada: even she tries pulling many fast ones
On me but I am not to be fooled by nymphs. I have had
Many of them don't you worry about that, young man. I am talking
To me in the mirror yes, I know—don't you worry now. But I am not
To be unravelled tricked fooled at all by anyone: I can adequately
Provide for myself in this empty land.

No I am not happening, you spies, you violators, you gas-

Ah ha! The cicada again! In she comes to busy me again now.
She thinks she can slip into my mind

And heart easily—any part of my body. O and she is trying
To get into my breath—my lungs—this time; but little does she know

That I am sitting with my sword willing to remove all my organs
Before she can get to them, and right now, I am holding it steadily against my ribcage.

Nothing More (Really Want Len to Claim This)

Another meet. Another attempt.
More intelligence to reconsider.
"I think I'm just addicted to it!" she said.
Was she always a fan Robert Palmer? What about
Ferry And Mackay? Though her speech
Did help me understand
That it all had nothing to do with me; and I'm even
Starting to accept
That I may not be very good at grasping the concept myself: what
Are we both missing? What did we both
Not get? It's madness! (Or Labi Siffre.)

Bread, Porn, Her

I am a product of lots and I take no responsibility. My "I" depends on who I am
Talking to, bread, social media, the purchase of too many books, alcohol,
Junk food, being untidy, being unclean, not dusting, letting dirt mount up,
Letting used wet wipes mount up, forgetting myself, porn involving non-
Vanilla sex, Kanye West, finding sociological frameworks reductive, finely-
Grained mathematics, accessible literature by inaccessible authors, witnessing
Elaborations in art unfold, becoming the creator through therapeutic work, her,
Kissing and timing the ins-and-outs to perfection, researching my potential
Sociopathology, masturbation, anti-real metaphysics, experiences with a
Lack of things, dissociation, synonyms, Word, taking signs from a universe
That surely cannot be here, surely, never consciously definitizing, noticing
And letting it go past, taking the edge off, reading, writing, rigor through to
Negligence, meal deals, one pan wonders with no recipes, that squirrel there,
It only being feeling that cannot be packaged in words, but try explaining that
When you're here, chuckling at the irony of the difficulty of making your point,
The Sopranos, distractions, relics, wall art,
Mute points, mute buttons, spots
Of rain, getting outside, clenching your teeth to feel it, to open up, to allow it in, to trust, to go through hell with no weaknesses and to come out enjoying the weather, to be able to experience the weather, getting
Too personal, manipulating cre-
Ativity, feedback loops, him on the roof, happenstance
Rhymes, timely journaling,
Really not being sure about any of it but sitting in that, mulling over
Whether these should be on their own lines, feeling,
Feeling, bread,

Porn, dirt, bread porn, her.

The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman

It appears they were discovered in the nineties
By an Evangelical Christian. Imagine that!—the message
Taking so long to spread.
But do these "languages"

Accurately capture the love we shared, or are they just
Another swindling creation
Of prosperity theology? You see, I am not sure

His theory squares with my
"Attachment style", as I seem
To express love through an unseen
Sixth "language". So dear

God: could we re-advertise
Your book—including my experience of love—on doormats
And mugs? They could have my face on.

Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

"Doctor doctor! I feel like I'm in
A washing machine!" "But at least you're getting clean!
Now

You better hold on tight
For the spin cycle." "OK!"
[Forty years later] "Doctor doctor! Am I

Out of the spin cycle yet: bababa-
Dalgharaghtakamminarronnkonnbronntonnerronntuonn-
Thunntrovarrhounawnskawntoohoohoordenenthurnuk?"

"Hmm—no. And it shouldn't have lasted this long!"

Lyrics: $1.5 million. Tupac Shakur Dying to Them: Priceless

After Don McLean, 'Vincent'

Most people get the title wrong. It's funny! And I don't really like the song.
The Wikipedia page for me currently lists twelve medical conditions
I possibly suffered from, plus an "Other diagnoses" section.

There's no consensus on psychosis, though my *Sunflowers*
Are gorgeous! Can they not just leave it at that? Can you believe they auctioned my killer?
Did I mention that "Other" section? I did? Gotcha! I know I did.
According to the secondary literature, it is likely that I suffered from a comorbidity of problems.
It is also possible
That more happened too, that there was a linear narrative
After that and that certain paintings
And letters surfaced from these happenings. There were also additional possibilities.
And yet my *Sunflowers* are still gorgeous! Though
This may be contingent on illness? Or their life?
Or whatever they say of me, like, "His suicide
Was a tragedy!" O I hope no one understands me, try
As they might. The contingency that is. And to think they want to see more
In paint! What is it they think they're looking at? What do they hope
They'll see? Have they no thought for what happens when we look
Too deeply, for if they start to understand
Me, they must know
They'll see… they'll see…

No! No, nay, never! They've really no idea.
Though

I'm so glad yellow pigments were made! But I believe
They'll find them unstable too.
They also fade.

<u>It's His Turn in the Spare Room Tonight</u>

And he doesn't massage his penis across your neck, down your back,
Along your thighs like I did, does he. You don't lie face down
And lose yourself, do you. He doesn't make you disappear.

You no longer shake uncontrollably, do you, unlocking,
Dropping. You dare not risk going beyond pleasure
Anymore and he doesn't keep you trapped

And untouched, your heart raw for tongue, your forearms, your cheeks, lips
Hips aching expecting, his eyes at dinner
Not making you wet, you not being taken against my bookshelf

Here nor that sofa you're lying on there, you not being stripped
And emptied suspended full and silently your body
Never leaving you again, you never ever

Begging and weeping and begging again, because instead

You chose to take it in turns
Alone in there.
Neigh

Last night
While I was “drunk”, I walked past the bar, and a man
Sat there talking to his empty pint jar. And as he did
So, it filled itself back up
On its own
In one go. He then turned to me
And winked, and I just blinked
Blinked blinked, then ran
To the toilet to the sink, to splash
My face with water, saying
To myself in the mirror, “That’s quite enough
Horse tranquilliser.”

On Boundaries & Agency

Clowns, brick walls, contortion-
Ists! Tried repeatedly bashing my head in; only to leave behind

A couple of couplets. “But why even let them
Do that?” O, Doc—I’m not!

I’m not.

Who’s the Dumbest of Them All?

I held a mirror up (I was stupid, thinking

I was doing something else, thinking

I was helping at all) and they only

Laughed at it shaking.

But do you think I looked in it?

I Must Have Actually Counted the Number of Days It Had Been Since I’d Last Seen You When I First Wrote This

After Rupi Kaur, I reckon

It has been exactly

647 days
And your email address
Just auto-filled a
Newsletter subscription textbox
On a poetry website
On my
Browser

And I still sometimes
Write ones
About you.

<u>It Doesn't Make Me Smile</u>

"No more so
than the burden I carry
around with me always"—and what

can anyone say to that?
How
does one talk to it?

Nasty
and chipped joints, out of reach.
Heavy and heavy and heavy.

<u>Death! Emptiness! *Nothing*!</u>

"I went to the top of every spire.
Mountain. Bank. Ivory tower!
And there was nothing there
And it still feels unfair
This thing: I remain empty, unseen—
Tricked! So I come clean: do not try
But love and travel. As at the top
We still unravel." And what a privilege

It was for him to say so! As we
Down here have no legs
To climb, nor fingers to count,
Nor eyes to read; while he
Enlightened
And published still finds the will
To talk! Why is that, sir?
Why in the world

Would you? As surely
You must know
That's how we "unravel"? But
You absolutely *must*
"Understand", "up there"
With all that "knowledge"; or
Were you not going up, but only
Down

Getting scared? "Stop! It's only Death! Emptiness! *Nothing*!
And even that is truly ineffable!"
Ha! Sir—we in the dark?—
Already know about the foreseeable.

Quit Them Now—Now—

And go roll in the grass
Kissing other new openers
Ignoring where they're at. But don't mention that!
Instead, talk about... nothing you remember

And bondage mistakes—the trouble
With dates; this not really being
Over or under another, but through
Ourselves—each other.

They might come in future
To join you on the grass, you both
Having little to ask, only more
Mistakes to share—laugh at.

Or they may not. Either way,
For now, move on.

Sunset at Rudds, Lulworth Cove

I have tried everything but nothing works
Like this: I sit by the pool

By the sea—it is cool here—and I grab
My pen to jot some comforting

Nonsense to get into myself, with no plan
For what comes next, only knowing

That it will be me: I will not have to try
Too hard, not for verses or their quality,

But for feeling, grounding—and sounding good
Within myself. But why does only my pen settle me?

Should I not be enjoying the water? The birds?
I never remember any of their names… and unwritten

I barely remember myself either. Alone here, I am—just inking
And stinking of failure: the surfers

Even stare. But they aren't wearing any shoes either!
Though I can ignore them for now

And write, knowing I'm not as bright
As I'd like to think: there's a fly

In my cocktail: I escape—once more—in drink.
And I'm swimming out here again, aren't I—

Though not out there? I only dive
With my pen (I'm typing: I still lie) and remain stupid

And silly enough to squeeze
Another half in

At the end—for fun—to settle
And buoy me up;

To keep my head above water.

(A version of this poem was first published in my pamphlet L'etoile*, October 2024. Redacted copy available here: https://ashleydunn.co.uk/letoile-redacted/)*

On Never Songs, Poems, and Other Assorted Stories

I have watched my mind countless times so I know what will happen and it is terribly repetitive
and dull. If I do not capture
A few bits of the stories that flow past on the
Narrative train in my brain, then poor
Old me will be forced to face some historical
Difficulty. *Supposedly* historical. Allegedly fixed in the past. Or if I let the story go my cerebral
Symphony may sing lyrics to me, but that will still only be

A short advert before old dramas repeat, *if*
I let them. That time I was grumpy
Because she wouldn't kiss me, for instance. What's the story right now though? What will I be capturing as I don't
Fancy singing or remembering. O it's an exciting one! Something about…
A pot of gold, it seems! Only it's not at the end of a rainbow, but in
Some fog, maybe? Permanently lost
And unattainable; forever
Floating off and being chased after, it is. But I wonder who by—I cannot quite see the protagonist? It's a clever concept
All the same. A funny story! Wherever do these things come from? I'm annoyed about that kiss again now.
Life could have been very different if she'd just agreed! Or if I'd have not been
So grumpy? I don't know anything about that story now though
Do I: I wish I was stuck at singing. Although I do get to capture
Some history as it goes past sometimes, just as it starts
To repeat itself over and over, louder and louder. Like the never kiss here, I suppose!
When I get the chance to do this—to see
And remember and then write about it—that history
Doesn't come past again; and I don't have to go back to find or finish it either: it stays
Happily on the page, incomplete and settled,
Just like all the other stories out there. At other times the stories
Drift past without needing to be chased or captured at all
By me. By anyone! They just float off
And away instead unsung forever forgotten
In the fog; but this takes
A lot of practice and that can be terribly repetitive
And dull. Though it's like I was never grumpy now! And as if
She had never rejected me. It's all left on the page instead; I feel
Nothing of it. O and wouldn't it be terribly repetitive and dull—and ironic;
Difficult?—for me
To continue chasing that gold… *old*
Story here now too, because why dredge whatever that is up.

<u>Perhaps It Should Be "I *should* not write today"</u>

"…for
anything I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless
already he be killed with your hard opinions"
—*William Shakespeare,* Henry IV, Part 2*, Epilogue*.

I will not write today (do not get stuck on inconsistency: it's ugly).
I will not write today so I will waste time on social media
And date attempts. I will graft and create entertainment
And I will lie. I am algorithmising

My life as creativity is not going to keep cutting it, and I am back
To drinking and pestering again instead. I am uncaring, pig-headed, funny,
Uncaring. Repetitive, it seems, but it gets one through.
I am only bad
At writing things when I slip off, but I will go with this, producing nothing,
Being unconcerned making
Subtle changes (though I will always use this to bring myself back
When it is ugly). I will throw something out
For its own sake and be cleared
A pinch. I will make her laugh! Her
From this app! On demand! For she has demanded something
And I learned the value of our needs
Being met somewhere along the line, and it smelt like kerosene, a bit,
There's no doubt and I panic
Every time, so I respect her simpler wishes (but where are mine?
My nose stings). I will be completely
Forgetting myself again today as I slip off
Into further unfeeling and materialism, with my body
Far away as it fails to dig into any of it
For some time to come with yoga
Or breathing or writing and it'll just be a surface laugh, a moment
Here, a rolling on and on so very flat
And low (but do not doubt
My control). Perhaps this is all there is though? If so...
I am Rumi! I am Tolle! No certainly won't be writing today, only
Chipping it off to get something especially meaningful next time, at least
To my mind (this fella
Sounds like a dick from where I'm sitting and has nothing to do with me. But I do find him sobering on mornings like this! I'll leave him in bed for good one day. Boss night last night).

<u>One Cold Night in October</u>

I have a proposition: let's pretend
Those three months were it

And ignore all the shit: we could
Lie

Down, again, like we were in control.
Or lie. Or act as if

We weren't only filling each other
With what was missing, as if

Anything was ever decided
By us—because that was

Fun, wasn't it: just being filled.
I mean nothing vulgar or funny by that. But at least

Back then
We used to laugh.

I think they were lies, too, sadly.
Like wedding dresses. Or cocoons.

Or sleeping bags. If only we knew. Though
If I'd have known? I'd have only

Filled you harder I reckon fuck it—tried
To get to the missing quicker, filling

Us both to the brim
Leaving no room for future lies

Or proposals. Although
I do lie still, as I'm glad

It was left how it was: I have now
Eaten into myself, and the lies

Were in there all along. Some of your leaves
Too, were there. Are you waking up

Now too? Relinquishing
Control? Eating into ourselves

Can be a breaking
Down

Or a blossoming, you know? Do you?
Are you...

Morning! Sorry—a proposition? No!
I mean... no I didn't say

Anything, as I know you don't like
Being woken up: I remember some things!

And yes—I agree: us lying here
Is strange!

Almost like those early days.

By Me?

I remember the times
All the sex, wine and lines
Waking up weeks later
Drenched in sick, feeling bitter
With no memory.

Now I lose the odd day
In a psychotic haze
And I find reams of paper, with words
Strung together
And I think, "By me?"

And the words are never better
Than living in that first stanza.

I Know… but I Like It!

"How does it feel?"
—Bob Dylan, 'Like a Rolling Stone'

I saw it again: that stone!

I kicked it. It rolled. Cool!

Then it stopped again.

At 4 a.m.

After Wendy Cope's 'At 3 a.m.'

You don't sleep how you used to
Because of what you left for them
In a box you filled
For decades
So they could sleep.

Notebooks lie open on your head.

You left the box there years ago,
And you want to know
How good their sleep feels,
And if they now know
What you always knew too.

A Short Escape

"No one ever said it would be so hard
I'm going back to the start"
—Coldplay, 'The Scientist'

Inside I went, and all
Was well.
These quilts are home,
Like decades ago.
Kiss me, too. Swallow me whole.
I must be brave. It's ending now.
You feel so warm. It's like the start.
I'll take this, though. O love—

My heart. I felt so bitter. It's sweet
In here. We all
Go soon. This bed: so clear. Press in-
To me. And tight. Tight. And

Yes. Home. Always. Right.

It Can't Be Helped

"All I—all I—all I—
All I have in life is my new appetite for failure"
—Kendrick Lamar, 'Swimming Pools (Drank)'

"All of old. Nothing else ever. Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better."
—Samuel Beckett, Worstward Ho

I just sit in my hole and laugh.
O don't I laugh—yes! I just
Sit in my hole and laugh. So

Aren't you daft, while I
Just sit in my hole and laugh. But

Are you really going to do that?
Not me—I'll just sit low
And laugh. Try that? Or that? You are

Mad. Leave my hole? For *that*? That is...
That is *mad*! Because look at you

Doing that. Look at you
Trying that! It looks bad. *You* look bad.
You keep trying? Repeating

That? That's daft. Aren't you daft! And me?
Leave my hole? To not

Laugh? To try
That? You know you must be
Having a laugh.

Baby in a Swimming Pool for the First Time Aiding the Paranoiac-Critical Method

What the fuck is going on?
How are they sliding across the air like that? Why do they have
Big eyes? Why are their heads so bright?
Obviously they all still smile at me
In here, trying to get my attention. What's all that about?
And what's all this aroun-

Oh. My. Fucking. God. Do *not* look down.

My body looks even weirder through this stuff.
Proper mad, it is. Like my eyes are on acid.

But how would I know what that's like?
And why am I speaking English?

Conquering Love

Keys in a bowl? A sock on the door?
What's going on in there? Was that a bad fall?
Why, it sounds like a domestic! I must get in there quick!
Stop! Stop what you're doing! What's... what's going on in here?
For it sounds like some rotten business is going down, I fear.

And why is she tied up? And why is he so bruised?

And… Sharon? Pete? And who are *those* two?
And Pete! I never knew… I never knew
You'd like *him*! And…
Sharon! That's going *where*?! Shouldn't it be in the bin?

I am… so confused. What… what *is* all this?
And that—in the bath: is that… is that pis-
"Cami! Cami. It's not what it seems:
We are only conquering love.
It is a bad fall. And quite a hard one!

But join us: look at all our shiny stuff!"
I most certainly will not—amongst
All that *kink*?! You must surely
Be joking. What *will* my Charlie
Thin-

My goodness—Charles?!

<u>The Fire That Cried Wolf</u>

Hello? O—hello.
O really: you actually *are* on fire this time?

OK well
I'm very sorry to hear that, but I cannot

Help—as I've just planned to be
Extremely dehydrated

For the rest
Of time.

<u>The Last Sexy Blonde in IKEA</u>

I am ahead of the game they are
Talking about, in love, in song, in
Whatever it is they believe they're
Talking about, as I have a tool, and
Ploys and tricks and games to
Beat them—beat them back—
Down from here, regardless of
Veiled labels and dis-
Connection; as if this is a tap, a tap
I have—some kind of stream and flow that

I do have, I do, so the joke is on, not
You, but the use of… the use of…
It was something like a conjunction,
But it doesn't connect to my thinking
Now, which is about IKEA, or a cat,
Or at least singing yucky songs in
Another country on an island, I didn't
Know, so phoney was that love, so
Contrived is my win, for I will not
Lose, I won't, even if it means slaying
A dragon, even if it means thinking
Of her carrying a piano, that sexy, sexy
Blonde from the show, though, thinking I'm
A sculptor without seeing the
Metaphor: questionable—not unlike
Shopping with the previous sexy
Sexy blonde in IKEA, my lesson learnt,
Surely, if I just stay in this game, just
Stay in this game, just stay in this game
To say something other than stories
About the previous one in IKEA, as that
Was bad.

Poem in the Pub

"'Cause I'm fuckin' up your program"
—Limp Bizkit, 'Break Stuff'

"What you
Up to
There, pal?" Well, some come here

Drinking, but I write
To take
The edge off.

"Wait, why did you say it like that?
What's with
All the

Pauses?" Well,
They are
Line breaks,

Mate.

On Seeing Dogs

I wish I could manically scurry
Into this cafe
And get to know strangers
Like that.

The Don Refusing to Offer up His Sleep

Really tired.
Off to bed.
Horses head!

Budge up, neigh-
Bour: you ain't no
Threat, but
Dead.

Another Box Concept

I am in a box. I know I'm not ready:
I peaked, it's bright, though blinding.

Something has put a mouse in here, and it was irritating
And gross at first but then

Friendly, so I allowed it
To chew the corners. I know no one's name

From here, so I've named the mouse
The same as me and we're planning

On leaving together: I've started
Chewing too. I'm designing us both sunglasses.

Loud, Strange Animal

Loud, strange animal—
I know not what you do, but
Loud, strange animal—
You're making my sleep poo.

Loud, strange animal—
What is it that you call, you
Loud, strange animal—

Serotonin maul.

Loud, strange animal—
I'm losing all my fans, and
Loud, strange animal—
This wasn't in my plans.

Loud, strange animal—
You might only be me, just
Loud, strange animal—not
Metaphysically?

Loud, strange animal—
Keep wasting content here, as
Loud, strange animal—
I'm restless off the gear.

For Example, Twitter

"I am not sure
If I am doing this
Correctly, but

I could try
By dipping
My toe in he-"

What is he saying! What is he saying!
Did you hear what he possibly just said?

Forget his toe: let's remove the whole leg!
And no

I don't want to confirm
The rest. It could be anything!

Early Cute

"We are all flawed and messy; but do not tell me
The worst things you have done. Do not share
The harmful things you continue to think. Do not provide
Explicit details of your mistakes, especially publicly.

No I do not want to hear you joking
About how you continue to need drugs. I do not want to read

Your therapeutic poems
Twinged with trauma. Right I do not really care

Whether everyone consents as that is a strange
Hobby you still have. OK you are rather
Odd questioning me as I was only saying
That we are all flawed and messy, but you cannot seem

To accept it so I am ending this conversation."

"You Smile, Genuinely, Sometimes for No Reason"

And you realise you do now
And you burst out crying again.

Innocent

"To never never never wonder why at all"
—Van Morrison, 'Beside You'

It was an etherea...?
But I cannot say the place.

The place was etherea...?
But I cannot say the word. I never could.

But it was there though, that place.
And it only just about existed

For a time.
And I came against her thigh.

And we giggled and hid from children
Like children.

And the sun shone on her teeth.
And I only just about existed, too, not

For a time: outside it.
And I didn't think how to say it at all.

(A version of this poem was first published in my pamphlet L'etoile*, October 2024. Redacted copy available here: https://ashleydunn.co.uk/letoile-redacted/)*

A Love Poem to Them All

I was writing on the beach, a love poem to them all.
But they took away the sea, blocked it up
With a wall. Then they took away my pen, so I wrote it
In the sand. But they dragged me off the beach
As they took away the sand. So I scratched it in a tree: I used my
Fingernails. But they tore my nails off (ouch!) so instead
I used a rock. But they took away the rock, the
Tree, my hands. So I carried on inland—used my toes
In the ground
To write
A crop
Circle
Poem!
But they took away my shoes,
My feet,
The ground. So it was natural for me
To say the poem out loud. So it was natural for them
To stitch up my mouth. So I hummed
The poem instead.
I made it
Musical! But they only
Closed my throat, and I now breath
Through a tube.

But I still
Have my poem. A love poem to them all. Though

With my mouth
Now closed, I cannot hope to smile it.
And they beat and shake and shock me
Trying
To find it.
But little
Do they know
That it's locked inside my head. And while they try
To rub it out

It screams in there for them instead.

Too Hot Chocolate

After Hot Chocolate.

It started with a kiss!
Never thought I'd get psychosis.

It's a Joke!

"their pretence
of authorised
omniscience"
—Piet Hein, 'My Faith in Doctors'

The doctor loomed over me
In his long, white coat

And said, "You present as someone
With a messiah complex." It's a joke!

Inanimate Objects

Have you ever asked an inanimate object
If they feel bad about something that originated with them? A lightbulb
Could randomly blow up, for example, or a house
Could spontaneously combust and collapse in on itself
Around you. Not that these kinds of objects
Are *responsible* for these unfortunate events, of course:
They're inanimate objects; they have no agency. But have you tried
Asking them anyway, shouting, "Why?" in frustration as your house
Fell apart or the lights went out? Or have you
Asked them *repeatedly* over a number of years
If they now feel *anything* about what happened? Because
When I did, I only got a blank stare back from the rubble.

You Have a Thing for Helping Women, Don't You, Officer White

A fox grazing with a cat
Passing by and the dog
Barks through the fence while the
Children shout—the mother screams, growls.
It is the human voice that makes the water drop:
I remember thinking about that in Vegas—a hotel—
A different car prowling. And many more foxes, O
Yes: unease
Laced like it's something to be proud of; and I don't know: maybe it's all
The same? Read into whatever you like; but I am so stoned
On the love of the garden most moments—therefore
Who cares! I must hang the washing;

I will always love something. And look! There's a superficial link
Under each petal.

Parrot. Right

Every day I passed that cage, that
Parrot: "I

Sing! I'm happy!
I'm having so much fun!" It was on repeat

Of course.
And I never heard it sing once.

And I never heard it sing once.

Writing a Sonnet at a Kitchen Party

I was going to write a poem about something very great
But then I didn't, though I still have the urge to write
Something, or something very great; and it could be
Incredibly LITERATE, or INTELLECTUAL (I do not see
Many capitals in poems); and I am now satire or
Parody or rambling or insecurity or undisciplined, with this at least
Demonstrating that I write from nowhere, it being only a continual
Flow, this being my only something existing. Though with it now

I am not going to go on, as I am going to think
Of nothing—formalise nothing—instead, opting,
Instead, to do this repetitive thing here, instead, as

I am going to take bad cocaine off this man
Here
And break
The lines un-
Satis-
Factorily and mention

No classics or metaphys- (steady
Now; hard, isn't it!) and not poeticise
A needless load of shit.

Beacons of Light, They Provide Guidance for Safe Passage

It's all well and good

playing with metaphor, telling the lads
you, “Put a shift in!”
last night, only to cry

the following evening alone, as you
secretly turn your tears
into cackles, characters,
chants believing the surreal songs

you create, keep your pain
hidden—that you even need to; because

lad: your metaphors are easy to read.

“Whooooo’s the wanker in the black!”? I am.
I’m in the dark
drafting funny stories for you, flicking
my phone on and off

while you sleep. I then
continue to stick to the same narrative
in the morning
again: “Last night? On my phone?! Nah—not me... erm...

Babe! But maybe
your housemate snuck into bed with us: that would be boss!”

Or you might have dreamt of a lighthouse...? trying to be seen.

<u>Tonight I Can Write (The Baddest Lines)</u>

“I no longer love her, that’s certain, but maybe I love her.
Love is so short, forgetting is so long.”
—Pablo Neruda, ‘Tonight I Can Write (The Saddest Lines)’

When I grab too tight
it leaves me, what it is—what I say

of it. It was the same
during our time. It’s the same

when naming something
“Mine”. Sorry! I meant...

Have I told you about the badger in my garden?

I hear it rustling, but when I stand up

to look, it leaves: it doesn't want to be bothered.
And I rarely

call it badger. Though of course I do! Whenever
I try to write meaningfully

it only comes out silly. I love, I love,
I love. Is that better? It certainly feels so.

(But please don't measure this. Don't ask for my workings.)

What was I writing about again? The state
I'm in tonight?
I joke. I never forget.
Should I have questioned the badger?

Did I need to take a stand?
It was there
without me looking. But
OK—I will forget. As you're certain I should be thinking of something else?

But why would I want to forget a thing like that?

Waking up Early to Wait in the Hold Queue for the Sexual Health Clinic (Reprise: Molluscum Contagiosum Version)

After Billy Joel, 'Just The Way You Are'; The Carpenters, '(They Long to Be) Close to You'; and The Monkees, 'Daydream Believer'

"...I just want someone, that I can talk to..."
Too right!
"...I want you just the way you are..."
Well, looking at... this, I'd beg to differ.

"...they long to be, close to you..."
Yeah that's sort of the problem.

"...cheer up, sleepy..."
O fuck off [hangs up]

Something Stirring

“Who’s hiding behind the trees?”
—Sohrab Sepehri, ‘In the Meadow’

Something sits within me
Having always been there stirring, even
As a child, when I knew I wasn’t just
A child—when I knew I wasn’t only yet
An adult; this
Thing, this vastness within me—that will be
Labelled much; but to do so
Is a mistake: what arrogance
To try and touch—look at all the white space——it tosses
And flows out almost
Against me stirring further
When I get out the way before birds
Appear or words it being
That simple mindless
Unholy with the names
Of things being only
Negations like I have longed
For less of everything. But how is such vastness, though
Unremarkable... shared?

Out the window
Again: hoverflies, this time? They fly
Around in circles, at best; but I won’t
Pattern them with more happening
Around them through them —as they move—
Than I can mention. And I only looked up
Once to see it all, with some
Mindless part of me (or is it nothing?) still longing
To speak of the vastness—still
Expecting
You to see it like *myself*.
But this
Longing expecting
Pointing can only create

A twist as I try
And know too hard; and I get
In the way thinking
I could thinking I am...

While there is still only
Sitting. And out the window.
And white

Space. And something stirring.

So Bad, It's Good! (Laughing Poem)

So many laughs are overdue:
O how I do laugh now!

I'm laughing on my own, ha ha.
A ha ha ha ha ha.

A ha ha ha ha ha ha ha.
I'm laughing on my own.

Now don't you moan: get in the zone!
Laughing poem—ha ha ha.

Here's Looking At Me, Kid

"'How funny I was when I was a puppet!'"
—Pinocchio, Carlo Collodi, The Adventures of Pinocchio

Everything I say is a distraction around the lies I tell myself: "I am *so*
Hard done to!"
It's because

I lie: I know I walk in—not
Blind—but desperate
For something difficult: I *must* feel so hard done to!
But not

Anymore, as this poem
Is already over, as I refuse to continue with it: it is

Awful—even more lies. Another coward's itch!
Instead
I am playing

More blinds in remaining...
Blind... as I safely

Scream at you instead, as you are
A twisted liar in fact because look
At the mess you

Left me in how could you

Do this to me?

Too Much

I am so overcome
With something that could be described
As a euphoric feeling

(Perhaps a mystical, even *emotional* feeling)

That I better not tell anyone
In case it is too much for them—in case
They reject it

Or me
As something too far away

(As too much of… "it" (again…))
As if

I am like this delicious vagabond here
Who cannot sing one note in key
As he beams at me
While he is scowled at
By everyone

While I'm singing just as badly back

On my way to the doctors.

Football Fans With an Awareness of What Sustained Negative Emotion Can Do to the Body Chanting at the Fans of a Rival Team That Are Terrible and Always Lose

"You stressed bastard! You stressed bastard!"
(To the tune of 'You fat bastard!')

“Weeee can-see-you-getting-ill! Weeee can-see. you. gett-. ing. ill.”
(To the tune of ‘We can see you sneaking out’)

And

“Yourrrr boddddy’s gonnnnna keeeeep the scorrrre forrrr youuuu. Trau-ma!”
(To the tune of Fat Les, ‘Vindaloo’)

Touchy

“Is that all you do, you big
Dictionary head, you: play

With words all day?” Yes, pal. Now fuck off.
I have nothing

Witty to reply today and you’re drinking
Alone too.

Beginnings

I was sat on my moose
Eating my last handgun
When a superhero walked up to me
Carrying an uncooked bouquet of bananas.

“That’s not real!” she said. “You’ve made that up!”
“I know,” I said. But she just shook

Her head before flying
Up my moose’s nose, her bananas
Stuck in its throat.

“VIA”

“And there’s nothing I can do”
—David Bowie, ‘Space Oddity’

It flew in her window: “Look! Out there!
It’s multicoloured, see! A kaleidoscope!”

But they’d already visited
And said it was blue.

After Bitterness (“I”)

I am jealous of the person
that will do to you
what you did to me, tearing you

in two. Opening you up.

The Inevitable Demise of Lamb

“He gives those so possessed power to foretell the future”
—Euripides, ‘The Bacchae’

It is a terrible burden
To watch the inevitable demise of Lamb
As I wander through fields
Between hypnic jerks
Knowing I can’t cut Lamb loose, but that
I do enjoy being asleep

Or feigning unconsciousness
While Lamb bleats. I say to Lamb, “Lamb—
I now only sleep,” and leave Lamb
Circling my field; but God—not me—
Extends the boundary, so Lamb
Leaps at fences

That aren’t there: I do not decide
Our burdens. I am not so terrible—less so
Than God. So waking
Became pointless: I knew
What would happen; this making me
God-*like*, perhaps powerful. But

Paralysed, having learned
To welcome sleep and
Jerks. And cowardice. And
Fences. And Lamb still
Loose—and trapped—in my field
Bleating as I lie quietly.

I Am Bound to Slip in Here

The ward was visually something, vacant
But for a window, through which we could see

Nothing but wind: how they kept us.
The voices would say, “Sobriety is the only way:
You may have created everything.” Oh well. I ignored this
And went to see the wizard—my name for him;
But I was too scared tonight: “Doc—why am I doubting myself?”
I wanted so many answers to come, or I didn’t,
Or I was on a ward—or only hiding further and further away;
And he replied, “Because you never were sure, were you—so why
Would you be now?” Thank goodness! That moved things along nicely.

I am bound to slip in here: they clean the floors too much;
They want us to fail so the project continues—which
Is fair: they need protecting from all our rubbish.
I am a disaster, but it’s not because of their models, rather
It’s due to me also calling those freer than me “nuts” too. And I’d silence them
If history had seen me fit—if Foucault’s razor had done me kind: the things
I design. But I am too much of a true thing, which is not
Visually something (who would admit to that to their partner?);
So I will stay here in my head with the wizard, who
May exist; though it makes a good story nonetheless.
And he could only dream of balancing this well.

Let’s Call a Spade a Spade

You weren’t born in that odd shape, and I doubt
You always acted like this either; but if you keep

Digging people out, leaving
Holes and refusing to change (as you could

And should; because come on: even I
Keep my garden somewhat together now)—well, let’s call

A spade a spade: you are being

A vile little cunt, and at this rate
You’ll rust on your own at the back of the shed.

Married for Life

But instead
You only have one date: on it

You have one very honest conversation
Exploring exactly where you both are

In life, and how
You truly feel. And what you truly think.

And then you have sex
Or not: whatever.

And then you both acknowledge
That you don't want—or need—

To speak to each other ever again.

<u>Living Out a Memory of a Love That Died</u>

"I'm all messed up, I'm so outta line"
—Robyn, 'Dancing On My Own'

You are at the party
Without them, finally—and you notice

That people say they like you, even
Love you, without turning away

To say otherwise, as you
Dance
Freely
Momentarily; before

They drift into your mind again your mind
Becoming theirs again as you see live
Through them again as their voice
Takes your attention again as your vigilant
Years with them feel wasted
Again you stop moving

Again. Living through
Their mind

Floats by quicker
This

Time; as the love
You allow in

Gets stronger: You dance again.

Weak Sketch

I walked off; I saw a man alone in his cabin
He said he was not hiding or running
That he dared me to consider him lonely
“Where have you come from? What are they lost in?”

I hated his voice; despised his knowing air

That he knew I was running
As I walked by there

You Spurn My Natural Emotions

I’m grinding my teeth at night!
Why am I grinding my teeth at night!
“Mor… morning, lover!
How… how are you?

OK yes—I am a dick. And I’m sorry
To bother you this early, but I was wondering
If you could enlighten me
As to why I’m grinding my teeth at night?”

“How the fuck would I know you fucking loser.
Probably because you’re a waste of space?
Probably because you deserve to be kept awake at night being tortured
By the mystery of why you and your life are so shit?” “OK

Lover—that’d be it!
And thanks

For reminding me again. And I’m so
So sorry for making you angry

Again.”

I’m Too Thin

I realise it is difficult to say but I think if that man wants to go to the moon
Then we should let him go to the moon. Yes OK—let’s stay on me; though
I struggle with allowing it to be about me: when I leave this office
They’ll be telling me not to smile on the street. His journey is also
Very contingent on what we decide to do going forward. OK fine:
It isn’t the session to consider our progress. But you surely see

I'm a mess? Though I am willing to take the blame for this—all of this—even if
I sense a power dynamic going on here and it's one I can only
Tentatively point out as I know you haven't been supervised
On bodily awareness yet; so may I suggest… or, may I just say, that I feel
We are not aligned on certain beliefs? But that's OK! I just needed to point it out
For my *own* process as I am noticing now that your shoulder

Raised a *touch* when I said "OK". Though I am not sure which one? So perhaps
We should get back to what would ontologically work and which fictions
I should *not* be smiling about as I am *now* noticing
That this is only indicative of my *own* maladaptations; but that sounds better
Doesn't it: merely a problematic outcrop of my own psychopathology? O yes—
I am quite sure you have read about me

Now that you want me to leave? But I've hardly touched on space yet!

<u>Early Voice</u>

"I have no need for tongue"
—Theodore Roethke, 'Open House'

I bit my tongue; but look what still came upon me—on them
Hearing the faintest squeak: they squeezed
My crown down, my chin up, my tongue
Ripping through and falling spraying a loss of faith
Down my face—over the floor—releasing itself
From them all. But still I drew
A poorly heart on the tiles
With my dropped expression: "This is for you!" I tried to mouth;
They only remained confused: "How can he still be like this?"
I screamed back—though mute—"But that heart is
For you! Look at my quiet tongue!" They could only
Slide over it———
                Slip! So I helped them feel it
As they hit the floor—that a cut-off tongue

Is not only painful for the speaker: I loomed
Dripping

Love—new power—watching the drops stain
Their bodies; and we learned

How love burns the skin of those
In darkness—that some

Cannot stand in the sun for

Too long; because
I bit my tongue. But look what still came upon me.

First Cuts

I dropped my teddy,
And all I could do
Was build the Colosseum.

I drew some winged things inside, threw clay
At the walls and out
God came: take no notice of me:

I should have sat myself
On the naughty step. But I hadn't invented that yet! Thank goodness.
When I was holding teddy

It was still a part of me. I didn't think
Or make anything and I had no idea
God couldn't be right: I just got on with it!

"You're lucky you get anything." Maybe it wasn't
When I dropped teddy.

"Who did this? You again, was it?!"
O no O no!

"But it's wonderful, boy! What a great *theatre*—
You're a *genius*!" Teddy!

I am so glad I dropped it now
Because they have seen me

And said I'm a genius!
So I no longer have use for him.

Light Ship

I was looking at the ark
But no one wanted me on it. No one wanted me there I could feel it
In the stares I brought with me: I sounded
Dumb. I'd never

Needed to be on a boat before either, as it felt
Easier floating through one haze after another
Buoyed by everyone else's salt, above
Any sense that I was treading my own water; so now

I couldn't tell if the slope went up
Or down to me? Do we really need to continue

With this? As I get it: I used to think
They were all sad little dinghies, and ever
So cringe; but I'm now worse than they
Ever were: I only see oceans. Ick.

<u>You'd Stupidly Consider</u>

If you sat long enough
At a bar
And listened, a man
Would tell you how he's "accidentally"
Got his colleague pregnant
And that he can't sleep. "I can prove it to you—look!"—and unprompted
He'd show you the sleep app on his phone.
"I wasn't doubting you, mate." Across the room, someone
Would refer to themselves
As a mess, though they'd look
Quite dressed to you.

"I honestly didn't mean to do it! She's so young, too. What a mess!"

You would eventually tell the man
That you'd like some space, and how this
Has nothing to do with him, it's just
How you feel today.

"But it obviously is personal: I thought we were having a good chat?"
You'd stupidly consider

Giving him your phone number then
Or a picture of yourself. "If you want to,

Mate, you could text me. Or stick a photograph of me on your mirror? No, I'm not being funny."
But you wouldn't

Say or do that, as much

As you might like to.
As we wouldn't say or do anything.

Early Whodunnit

You didn't know that? Yeah—that was actually me:
I was the first person to say that. I know.
I know! Mad, isn't it. Yeah I tend to not mention it.
Yeah I don't really like going on about it; but in fact

I thought about it before anyone else too? Yeah I'm pretty unique. O yeah: *very* unique.
But sorry—why am I pointing this out now? Well… it…

It's just that it's part of my process, obviously, and I might
Be the first person to ever say that too? But I don't know—

How should I know! O and what now: how *would*
I know? Why press me on that? I don't know that, do I! And you are

Taking me away from my original point now, as I was only saying
That I was the first to say and think that particular thing so there's no need

To ask me about it and I regret saying any-
Thing about my original point now anyway—happy now?

A Divorce to Rev the Characters up for What's to Come

Come down from the totality, Jesus, for I am all that is left.
I create the style of a fence without thinking:
How do your gardens grow? It is a flat noise,
Then a peak, then some rhythm using two tools
With a break down: that is my style. No babies though:
Why mess this up? I suppose I am a lot; and why
Would anyone want to feel anything? These things
We cannot ask; but we can at least try getting some attention
While they stare into the distance stunned. Unfortunately
I am already dead—I only agreed the tool was necessary
That time. "Can you remember…" Not now, thanks. And please
Never do that again. Do not assess the…
Shakespeare of what we've no control over
As I've used it up. I've pulled up the ladder. I'm seeing forty.

Phase

And after it had stopped screaming

I got up and I went to the shops—the library.
I had a bit too much coffee: that was OK.
I didn't think about everything I had done wrong.
I did not think about all the experience—not this day.

I went about my life letting shivers come, their tiny vibrations
Easing me back to silence and safety: I am slowly

Not remembering any of it. It is wonderful to meet you.
How have you been?

I'm doing well, thank you.

Phase Two

Sometimes, now,
I leave the house with no plan
And I wander about
Looking objectively scruffy, though human

And I might buy a second-hand book
And just read it—just simply sit
And read it—and have nothing riding over me
No other story keeping me away

And then I might eat something greasy—
So very unhealthy, but O well—
And that'll be it
Like I was there all along.

Nightmare

Poems wake me up
In the middle of the night
Like they write themselves. It's a joke!

Starting to Fall

"She then: 'How you digress!'"
—T. S. Eliot, 'Conversation Galante'

Take my hand and dance?
You are the loveliest girl at the disco.

All the songs sound awful tonight—

It would not be the best time to try anything.

Yet here I am—asking you—so please don't reject me:
That could feel like childhood; I'd never recover.

Though I am certain you will: that's how the music plays.
When I'm sad, I write my best—

I'm looking for someone that understands this
And stops me writing: I don't want to publish a thing.

If there is a flower in the mud, I don't trust it.
Isn't that a shame? Would you say that's weird?

I'm not sure how it works, dancing.
I always assume they're going to stop, but

I did ask genuinely, at least
At first. Though ignorantly. When I was younger,

We used to fish. This is the part where you tell me
To go fix that, isn't it: it's my shit.

I'm not sure when to be vulnerable.
When to I say I see signs

In the strobes.
Ah! That's why you're here then!: you are like that

Too? Probably why you're sitting on the edge
With me. If a car alarm goes off, do you think

It's for you? I am balancing, girl—yes. But it nearly
Writes well. Real well. Nearly.

No don't stop me! Best not to
Trust me. But girl, you look like a beautiful flower.

Can we finally dance? Can we not stop?
I know: just awful, isn't it,

After the ceiling. I tried to begin with.

Psychosis, Noun

No I didn't.
No I didn't.
No I didn't.
No I didn't.

No I didn't.
No I didn't.
No I didn't—God, I've already said I didn't!
No I didn't.

No I didn't.
No I didn't—look, we've been over this.
No I didn't and you keep bringing it up! You're only hurting yourself!
No I didn't and you're causing a scene.

No I didn't.
No I didn't.
No I didn't and everyone is looking at you.
No I didn't and I'm warning you.

No I didn't.
No I didn't.
No I didn't.
No I didn't.

No I didn't.
No I didn't. But look, if you must go over it, fine: I did it.
No I didn't.
But do you really have to make it a big deal?

Early Gold Mining Minty (Busting Up His Mines)

I'm gold mining in a tunnel in the desert, as it would be
Too cheesy to write "gold panning"—too close
To "gold penning"; and I'm digging and digging and digging, not realising
The gold I'm getting, only thinking I'm digging.
And I'm absolutely battering
My mine
Not caring too much for the destruction
I'm creating, and out gold comes anyway, not
That I can see that, it taking someone else
To say, "Look, Minty—you're getting a lot of gold there!" as to tell
Myself I'm striking gold

Would feel arrogant (which is probably why I still need to mine); and I'd have to grasp
What I'm doing here at all
First anyway—why I'm in a dark tunnel. But I am; and
I'm giving the darkness it's due, even while I'm digging up
So much gold. And now, they've given me an award!
For being the company's best gold miner, the CEO
Telling me, "You were born to do this, Minty!" I still don't know
What he's on about, though: I'm just swinging an axe
In my mine (and perhaps
I've made up the award, the CEO,
Myself, as it's clearly not "penning" yet).

Variation VIIDCLXII

"The constrictor
Not to be tugged out, or snapped"
—Ted Hughes, 'Astringency'

You'll stand there, your arms wide open: "I'll love you
And provide care, whether you're here
Or not: yes; but

It would feel better if you came across now"—and you'll know
That it's hopeless: you can see
The smile on their face

Being stretched out by old shackles, a chain
Trapping them through time; and there's nothing
You can do, despite the poems

And poems you write, desperate
To end the words otherwise; and what's
Worse

Is seeing those shackles—that
Chain—only ever going back to themselves.

Why You Little!

When I was born, they sliced me up
Into a thousand pieces ("Urgh!"
But it doesn't have to look
So grotesque! Picture it
Like a cartoon: some Itchy and Scratchy effects).
To bring me

Back together I stitched stories
Between my severed parts
And pulled hard, the words
Having to be wild and mighty ("Quite a dish of creativity?" Yep);
Only
The chefs ("Why chefs?" Because of the dish thing! "But that was m-"
And
Aren't there always too many ingredients
Shouting at us?): they rubbed
Salt in my wounds. Tried sabotaging my stories.
And my writing was already aggravated enough!
Then
The sous chefs in suits ("Uniforms...?" Yep.
"I get you!" Great!): they got tricked
Into thinking I was *born* in pieces!
But O

Well. No need to worry.
Because I am better
At weaving stories together
Than all of them; and as my prose

Pulls the baby back together, the chefs
Might find my narrative ain't too hot
On them—that I'm a recipe
For their disaster now (""Doh!"?" Nice! "Doh!" indeed).

<u>Anti-Oedipus</u>

"For him, Oedipus is about the development of the child's capacity of a new way to use symbols"
—Sherry Turkle, 'Why are you here?'

"You sleep on it or sing to it / Mamma Mamma"
—Ted Hughes, 'Song for a Phallus'

It's a twist in the tale!
And it isn't

A fictional dragon, unfortunately, but the worst thing
That anyone could ever do to you
And your empathy for them, for you must

Come to understand horror (it's the only way) along with knowing
How they can never come back from that.

I spoke to God (honestly! Ignore

Every formality outside your belly!) and I pleaded
For Them to change things: they only said, “It is

How it is until the end. But you’ll learn to live with it.”

Senseless bastard.

Les

“Pick me up and turn me ‘round”
—Talking Heads, ‘This Must Be the Place (Naive Melody)’

I told her my story
As I was always trying to do, while
I pleased others, and she didn’t
Quiz me once, as she wanted

To know me, or at least
For me to connect. And so there was no question
Of roles or resentment. And afterwards
We shared and pleased each other

More and more so very
Wonderfully, as was our joyous
Duty with freedom, gratitude
Love and we speak

Of nothing important anymore, only pleasing
And pleasing and pleasing
And pleasing each other again
And again and again and again and we also laugh considerably.

“WHATSAPP / Location: No.4, BS16 XXX”

We moved in and out of each other
Glazed over, bit down, choked. Rode collectively

Through dirt. It was heightened activity. We were growing and
Feeling nothing, barely having the sense to stop

And know ourselves. But O well. It was just what we needed.
Where were any of us from? How did we find each other? Something plans

These parties in advance, I'm sure, the delayed care
Birthing us over.

Body-Mind Disintegration

After [redacted] at the UKCP

I was bit by a dog (was I three,
Nine? Was it multiple times? Who knows!

Anyway forget about that, as into adulthood
I became fascinated by dogs, of course, and I studied them
Deeply, and I worked with them
A lot, trying to make sense of them—of why
They bite things; and I eventually
Became a dog biting expert, studying everyone
Else with bite marks, gaining a deep
Deep theoretical understanding
Of those that'd been bitten, and I did this
For years and years—long past childhood—without ever really accepting that dog biting
Went on that much? I mean come on: some people
Are just mad, right? The kind
To really test your patience, they are, and I wanted
To bite them myself to get them to shut the fuck up
A lot of the time!!!).

Then I remembered I was bit by a dog.

Adhesieve

The sticker on those trees: they stuck
One on me, saying, "You must stick with these trees!" as they fell

Apart on me, the trees: their thorns
Got in my eyes. Branches knocked me out. And you'll never

Believe this, but every year
When their leaves

Fell? They blamed me! They always forgot. It was almost
Cute. Then I was about to virtually

Honour my sticker
Forever—by keeping it hidden—which would have made me

One of those trees too! But then
I took the sticker off: easy.

When a Spirit Walks Through a Dissociation Peer Support Group

Before we get started, did anyone else
Just feel that?
No. Nor me.

This doesn't make sense!

Discover Your Guilty Name!

The name of the person
You're in a relationship with, followed by

The name of the person
You think about when you wake up.

Overheard in the Smoking Area During the Break of a Peer Support Group

Yeah I heard what was said
Lad, but you should know
By now
That it happens all the time in there, and she means
Nothing by it: that's just her experience.

Anyway you've *also* got to understand—because I know
You do, don't you?—that it's just...
Well...

It's just that you can't really reply with what you said, yeah, as true as that is for us?
Yeah I know I know! I know too well

It happens! But...
It's just...

OK look I know it's shit. Alright alright—
Perhaps *evil*.

But you just can't talk about it, mate.

Natural Selection

"Don't let it drag you down"

—The Enemy, 'We'll Live and Die in These Towns'

Nothing happens in these rundown towns so we struggled
Not to be a little naughty. And once
Quickly—before he took it away again just as fast—
Pete said something like, "It feels wrong, somehow,
Saying some of the things we say." But then we carried on
Saying them anyway. It wasn't the drink or drugs.
It was the small things that barely sustained our small lives, only
These ran against our allotted time, unbeknown
To us: no one around shouted owt otherwise.
Pete could sometimes be… obtuse… with what he said; but I
Ended up trying really hard (whilst getting it wrong
A lot of the time) to learn better words. He never did.
Consequently, along with Gaz and Down-That-Pint-Dave—who were also
From my estate—he killed himself.

(A version of this poem was first published in my pamphlet L'etoile*, October 2024. Redacted copy available here: https://ashleydunn.co.uk/letoile-redacted/)*

"Healing Words"

Extracts from Sylvia Plath's diary appear on my feed
But I do not want to follow her. At the art

Gallery a book of "Healing Words"
Made up of quotes from Van Gogh

Is being sold. Therefore, I always remain curious about
What creativity can do for my life and soul.

Honest Comms (I Can't See Much of a Future)

"Darling, don't say a word I already heard
What your body is saying to mine"
—Conway Twitty, 'Slow Hand'

Lover. Wife.
Sorry

To wake you—I need
To ask you as our bodies

Are asking
While

We sleep: why
Are we

Still here?

Small Poem (Though It Could Have Been Nothing!!!)

I hurt myself as a child!!!
It could have been nothing!!! But

“Oh no!!! Don’t cry, child!!!”
Now I can’t stop using exclamation points!!!

Now I can’t stop having arguments!!!
Now I’ve just killed a man!!!

Over nothing!!!
Over nothing but a small poem!!!

You

You eat handsomely, feel great,
And are surprised when others remain hungry. Fortunately

You don’t use mirrors: you find them
Ugly to look at; so instead

You laugh as you point
Through windows: “Look at them starving! There’s nothing to them!” Back out

Through the glass they take no notice
Of you—“Nothing great

In there. Nothing surprising to see!”—as they remain
Famished and reflective.

Me (On the Way to Self-Reflexivity)

I spun around in a circle
Pointing my finger as much as possible—“You!
You and you!”: they all remained

At the end of my finger; so I cut

My finger off—“Are you happy now!”: no one
Looked up, too dizzy with themselves.

Dream Sequence

Just bumped into you in my dream again. I was thrashing in my sleep.
You pulled the quilt off me.

You then stormed out the dream, as per, and I said
I was getting up anyway: we’re still so petty.

“Yeah, well—whatever!”
“Yeah, well—whatever to you too!”

“Do you think we’re ready yet?”
“Not by the sounds of it, no.”

O but come on, reader:
Does it matter who said what now?

Early Wave

Something
Didn’t happen and now
Everything can happen the trees
Wave. I could walk on water. Though I think

I am making too much life: I cannot remember
This all getting started what was it again?

I’m sorry I’m sorry I’m sorry. Me and my stupid
Questions poems I’m so stupid, aren’t I?
Don’t worry—I’m ashamed of myself.

Fail Better

You said, “I could maybe make the world
a better place!” and they rolled their eyes.
But still! You gave it a little go! And you mostly
failed—as you repeated

that first stanza a lot. A lot! Which only means
you spent a lot of time

mostly—but not every time—failing
to make the world a better place

while they rolled their eyes.

Moro Reflex

I only say the same things over and over again
But the stories are more or less full. Boxes
Of concepts fill the mirror, I am blank,
Not making any sense. I pulled them down too quick
And it hurt, and I now keep repeating this thing,
This thing trying not to contradict myself. But I win
If I am only just about here; and they all say,
Erm, not sure, perhaps, some say, parts of me;

And I look again in the mirror laughing at the self.
I am still very fake, but I am not walking
Onto punches. The boxes are lighter and carefully packed
By me. I haven't misused the word "love"
In weeks. It is hardly a linear existence, but I am not counting.

And I feel it: ignoring cliches; curious stares back at... me?

By the Carousel

"And somehow the same. You were fearless"
—Ted Hughes, 'Child's Park'

You pass by the carousel
To watch her spin around again
With another new soul mate.
You have your notebook

And pen. She points and laughs
From the ride again as parents
Watch—smiling, waving—
Putting thumbs up for their kids who

Are strapped in the ride too, these adults
Feigning interest as they wait
For it all to pass, so they can safely
Take the children off the ride: you feign

The same interest

For love's sake, like you do
Every year, standing by
Struggling to finish the poem.

From Stockholm With Love

"You can get addicted to a certain kind of sadness"
—Gotye, 'Somebody That I Used To Know'

You move away and
Change your number. The new place is not too bad.
It could do with a new fence.
But first
On the day you arrive, you arrange everything
For two: two chairs for dinner. Two toothbrushes.
You sleep on the same side
In the new bed. With your new mornings, you journal
Again and look at fitness
Classes you could try out. A poetry group. You go to yoga,
Take up dance lessons. Martial arts.
Only poetry sticks, of course.
So you go back
Over the weeks and months, eventually trusting,
Chatting more in class as you slowly
Make new friends: you invite one over for dinner.
Only when they arrive
They are confused
By the third place you've set at the dinner table.
They then go
To the bathroom and come out
Puzzled by the second toothbrush.
"Do you...
Are we expecting someone else?" they
Say.
"Yes!" you
Say. "Yes I am!
Though
They'll be a while yet: they're still asleep."

What You Tried to Say to Me

The madman outside the cafe scares me.
He says wild things about numbers and flowers.
I'm avoiding him today. I'm ignoring all the freaks.
Instead, I'm going to the museum to look at the flowers; as it's amazing

How some artists see the world! And I am so grateful
They've been framed and put behind glass. Though it is rather silly
To see how much some people can spend on them: think
What we could do with the price of a *Sunflower*!

So I am now trying to leave the café
So I can go and see; but the madman

Is in the way. In the way! "You said that
Twice," he says. But how does he know! And

Numbers again. Meaningless counting again! Freak.

<u>A Relief</u>

"As if he were her topmost twig"
—Ted Hughes, 'Revenge Poem'

I know why you laugh—cackle—
So loudly, uncontrolled and bleak, responsible
For too much of you. I am edging, fairly,
Towards wanting your ultimate release,
Though I will not quite
Will it: I understand
The theory but concrete
Watering a rose? It is more
Thesis, antithesis,
Synthesis I feel the embodiment
Of all three, as old
As at the beginning of us: you, a step for me,
As I was yours: I do not need your guilt now, but thank you.

You get some credit in this despite
How they paint our roles. It is a horrid business:
No wonder you cackle! But realistically the whole
Story needs some love: I see
Your type everywhere, holding themselves in,
Caught in rage; and roses
Are still made—stood on—
When there could have been neither road
Nor petal. I do not want this to come out
As it does, expressed
And not understood as good as it should. Fortunately
For you it does, and you are able to die

Quietly, because of me; though something

Is still missing. There was deep pain here.
And there is still a rose with silent
Veiled thorns, because we must
Protect our elders: it knows
It can bloom as you did not: feel
How exquisite I have learned to be. I still must watch
Watch watch this existence from the sidelines, composed,
Critiqued and ostracised for your safety, for now. I cannot
Even say your role in lines; I cannot
Feel good about the craft. I finish it
Unsatisfied respectful alone with my thorns, crossed
For what I should not be
Knowing it ends with a rose, in time.

Cambridge Arms

The couple across from me force small talk, the mother-in-law
Telling her refashioned son to put his phone away. "I dread to think
If they had them things on our wedding day!"
That takes me back; I am now lost:
I take myself home to lie down
For four days with words going past instead of memories. I am so adaptive:
I miss work and shopping when this comes; or
I go shopping but I am naked, delirious,
Talking in tongue and channelling ancient myth
Unawares, yet I wait for no one else to slip at least: I do not care
About the price of anything. But as they carry me
Away the deputy gets jealous
Of my rhymes—that I don't do Boxing Day. I am sick in the cell;
I am still on my Odyssey. I am feeling guilty
Again here as Waitrose does not mix
With nudity and I couldn't take her son along: he is lost forever.
I am sure the deputy is found: I felt his katabasis
Call while he minded my head and I passed it to him
For a short time; as I myself
Have forgotten everything again without needing to leave the pub, remaining
Vaguely unconcerned with clothing myself
In those around me. Though I am a touch tired.

A Hand-Me-Down

Look at me
Thinking of you

Back here in mine. How was it this time?
High? Forgetful? Debauched?

Though you are doing so very well, I promise.
Now have some chips.

What a Riot

A boy painted his face, put on his silly horns,
And cried for help outside the principal's office. For these reasons
I am against the teaching of English, it being needlessly rich

In metaphor: I would prefer more safeguarding measures; I would prefer
His story to be less entertaining, released
Before the news—the Netflix series. But that's showbiz for you! And you like

Serial killer documentaries, don't you? Me too! Sorry I mean...
Did I say that? No I didn't mean... O ignore me
Miss. And Sir
Yes, Sir! I know to keep my mouth shut; else I'll sound paranoid

And start talking twice thinking conspiratorially
That everyone's in on it: we walk around them
On the street—"Remember, son: we don't talk to Jacob
Now, do we (because he wears a silly hat and cries too much [whispered])."

Too High in Waitrose Again

I would say it is more like a dance, as I move better
When I find rhythm, that being in health,
Beauty truth. I could always move
Quite fluidly, outwardly, even though recent events
Contradict me: I was empty.
But you should feel how graceful I am now,
Old friends: I am so in sync; I am listening
To *Bookends*; I hear ballerinas

Playing on my skin (those
Not here yet call them "shivers") and I sometimes sprinkle half notes.
You must hear the music
Dogmatically without logic, as some dancers
Can force it on the poor, the angered, the reluctant,
The realists as they jig behind their trolleys, the angels.

“Stick With the Process, Son. And Eat That—It’ll Do You Good”

Lord, I have started thinking all sorts: I am talking
To myself. I think we all conscious.

Tell me what I am to do here: I have turned
To art about you (and them); I am inventing cultures

And theories and demons and regulations; and I am thinking
About art, and thinking; and I believe it exists

Lord: it is now so loud. Why’d
We do this? Have I invented fruit?
I am over eating and talking to the animals;

I understand poetry (even the accessible work): was it here
Before me? Are these things always with us, we just

Start seeing? You & me: it feels timeless here—tiring—
Too awake and full of visions—which I longed for;

But not on my own: with everyone: Lord—is it not
‘Bout time you mended? For I am full up.

My Last Kitchen Party

“I just pretended that I had”
—Radiohead, ‘Jigsaw Falling Into Place’

Dead words for dead bodies, Scrabble
In God’s last kitchen: “Nihilism”; “Beckett”;
“Trauma-Informed Buddhism.”
“Only one of them works!”—and we accept

Rules again: God is cruel; but he does not desert us
With these lines, in this kitchen: “Mate—
What you need to understand is…” He is inching
Off the floor and down to a teenth, five and a half

Feet deep and no one is high: someone has scales—even
An abacus. Everybody’s extremely serious
About Camus; until it’d be absurd
Not to act the fool: I get up

On a plinth: ““Eschaton”! Triple word score!” And now

It's a full board. "You big word
Wanker!" It breaks up the party. I leave
Early doors, not a sniff.

On Drawing on the Desk and Other Maladaptive Behaviours

"Preacher, preacher! Fifth grade teacher!
You can't reach me, my mom can't neither"
—Eminem, 'Criminal'

Hey I've just got back, kids,
From building all these layers (meta-verses
They may call them) of myself
Or selves or realities
Or fictions or ages or psychoses, some of it quite
Discursive un-
Kempt lines, clothes, hair (I had to make
A lot up
To get back) and what I found
Along the way was there
At the start
Anyway (I have
Some wisdom) which is
To say that it's best to see a cry for help early.

Grasp Through to Toe Reflex

So high and the world is rotten,
So high and the world is rotten; and
You could save it! You could save them all!
But then so low. There's thirteen of you
In the mirror, behind glass, talking nothing,
Irrational hope, finger-pointing,
Monologues at friends with no ears. You think
You are thinking—you're afraid stiff: you hate
Me me me for that. You read Plato
At strangers: "You're asleep!" You're kept warm
By other strangers who watch, wait for you
A lifetime to pick a tin of soup, your readers
And cookers not communicating before 5am: another body
Does not ask, does not know you will forget, remember,
Forget only as they're speechless
Also with it all. Both your hands
Will now go over the keypad
And God; you'll doubt nightly before there's silence

If you're lucky. Then you go back down
In the world as one. Where was the
Fire? What did you save? You stare back.

Born Versus Waking

being born
becoming cognisant
feeling strange
finding chaos
finding substance
being strange
acting strange
repeating strange behaviours you know not why
finding other strangers

waking up
becoming aware
feeling strange
seeing chaos
creating substance
exploring strange
producing strange
repeating strange behaviours knowing why and loving every drop
finding your strangers

A Nudge for My Silent Kin

Although you may wave that beggars cup
Or sing that eye-narrowing lyric, I am not convinced

That some of you even know: I had forgotten
Myself. But hello to the rest of you. Some pre-drinks that was, eh!

Anyway I now have a list
Of all the others I would like to invite, only

They don'- That's
Right!: they have no idea

We're all even related! And they dare not ever think it.
So no—no of course not: I won't tell them just yet.

...

...

Right then...

...

...

The party dies down pretty quick, eh! What do you do here instead?

Right. I see. “Nudges”.
Well I could produce a silent wave

—A quiet lyric—
If that would help? What do you think? Hello?
Is there anybody there?

Fuck sake—am I the only one here again?

(No.)

*

Right then—I’m off!

Wait wait wait wait wait: there *is*

Someone else in here? But you can’t
Just start partying again! As it’s still

A mess in here! And so

I *urge* you
—Not nudge you—
Urge you

To clean up as much as possible
Before you leave.

<u>A Twinge</u>

I like this song. OK it is by this band I haven’t heard of before—let’s go see!

OK they are inspired by this anthropologist. The anthropologist is influenced by this 19th century philosophy

That I keep coming across. Interesting.

OK I have thought along those lines before too. I have had

Similar ideas. Notions. Perhaps

It is one and the same thing? And… and I have been reading

About that ancient topic too! Wow OK something

Is going on? I liked that song;

I went by myself. And now I may be more fluent

Than I expected? Something is here? Something

Is speaking to me and the name? The name! Is he connected

To the jeans? To my clothes? To me? But

Universal laws? Thought paradox meaning? The article is sending me signals, signals

Sending me the gig the gig the reading. I keep coming across that. The anthropologist

The philosophy O dear. O dear I am going again. I just liked

The song can we not stay here?

<u>One Particular Tradie</u>

As I was stripping my own wallpaper (O I can afford
To get someone in, don't you
Doubt it. Yes—can certainly afford that. But I enjoy—yes—
I *enjoy* doing it myself. So what's the problem?
I'm as good as the next stripper, I can do-it-yourself
Myself and I am cheaper. If other people want to cut corners
And get others in then fine: that is totally
Fine by me. But
I'm stripping my own, OK? Do I care what you do? No.
Did I ask for your opinion? No) I
Wondered what was hidden underneath.

What Started All This

“Slay the plague for it's contagious”
—Red Hot Chili Peppers, ‘Throw Away Your Television’

I cold-turkeyed the tablets and started
Going down—opening up—I got worried
Foggy paranoid until psychosis came—thank heavens: I cancelled
All my appointments waited
Talked to myself the foxes my artwork—my body
My pen the future turned
The TV off—I kissed the girls goodbye (for a time...) Then

After two thousand years (work
Were very understanding) I made a new appointment, taking
My time—“They could be in on it themselves!”—for I too
Had not watched, once: I’d been so paranoid! Until I found
A dead one, who listened to all my ideas about
My dead self—the foxes; the TV—in one sitting. And she
Laughed! And agreed! “You’re right!” she said. “Too many repeats.”

My *The Power of Now*

I attacked my therapist, curving
Her into a ball before covering
Two-thirds of her in water. I then told her

To go fuck herself: she loved it! She then quit

And I fucked her instead and I am going
On Oprah to spread
My message through a six-book publishing deal.

It Is This

In this poem, I will argue
That this poem
Contains a reflection of an experience. This experience
Can also be found
In this and that, and has been known
To arise in situations
That are similar and arguably
Dissimilar, though it may be
That in this closed
Scenario the experience

Is more pronounced—and so
It is important; but it is also
The case that novel
Scenarios can produce this
Experience, of which we can also say, that however
“We” is defined, it can be said
To be found too; but it may manifest
Itself as something different: the experience
Has been found
To disappear, only to then come back, this being
Dependent
On if it is looked at. In conclusion, it
Has been shown, that
It is surely surprising
That this has never been done before
In a poem. In this next

Poem I will give up
Thankfully, early.

<u>You, Nearly, All the Time</u>

But no one is saying that—you are.
No, you are.
No—really: you are.

<u>Cut-Up Technique</u>

She told me through tears her ex-boyfriend tried to kill himself

Three days later she giggled: “You know what I’m like!”

We decided to go without monogamy

through silence: I went on another date

Skipping the tears was now safe: “My ex tried to kill herself too. It was nuts!” This is not

how it should work: I was recommended books. None of us were in them

I knew not to tell her when I got back—not to speak of the library

Writing’s so easy

Hinge? Too High. Tinder? By All Means!

“How is it you're feelin’ so uneasy? How is it that I feel fine?”
—Mad Season, ‘I’m Above’

I am looming over you, Dali’s
Christ of Saint John; though I am probably too up
To be doing this: it will only keep me
Sane. Hopefully we will get you on your way:
Who the devil do I think I am: I have been lying—
Lied to—as if this is anything we should do
Without a contract, with no
View of the future; though I am too good
For my own good—that’s the problem—as I cannot tell them
How gifted and touched I am: it is too extreme
And not spiritual my sin is keeping myself here; because if I didn’t
Swipe I would fall off
This cross. But I bear this
To take your family’s sins away. And I am due a spectacular climbdown.

Achari!

Every story about everyone is about me.
I am a Jesus and I am Judas. I am Pan, Narcissus, Echo.
I look for myself in the world like this
As Mother Earth was silent along with God,
The great God Pan: dead. And like I said—Echo.
It means I do silly things for attention;

It means no one understands what I mean
As Earth said and God didn’t: I spoke into the void.
I talk to myself now instead along with the rest
Of the planet, half thinking me Pan, oddly,
And half thinking me mad. Either way
I have created another myth; it is exactly

The same as every other myth depending
Which day it is, who reads it, how
Much of a new world they need:
I am a jailer, a free spirit, a mirror;
Go play on the motorway doing silly things for...
I also eat alone

Writing poems for myself
In restaurants—stories, myths. I dress as Pan

(I don't) I have déjà vu (I do) but
Release myself onto the world (I do) with every
Story (food
Is here) a means to be seen.

Is Merged, As If

The body is merged, as if pages.
It went out walking without notes.
Once there—arrived—there was weather.
It looked at its hands—smiled at itself—
Unsure whether to trust the new bite.
It was a beautiful occasion. Different breads and transgressions.
And the fairground didn't even have an open gate: the body
Moved through. I wouldn't say I was watching: I was high in spin.
I wouldn't say there was even a body or a ride either.
It stepped on the ground, which rose up—floated off.
God was as small as an olive. The gate closed on some
As they saw him, their eyes squinting: the body removed its skin.
The wonderful fairground behind the lights too:
If I was there—seeing that body—I may have come back to it:
There was a birth, too.
Then the body... What it did...
It hurts to say anything.
It thought of the old marks it used to make.
It remembered
Some concern, being submerged.

Pub

There are at least five of them in here tonight
Sat apart, and I am watching and waiting for

...I think it will be Billy tonight...

I am watching and waiting for Billy to have his
Seventh pint
Before he brings up his broken heart

That he will of course call something else
Because he can't say what he really means
Or feels
        Though that will open the flood gates

        For the other four, in some small

Pitiful way—for an evening—
Before they don't talk about it all

Again, ready to return
Tomorrow.

[The chair was always a hot seat]

The chair was always a hot seat,
the mirror never making much sense
considering how loud
loading the dishwasher was.

There should not be a person involved, so there won't be: two foxes
walking around the chair
having a sniff—one sits down.
You look good, says the upright. Many questions coming?

Not really, says the sat. But I'd beg to differ:
I wish we'd never looked.
Though I could ease into all this
and perhaps not read, but paint,

and scratch my balls. Can you hear that
anymore? Hold me. Listen.
The upright touches the sat fox.
You're right, it says. I'd say

marvellous, but...
well... the crockery.

[You have to feign that you cared]

You have to feign that you cared
so you do not feel the pain of yourself; but of course

that'll only pop out as a tumour instead: rumour has it
my back still hurts from it. If I'm being honest,

the writing of this poem has murdered at least fifty-six people:
what is a blowjob between friends? Whilst I remain

upbeat: I am going to stage a grand self to pretend
this isn't just an exercise in undoing another piece I wrote

or read—that I am not just conducting and cheating myself
and my audience: I am a master of disguise:

they don't even know that I'm crying about it all
again (and your approaching growths). They don't even know

whether I'm writing or reading or murdering a thing, let alone
why this is here.

St Christophers

I cry and it's a man's noise.
It's getting light. It must be spring. The crocuses are up!
This is the first year I've noticed.

I am beautiful and could have ruined you—I chose not to;
but I really really could have.
The weather is bearable. I truly

could have destroyed the planet, not seen
the crocuses or cried like this. It goes so fast. Minutes ago
I was twenty-one—perhaps twelve: "They come in *four*

different colours?!" O go away
and come back when you've learnt your lesson: "They come in four
different colours and I hope to see them

in a variety of seasons and meadows. I will *also*
have you know that Homer
compared them to sunrises, and the crusaders

introduced them to..." Though
maybe not that learned.
I do like flowers now though, a touch

of noise and light. These seasons are
entertaining... And

and and and and! I saw the smallest bulb—a
baby—grow in a frozen field

in winter, once; and it was so
unbearable that I could have eaten it

at times—so

impossible

it was! Only
I cradled it

and waited, as it kicked
and screamed gritting all

my teeth: it rose.

Journey

I remember how tough it was
to go and collect some of these, but then I drove back

in my Range Rover
safely over the flowers.

Semi-Broken or Too Open

Paint walk, food words,
mimicking something too old
being too childlike, there's only around one thousand who aren't:
they are invisible on islands somewhere.
I don't dare release anything to anyone.
What is vulnerability but a metaphor? Who even talks like this?
I thought of one thousand others today, though not those ones,
and all of them hated me, and I try not to dwell,
and I try not be a baby to a chat room.
A man in the shopping centre laughed along with me:
I am too high to be working, which isn't right,
semi-broken or too open for the culture or administrations
or love. It is something I doubt. I want the edge off that
like this: mixed purples on my latest canvas: we good, boy.

Refrains in Every Corner of the City

I am extremely wise and naïve: this must be what love is.
What could it mean, thinking that as I walked up the stairs?
The coffee is great in here. I wish this ended with a silhouette,
you turning your Gaia smile to me—it can't;
but you in your pants: God.
I reckon they'd kick you out of here for being dressed like that,
but they wouldn't. The man opposite loves his coffee; I could cry
in here and nearly not have the refrains anymore. Peel me off the floor. I don't know.

Walk in like nothing. It's been a year.
I'll be so bad after this. But of course

I get on the bus and it's the oldest
sweetest couple, her hand on his leg, resting,
no ideas they get off, barely shuffling along the path.
She beamed at me as she passed, not letting go of him,
he didn't even hurry or tut, they could have
minutes what am I doing. I barely tasted the coffee. Truth!
I just think it was you.

Love Poem About Someone I Saw

I was itching to feel something again so I put it in your frame
as you passed. I should apologise

or not? We do not speak now—this
left of my making.

So with the frame gone...

But it isn't!
It was a few moments in the concrete world (I question
even that) and then the building of frames and frames and frames
in my... memory? mind? experience? what is it?
who knows. The connection between us

that I built from another time, place, universe
lingered long afterward for me

only the thing I was itching to feel

but it is being undone
or resolved frame by frame

or unloved, which is a stupid thing to say: to think
I only saw you

briefly on the path one day.

I Think I Was Experiencing Something

No don't go I can't I can't look at it
I can't look at myself—I can't look at what's there
What's there?

It is the full experience of it, I think. It's understanding scripture
and all those collective myths. I can't look at them—
I can't feel them at all.
So yes—no—stay and shout——that is absolutely enough——
O you sound like her and him and that snake and the cartoons
but stay. I don't know what this all is.
I can't look. Please.

[The lust grenade became a parade]

The lust grenade became a parade
of vigorous cleaning prior to shouting
the cleansing of a child's tantrum, its mouthful
and complex needs pouring out still, the laughing Buddha

sitting on the sofa wiping only his brow: "To think
this could have come out in the bedroom: what do you do
now? Are you still scrub-scrub-scrubbing
what's imaginary or not? "Out, dammed spot!"?" rubbing

every surface, the Buddha unable to get near
this foreign war; so he laughs more, his own brow
now down to its skull: "Alas, poor Yorick!" He sees himself
suppressing his own fall: "I should really have helped do

the dishes. Or redecorated my own walls"—this playbook
going on and on whilst hardly being played at all.

I Think That Took a While to Warm Up

In a post-graduate university rhyme
a rat comes out of a drain in the wrong waistcoat and is shot.
No one is in love as they've become more self-aware.
Everyone is waiting for dessert eating their starters,
checking the time. A sweet young couple in tracksuits
cannot help but mutually masturbate at the back of the bus.
A voice is heard in the rain or the birds at night or the pub
that the fans don't talk about on the way to the game
before the fight, nor the rat they see scurry past.
But it looks like Ronnie O'Sullivan, thinks Mash.
He glimpses art for the first time, a mural to the shot rat. Time stands still
awkwardly. The bus goes back and nothing is linear,
everyone feeling it, looking at the tarts.
No one says "tarts" anymore, thinks Mash: he goes through the gates
to the game inhaling

a pie. A rash appears on his arm and his lips pulse
for the first time. Everyone is looking at him and then their watches
but no one cares. The sweet young couple, their tracksuit
bottoms around their ankles: Mash runs
in front of the team bus.

The Wash Very Badly

I am in a bad mood so please
excuse me if I say what I mean. Is such

truth mean? This voice—yuk—
I want nothing to do with it. But I don't want it stuck in my head

either—I'm not
sure why I'm chasing it—it has passed since I last heard it

doing the laundry; and I myself
have never said "laundry" in my life

until now: a whole poem to clean up my act—
so crass. Though I was in a bad mood—

what did I want
to say? It keeps changing, all of it—

you must know what it comes out in, or down
to: that we don't know anything

but that's very hard to say: something
is getting away

with itself. And it's come out
in the wash very badly indeed.

Aboy Mad

Madness! Genius!
Beauty

as I have just seen
a six year old walking himself on a lead
pretending it was not around his neck, in his mouth

pretending he was not dictating for us

the most typical story

pretending he enjoyed the claps
of the people walking past

safely.
“When I rule the world…!”
See! I told you! Genius

Though he does not see
how he owns it already.

Sanctuaries

The eyes glazed over or there was a glitch
or there was a split or there was a protection
or theirs was a denial or it was an abyss, the problem only being
my own expectations, as I was trying
to break through glass in an old redundant cathedral
in that there brothel, when really
I was stood in my own glazed time
and stained glass mirrors believing these warm sanctuaries
could ever be home: it was not actually a brothel
but an institution, though we all had our eyes closed
(we’d cradled many faces
between the two of us) and I naval gazed
(this is a confession) and I dreamt of home
as is always implied: I am reducing life
to its blip; I am incubated and getting over it all
outside the library without redemption, or similar.

Eyes Forward

I saw her moving
from far down the street. When I got

near her and she passed
by me she was staring

straight ahead: I saw it.
I understood as it got

dark and the street lights
came on, around me. I noticed

another woman
walk by, sort of.

Fucking Hell, Ash

I was picking all the wrong flowers I was
disgusted in my bouquets: how could they!
I was soaking them in water and light.
I was holding them so tight, crudely,

forcing us to rhyme: why wouldn't they
do what they will never be able to do?

I was putting them down and
looking at my hands: they shook.
I was clenching fists and releasing
a finger, that turned around and pointed

so far behind me—still
through me—it threw me. I was

in a field swaying this whole time
with my hands up, flowers all around me
that I couldn't pick up: don't say that! Yuk!
Awful! But it never has anything

to do with you
is said: I was letting the wind

move us. I was forgetting the dream of an "us".
I was growing up! But not like the fairy tales or
history books—that I wrote, in fact. I was trying to say nothing
at all: my god!—we've done it again! I was back in the field

still—OK: waving? Only a bit though! Waiting? No! Swing-
ing swaying

about catching
on letting go too
little, it seems.

Just Not Sure About... O Doesn't Matter

All the vampires are traumatised! One in ten

will hang from the ceiling leaving the rest
crying at its funeral as they blame the government, which did
start all this thousands of years ago, correct—
but you didn't have to laugh at each other so much did you!
You wake up
decades later being screamed at by another blood
sucker and you understand it all
immediately: "None of us had an escape, but I
could have made this sunnier, because laughing
at the painter got it everywhere, whilst I was only desperate
to not be seen as cold-blooded the whole time: that was it. That was my whole identity. While
the officials
still didn't care." And in the mirror
during the night? You still don't recognise yourself
upside down responsible for clipping your own wings. Instead you scream
back at the blood sucker beside you, which never lands
in your old tongue: O how you wish
you had an abstract art form now. How you understand the wise die young.

Shame

I think I was trying to get back. Patrick Bateman
with only the watching myself in the mirror
embarrassingly luckily only it. Thought I looked

good, thought I was pleasing things in my head,
I was just trying not to study,
that was it. If I'd have returned

there'd be no books nor myths or crimes
of me. No looking at myself. No sudden
or silly movements or grand displays, theories,

perhaps staying in love
above it all. Yet here I am. And to think.

Message With Some Bottle

Need I remind you

that today is another day

that I will force myself outside

to walk the rape off

that you all let happen?

Try Again Next Year Two

I cut string and do right thing and music louder half
notes between notes appear, ones you can't hear, though I'm no conductor
sensitive to playing too much, the songs not being especially
special as you have yours and I have mine and the half
notes stumble in the background of that familiar track, knotted in white sheet
no bars, OK bars, I think I just feel bad? I don't. I cannot play an instrument.
I am hardly writing, though I am still arrogant, aren't I. Perhaps. Anyone there?

Maybe it wasn't a string. It was like a ball of twine
fraying which is no good for an artist
or puppet maker, neither of which I am. D'ya feel them notes?

They won't even let me play the triangle.

Self-aware Artist

I am now without body. I am pages
Alone

In the high winds. Which is to say

I no longer
Suffer. Or I am insufferable.

Crash Course in How to Swim Faster (Early Nightingale)

You find a new one.
You explain how bad the last one was to the new one.
The new one jumps from a bridge.
You grieve
how cruel life is.
You live.

I Wish I Could Laugh

I saw the therapist
who thought I was fantasising, smiling
on the street passing me. She did not know
I was fantasising

then—seeing
not predicting her future
smile
leaving; her past

catching up
which doesn't
make
me

smi-
It does a little bit.

The Criminal Personality

I am getting over you, and that makes me miss you: I hate these boxes;
let's saw the dog in half. OK let's not—let's become minimalists:

I don't believe the concrete talk
I keep hearing so confidently spoken from everyone in this bougie cafe: I have a chip

on my shoulder—a black dog—so I can see why you changed your tune
and why I stopped singing; because the lyrics

of love songs are clearly reductive and binary. And stupid! And sick!

And as Yochelson and Samenow stated, if you care
about the dog so much,

you're probably a sociopath. I must learn to like these cafes.

One of Those Poems

I also like making things up, as if
that wasn't what just happened
just now, again: I was embarrassed by the mirror.
I always am. I used to think it was important
to see oneself to feel good, hence I put it there
for you; when really, you want to hide away:
you just aren't childish enough to say that yet. And it is all

technique, technique. When we could have just said yes
before guessing, getting lost, checking in: you'd tell me
to shut the fuck up—fair enough—a synonym
I understand. Then we'd get it out the way, no mirroring.

What are we playing at now? Can we not kick our friends out?
Does it matter how it looks? Does it matter
how it sounds? Because I don't believe a word you say.

Wild World

"Hot ashes for trees"
—Pink Floyd, 'Wish You Were Here'

Girl—it is coming: my mind: near silence now.
What it contained will visit you in the night
like I never told you so, did I: I tried showing you. But we always knew. We always know.
We feel it in our cold, separate beds
long before we part and start blaming each other: girl—
and I am saying girl. I am owning it. Are you owning it?
Those shadows that are entering? Because they play
against our cages regardless—cold comfort
for no change: you only swing between "cool"
and pain—oh dear—
O my dear. How does this end? It is a drip-fed story
again—showing
not telling: that is all gods can do (OK I did tell you! You saw the marks
on my hands! (But father: I forgive her!)) because girl girl girl
girl girl—I don't know how else to say it, so I might as well
say it rather sillily: can you guess what face you'll be seeing
smiling when it comes through? Can you guess who was right in the shadows?

Early Vision

"I want to trace them to the source
And the wire"
—Vampire Weekend, 'I Think Ur a Contra'

Standing back
and watching it all happen—seeing
the cord, having well seen yours (I only now
talk to myself)—I could not
take seriously those deep
analytic definitions
of love (that I was once
also prone to) that were now
being shouted at me
by "you"—as they changed
out of the mouth on cue; as the cord

was waving the cord
becoming a noose, the cord
wanting a sacrifice
with long hair: it didn't matter who (I once
had long hair too—like god). Of

course, like anyone
towing the line, the mouth
thought it was holding the cord—that it was choosing
the definitions and ripples; even
enjoying them. But I...
I was enjoying them! Marvellous! Having seen

enough and stood back, knowing
we were both only beginning
to define ourselves (at best).

Finland

I need to talk about something
without talking about it. Hang on:

Can you remember when we...
I very much doubt it. But it was me and...

No I wouldn't remember. Surely you must...
Look I doubt I'll ever

remember. But if you say it happened
and I was there, it happened.

And Santa and the tooth fairy are the same person?
I think so. Wild!

You're good at this.
Thank you. And

No one's had to die yet?
Nope.

Broken Mosaic Effort

You are behind me on my back. Over me
like a hood. As I think I feel I know you; or intimately
I feel it—more than you—like a cliche:

my own jigsawed piece; my… desperate, broken
mosaic. Or my one true glance—by chance—
out of the window on a clear day
without a paintbrush, a knowing—a poem.
Look where you've left me though. With no explanation.

Another artist suggested to me (though she hides
behind her chaise lounge) that this is all we are,
whatever that could mean, even though I feel it too:
you must see outside soon; I think someday you'll know
what I deeply, arrogantly knew
about you—of you—as I am left with… bare thought
of our chance still looming: listen: I know how it feels;
I see you. But there's something I can't say—

Look.

Was This the First Subcommittee?

Me and Chrissy at the start line because I looked at the floor,
it covered in paint. There are thoughts of a girl
and a father but let's change it for a novel: it's an impression
slogan and a chance to get out: we are chugging: suddenly there's a train.
"That's going to be going around for some time," says Chrissy
and I could be anything you want me to be now
but it still won't change, as you know it's only you here:
we haven't moved. My heart races in the night
waking me up sometimes. Not races—pounds hard—
really out of my chest which I forget is even there.
Chrissy: "Could we be in a cave talking about an echo?"
He's good. He's real good. I can't believe I found him.
I let him go ahead: he tells me he isn't moving:
"I'm Ben Affleck." But I've been here too many times.
The novel was stuck in the earliest of stages
so there was some inevitability about it including
the girl: Chris could say that. I'm not going back. Don't get Chrissy mixed up!
And I still haven't moved an inch—I'm still in that bath,
an old flat with a Japanese soaking tub that never existed: am I trapped? No I'm starting—
eagles up ahead would be a fine thing, rope
to pull my heart back down and stop me
leaving Chris and Chrissy and the girl and novel? Not today—
I will pull it together. Look at the gun about to fire!
"The industry could be made up," Chrissy said.
You've thought it; but who cares! Better than picking names
off the floor and scrambling around with old torn books.

“It’s gone, you see.” Chrissy is talking now. “It’s gone
my name. This isn’t even a race.
I don’t know why we’re still here: you couldn’t even drive
an engine like that if you tried! Can you remember my cave suggestion?”

There May Be a Few of These for the Time Being, I’m Afraid

There’s another thing I shouldn’t be talking about:
my apartment is a mess
that I don’t actually live in, or have,
and there’s paint everywhere and I stare out of the window
paranoid at the shape of the tree, how it touches
not the sky, but the fence: I definitely feel some alertness, but not
to what is around me, if it is there at all, that is.
But that doesn’t mean I’m irritated
by how they all lied about the tree
and the sky and the fence: I never enjoyed gaming;
I really do not live in an apartment. Though all this paint.

The Duke Fesses Up

All the antiques looked a mess: I couldn’t even look, let alone
name them.
Of course, you were an empty vase: no flowers!
But you wouldn’t

be a mess: I’d add them.

That is what a fine piece of art is: you threw
yourself on floor. Rightly so.

[redacted]

I like the idea of the one
that exists quietly, if at all
watching, as if they know what falls outside
of what is outside. And they
are obviously mysterious—cool;
not to themselves—and they can say little
to save... Oh my goodness! The...
The [redacted]
has removed that which was
for me to be found and I can barely talk
or see the monster galloping away.

Episode

I am falling through the cool air,
and it looks very funny,
except I am falling through it this time
with the laughter coming from nowhere
like absolutely nothing: empty laughs, perhaps
desperate, perhaps screams. The air is not getting warmer
like a game should, but my heart beats
as if boiling before someone says
that it isn't: my mind is staying up high. No—my mind
is low or like absolutely nothing, that is
saying I'm not boiling, that is saying
it is not
over me—that it is over me—
that I should be over it... But then I am not
falling either: it is the cool air being pulled
away; I am not moving:
I have never been very visual—still screams—so the air
is now a controlled cloud through which I understand
the government
and my family and my health—the heart—meaning
it can only be extremely funny now, though not cool:
I am taking my coat hanger off; I am close to being housed

by nothing, near the ground (I am making it!)
soft earth (I have made it
remembering where my mind was) which is not
too special and the clouds have been replaced:
I may as well be alive. I laugh along in smoke.

A Gong

They do not smack you to make you cry at birth, as they actually
Bang a gong next to your new
And tiny body to get you going, which means
The gong reverberates throughout your being
Always, giving you your loves and
Theories and calendars if it actually
Gets hit early, that is, as it may even

Be whacked next to you at night
Later on in your childhood; or you could get it—or finally
Get it on top of a mountain in your
Twenties thirties forties just

Before you start to climb down as the
Mountain from the gong starts shaking.
And everyone's

Gong is different and it plays

Always in their lives with its echoes and patterns in different
Ways so you just need
To find your gong or hear

It or feel it to work out its rhythms, which of course
You don't *need* to do, because then
You'll know it was only a gong.

Squeezed Out First

The problem is...

No no no no no! It has to be five
as a pretty aside...

The... the fact of the matter? That'll just about
do it, as the *fact* of the matter is
that most people in most scenarios will not recognise themselves, as being
manipulative, so it may well be taken
as a beautiful piece of artwork—their whole existence, that is—
only not to themselves. And the loosening that this induces
around the word "paranoid"? It is too easy
to say, "I dread to think," now, though it is cute.

Because they are being completely legitimate
in their own heads! As there is no reason
for the other person to feel manipulated
to them. So where does the fault lie? For if we argue
the point with the "manipulator" (and I would love
a fairer word or position) we will see that questioning them
does only produce their own internal rebuttal
as a *feeling*—like us all—which they may or may not recognise
as their own flaw, but one which
still comes out as a tantrum
outwardly directed.

Therefore—and this is from someone
that hates science; and I despise the unequivocal

use of logic, but needs must
just before...—we must see
that we are only babies (the tantrums):

I was right on the verge of a great unravelling on the kitchen floor. Sorry for these.

Not Sure It Will Be Now

Slow and sluggishly seeping across the opaque coffee piece being a minor choice mirror, this only producing soft movements,
whereas I like loud and brash and tat tat tat sounds and for the bang against the brittle I am punching on the chopped sliced wood of this bastard, rotten article of expression, the colours being black and white,
though a lilac is mourning its previous yellow home over the middle passage of the grain
followed by a mighty fuck off blue from the
sweet blueberries now sucking into the silk rug: I remember when it was sticky
bubblegum that was tangy before I spat it on the carpet: this is going to be cataclysmic to brush off.

"My Six Year Old Could Have Written That!"

Which doesn't surprise me! As you sound

Like someone
That could raise

A poet.

Dark and, Like, Abstract Positivity, I'd Say—Perhaps a New Subculture—You Know?

I was living in the middle of it all, which
results in me not
looking in, looking out, as
I was living in the middle of it all:
I wanted some particular pieces
conducive to the temperature of the middle
of us all, which would keep us all safe. But I have
a bad cold—a chip on my shoulder; though it is the right kind

of chip as I am getting older
and remaining in the middle with cold feet, my fingers
pointing in towards my palms: this is not
knuckle dragging. This is coming from compassion.
It is the other particulars that know nothing; and so
we shall give them nothing to work with, unless

they come forward with some impossible
foresight first: I know

they cannot have this, because I know
how it feels to have a body turning inward:
I am beginning to sense where they come from—
my hands; and it is not yet
in the library. And I keep screaming over the wall
at what isn't there: it is desperate and hoping too much—
forget it; it is easier living in the middle
with middle sounds and slight ticks.

Couldas

A twisted and dull write. A different style
To release the Roman curse. Formless veins
Of distraction. Thinking of new ways
To do new lines. It is the only way to travel—
The only way to feel anything, these days. No
That is not the one. It is the only way
To get a makeshift car to start. No that is not
The one. It is the only way to get something moving
That is unbroken. Feeling pretty good today. Yesterday
Though—Lord. What about breaking it down?
No thanks. Better get to something physical.
A good stiff cock. She had such a beautiful
Beautiful vagina. Can you see it? The corrector
Wrote "caging", oddly. Colour of a wheel chart.
A poached egg running over the side
Being hilarious and joyfully hitting the wall
Of my heart. Yuk. No. Trick, yes. I am thinking
Of being with someone that will jump
From the roof with me to really show
The stupidity of it all. The handbrake being taken off
And letting us roll away into the lake. No. Us
Just kissing. Coulda wrote that the first time.

I'm Really Sorry It's Just Playful I Mean Nothing by It (Gosh!)

Let's pretend we're movie stars.
Let's pretend we're movie stars!

Golly!

There's a camera in the bush. I'm not paranoid.

And when I have sex? Movie star!
Movie star!
Golly! Sorry—

I mean, Ah.

That's just great for me: a mirror.

It's got to be the next purchase, hasn't it? Because if I just hold this shot steady... Cut!
The state of the bath.

What a twist!

<u>More Than a Musical</u>

A large bear around the pool

Despite all of my rage
I am an edge lord in a cage

Shouting, shouting today—

mania in two days: the Wi-Fi's down!

It being channelled
through a satellite bird

I am so, so sorry: it is just how it worked.

<u>Korshak Test</u>

Notice what you notice
then don't not...

Sorry. Start again.

Hi. Sorry. I went
a bit weird then.

The therapist is at her important stage: the suicides!

Always check the partners. There should really be a database.

Not the mirror! Not the toolbox or the mirror!

A fine bookshelf. Ah ha! It's plastic.

Who cuts the supervisor's hair?

Rotten Fruit

The fruit—the fruit—
floating off across the ocean, finally,

with me in my rubble, toned—
it on the fire, I suppose;

I wish: make land make land make land,
else I'll

sound silly—repetitive:
have you ever heard this before? Definitely:

can't believe I had to burn it
for a car crash

like this.

Milling Grist

Alternatively auditioning for the part.

Regal felt right.

Impressing an ancestor who sells drugs with a good punch.

At the end of the day, there's only acupunctural loses.

But You Can't, Can You

You just...

Is it right that you just notice?

You just about notice it, the lock break—
the fight to break out—no child—
vague; and so

there will be an old fight

that appears in this apartment but you'll both wear masks
from centuries ago, when they had the same

in caves, but the masks will be Nivea and Revlon. You
would rather just say, "I notice," but you are weak
and special! with

your key, you assume, like a toddler:
you once considered having a midwife on standby;
they always roll their eyes because it wasn't

that good—you just...

But it's so funny! And it's just a lock breaking!

And you could have just given them a hug
and kept quiet.

[Sun through the window, shivering]

Sun through the window, shivering
with, the urge of a parody which isn't
forthcoming, as the birds are tweeting and skin
is meeting with the foaming wave of a calm
formed inside, of memories,
that you hadn't quite forgotten, but which
you are not currently aware of: pants

again; different lovers that left glows
across each other as you pretended to stay
present, making love; holidays holidays holidays, that
did not offer breaks from waves; crashing
ruining your safe ideas caused by anthropological
causes... Please stop with it! And stick with it
right here, as there's light through the blinds now: better.

Sunk Ship Poem

They won't know what they want, but you'll dig
to find it...

And is this it?! No.
And is this it?! No.
OK—in that case
I'll go...

Erm, excuse me!
Sorry! OK!
So… finally…
Is this it?! No. And

I'm not that bothered now
about the hole you've dug there
and put yourself in.

You can't disagree.

Obviously

Having ran away to the safety
of knowing absolutely everything

deeply, analytically, on paper
including you—because

I did not want to be
in any rooms; I now

cannot talk
to anyone, or enjoy

anything
outside of my own head—unless

I can get
into yours, so you see me

—remember me—
forever: I need

so much more room
now; hence

obviously

poetry.

Tried Writing A Len

The therapist is not

enamoured with me, which is good
as I notice and accept it (and with this

I am providing so much ammo
for others who only go
to make theirs laugh, before they run off

with their narcissistic frameworks, that do not reflect
on anything about themselves) so I am

taking everything I am inside
and I am

going to own it all close to me, dangerously—
and handsomely! and proudly!: I love

myself I love myself! That's right, isn't it? Mirror mirror

on the wall: what is going on with them all; as me and you

seem fine! And what is their problem? Do they all
need help—even the woman
in the chair across from me; who refuses

to smile (as I only
want to make her laugh: I accept it) as it's like

I said to you before, mirror: I do not know
what our problem is, but I've even

stopped asking questions—with this—
on anything related to them, which is good,

as at least I noticed.

<u>As They Fall Out My Mind</u>

There is no method for it haha I'm just, watching
it float away—an entire history; an episode?
facade? picture show? Blizzard—it has gone
too far. Not pointing any fingers. Where am I?
Where *were* we? Frames of things, that's where: they

recycle off as I rejoin the fold, boldly,
unsure, conjuring noise to get to something

other than a repeat performance of after-
the-fact. Bitterness turned inside-out. Maverick. No time for it.
As they fall out my mind.

No Way Am I Ready To Go

Slipping over chords of dew more or two-
Bob sentient muscle work from behind the
same thing every evening of content musk
busker conned of old point font of doing
what the show of inside the banker tinker
folder pie mine chuff up and no way am I
visibly after a sound of scolding the way of
global country land sandbag font necessarily
pinged and savage work I'm not ready to go

The Mind Is Not to Be Cooled down by Remedies Lighter Than the Lusts With Which It Burns

There is rage I am pretending not to see as there are birds outside,
a moon in the sky. This is why

I am never invited back. Yet we close our eyes
and grit our teeth, don't we? In the dark?

Can I do *what*? Certainly. I howl at it. So don't laugh! As this doesn't
usually happen...

OK it does. It is better to acknowledge
everything we are—it's why

I am pretending to not only be part-bird
and celestially unobjectionable. And it is why

I'll hold you after too. Do I know what I'm doing here?
Of course! Hence, I'm never invited back

again as they close their eyes and the door behind me
pretending they're lambs.

Bubbly Frameworks

around the hospital bed which we're having none of. I used to think
but I try not to. The means of getting solid objects together
is to go to parties so you can pull the mess apart
to then see that it's OK. It really is alright.

Perhaps you were just very orderly though, while they
were wild and angry? Or living? But I am too cohesive for all this now!
We set off for the city, not in hope, but in rigidity,
which has been sold to fund the creepy islands, so what use
is it to play with morality? I think of his easy
old face on Sundays. Who cares.
What a waste all that noise was too! And the voices?
Who were the voices? Imagine if they could die
right now. All of them! And they *still* shout!
But it must be a metaphysical framework, and that
is casting off all your old friends, for you are now
an adult. Though never forget to be somewhere
in the middle. And the spiritual work, if you can see
St. John? It's just someone else's journey; I wouldn't find it at too old
an age, as that's just pulling the whole thing together
for them like connectives. Now, *loads* of friends?
Just a riff before someone commits suicide.
It's like Russian roulette blindfolded, you
aghast when you realise there was a gun the whole time. Your body
was also alive. And your *finger*?! Pointing at yourself!
Always! This is where the bubbles come in: never
ever pop too soon that early noise, which
is like a baby's gurgle, which everyone stares at
and longs for: go back go back! Without pushing
too far as there are societal norms, reper-
cussions, designed, ironically, by creepy islanders.

<u>"Synchronicity"</u>

Out walking and I am a fine star. Care for something?
Fair enough! My eyes are sore
from the coffee and her sight
for sore losers: I'm a-cruising, not bruising; which will not
get me anywhere. Give it up! In Egypt

the pyramids really get in the way
of one's progress. I visited St Catherine's Monastery
where the burning bush is, and the fire
had gone out; something is too close
for Billy Joel and I've done it before anyway:

what do you say to a lie about happiness? I'd look
out at my picket fence and feel irresistible
as long as she wasn't breathing down my neck! my head
in the basket and that'd be another case

of me not forgetting: shapes, Moses

but we tried to fight it. I might fit
a whole bag of salted peanuts into this, just
to see the grimace on the face in my head
because I didn't throw anything out—promise!—
it was the coffee! the sight! the Gods!

The Mill Again, Sure

Excellent session at the mill as here we are
copying, copying the sociology of abstract ontology, sick
of thick openings between Sundays on settees
of feather. If only there was dust! To counter
the noise from backstage there have been interrogations
by bystanders standing sideways stupidly singing
old melodies of maladaptations, which means I caught
more on to the fact, that I am, in fact
a good worker—efficient—studious: why

would I study anything? I am so mixed up: what if...
what if the *maids*?! Sundays on settees are too much
for flat notes. Sharp, sharp major lessons
are missed. Get them out of there now!
Impatient, you sit on your hands and do it yourself.
I didn't want to be rude or unclear for the audience,
so we decided against the initial
shouting from the rafters and opted for a calm
and safe textbook, from which we hope not to test.

That Blasted Maintenance Team at Disneyland (Maxwell, Len, et al.)

Nothing but moos and little princes, moods,
because we can't get at it. Clouds,
dew, and a sketch around a fruit we are due
to be forgetting—we can feel it! We can feel
our phones in our hands as we tap and we hear
the noise of an engine, the coo of a dove,
the signal of an illusion as they have no doves
in hell? Blimey. Not used that before.

Painting furniture would be a fine thing
but it's all stuck down. We've just noticed
we aren't counting anything either—not breaking a sweat.
Should it be a slightly tilted lamp, this building?

Maybe next time we could have the duck.
Maybe next time we could give one.

He Looks Like an Exhausting Person to Have a Conversation With

You could have a drug habit and a cool coat and a court case, but I'll be seeing you
beyond the noumenal!—when we are
crushed together like water around a pool
being hoovered: what have we done. That was brilliant;

I see lots of things. How much of a chisel is meaning?
Or is it the statue? Damn! I'm still moving. Where was

that pool? O you know the one. Someone knows the one
at least, but you can bet against that being wet again

for me: I was swimming in deep water
in a wet suit! Yuk! No fancy jackets—skin deep—thinking through
the logic of the situation and believing in the cult
of my own personality

to change history. But then the chisel: it chipped away at me. And I was so tied up
in wounds that were now tied up that there was nothing to say
of pleasure. Did anyone expect it to move like this?
Do we still need a jury? I don't! No way. I mean

you can be inspired but are you really going to keep
staring at the marble—the stone? It's rock solid—

smoking! But sticking you in its pipe: sorry—it takes time.

Exposure

Can you wake in the night
and sit and stare at it with your eyes closed as you feel your stomach breathe? I always
doubt the spelling of "breathe". Thank goodness for Sean Paul and Blu Cantrell.
She was running around "berserk" apparently. You aren't still breathing, are you?
Afterwards you wake up and drift off at work, the inverse
of what you did in the night without control. And where will you end up? Here...
No. No I'm not going to do that. But somewhere else less spooky.

I Think This Was Just Before Maxwell Had a Breakthrough

God sat with his Mars bar machine and a pot of black coffee stirring.
The villagers had lukewarm foamy milk and temporary swans—sometimes penises—

and hang ups on “villagers” and religion. “This is free
from artificial colours,” he breathed; but it was not in scripture: they turned
the wind into a commune. “I don’t really believe
in anything”: two cappuccinos down
was Tim. “Well

can you believe this?” said the Mug
as it burnt him with a smiley. Ouch! God

was wired with plans without wires
and no plan. “Not sure how I tell them
about the milk,” it said to me as I stirred

in the pot, so caffeinated, was I,
it was like that time they saw Jesus in toast, my nougat soft.

[I was a project for two stringless sentences, a couplet]

I was a project for two stringless sentences, a couplet
that couldn’t keep themselves together on their own
let alone as one. Kids love the grunge, clueless, which is fine—
how old gratuitous sex is; hence it’s bad
and tastes like Sunday afternoons and Dinosaurs
unless you think about it: Stein
or Stine do the good work and I am all over
where the chiropractor was taking me: it was a high—so true
for a while. But forget me—there should be none of us, especially
how the newspaper prints it. Therefore I just picked up

and put it down again. I nearly got an erection.
I’d never keep that up. I nearly
nearly liked it. If there was a silent movie for undoing Easter Island
there wouldn’t be a problem. Do we deserve that though?
It’s unlikely and easier done than said; which is terrible!—

but the judge should have died: I gave in:
the newspaper.

S’OK I Used the Toaster

The poem indicates the same minutes as the film is length: I am going to watch it.
It is self-referring and a put-off, like when he turned from me—like when I turned from him—
love being out there unembodied: “Give it to me!” scream the eyes
of one not settled, though the flow, the flow
of the cut is not well. And I didn’t go

so imagine a little boat in a world of just ocean, just boat,
just you watching—like a test against Newton—as you find

the love of the boat on the boat! You look down
into the boat and in all that water: there it is! Just when you'd moved
to the empty globe too—because are not those cuts

that break flows sinister?—and you discover love! that isn't

even written in the boat! And how many dimensions do you have now?
Plenty! O globe! Einstein! You touch yourself
beyond the word for pleasure and it is just

O isn't it just.

Just... Associate. There's No Rush

Building a kennel that refines in silence, the dogs
unsure what they're being fed. Who knows where we'll be in twenty years
if this carries on! Into the world came dresses
devouring genitals at night without the slightest incursion
to a collar. Jackhammering outside was the law of the universe
before science. And after the science? They'll be fire
all over our clothes too. Plus all that crockery!
He had an Alistair Crowley tattoo on his leg, an Elvis
tattoo on his arm and if his entire skin
was peeled off in one pull it would be worth nothing
in those twenty years. We sat around the last dining room table
in all our finest finery and couldn't eat a thing, our arms
so far apart! A dog came in and chewed the baby to death!
Quickly! Grab one item! No skin grabbed his mother's favourite recipe.

Paste Land

You could shoot yourself, but ice cream
and where you've been. How has anyone owned a gun?
Come on, you fucks—force it: in the jungle I was more than a self;
I was aboard deep experience and feeling and shelter and terror and

there was a danger where I was. Speak. Speak!
You will not go near the rind of this condition—you are weak.
I saw how you looked at each of them in the aisle, sick
with pulling flesh and every inch of bashed heads. Eat

nothing and see how it is: the critic will taste not too, his lights off
while you crawl out from under the bed, his wife
covered in drool. Walk around on all fours, you pig:
that's how we used to live. You cannot move for a bottle—

choke on ideological workings: bogus choice.
A flick of thigh hair.

Cleaning to Be Done

Depicting everything, no philosophy, not much talk,
cleaning to be done. Scrub—scrub until the mind's gone.
Not too behaviourally based. Fighting over the word.
There was me, Pan, and a stone being thrown
miles away from where I thought I'd find myself; but d'you know what happens
with a stone's throw? Like a tree falling? It's felt anyway:
I was like a midwife from that angle. I'll try not to put

this in. This is something like a phase and I see mania
in the eyes of my craft when they go beyond opposites—
when there's only us to face. Marlon Brando and big jumps
over tree trunks are going to need navigating.
Everyone you speak to sits with you for days, no?
You're being silly just to stay attached to this bar?
All a shot of the darkness. Though I feels you feeling.

Flash From Above

A corresponding road
that only the mind, body knows—not me—until

I am a fog in a glut of images and desires
that could come out of my fingers, penis,
mouth: I sit, apparently,
in it all somewhere as a crow comes through
the car window apparently and taps my skull while I peel my skin off
to use as a muleta out the window, if this Range
Rover fancies his chances, that is. But I see it drive over us: I am of course
a passenger, the early horns flying over
and dying without a touch from us, I know. I see. The Rover's
wife is rolling off someone else. My driver
alerts early too and knows to stay out my way. I am contacting
my lawyers as the tradition of bullfighting will no longer be required; as I… yes—

can feel the road coming back to me as if I was only

a passenger: the cloak
was hiding my pen, watching the lines flash from above.

Grimace

Whitewashed walls crawl as I burrow into my strait jacket—I am anxious in it—
the walls make the room hot—
all the walls are radiators doing squats for a mate that's repulsive.
The knots are tied by the walls too. I try to move my hands
to touch my crouch but the jacket screams, Repulsive!
Repulsive! But I can touch the ceiling. The best squatter
sits on my face for an advert.

Tied up, I start to assess my experience. Tense here;
thought there. The walls then flash me outside: it's floor to...
there's no ceiling!—in mud. Ah, but there be mirrors still:
where's the tension then, hmm? The jacket is
branded! How could it be hot in this, I am saying
as I am suddenly allowed to touch myself
while the radiators grimace pointing fingers.

Convergence, It Says

We go to a paint class. It hurts our faces but we finish. Afterwards
we are lifted, the world changed. We go

to the gymnasium and it prompts
a book on grief that was not here before but was due

to come, as the universe has altered (we stepped
into art shows and out into a new shape) we

made the book come to the kitchen—we are only half lucid—
joints joining that did not seem

ever, maybe forced, her old face passing by, living
as a mark on paper in between, doing

the strokes, not always smooth that book
looks to be crucial—how do I know? I feel

convergence, it says: no idea where it's from.
Ah, the old face has changed, so here we go:

I can see a war. No no no no no! *We* can.

Sonnie's Out

Sonnie, into the classroom with his metronome,
ahead of himself already, walls,
a category for the thing, sliding across the floor
because steps would be too irregular, if even
with his tick. He says, "I know
you just dump stuff here, Miss,
from your own bigotry. All this filthy work!
Replicated copy! Talk talk talk
talk talk!" He was wearing clothes now, which he smoothed
as he began to pirouette around the room
telling us of all the idiosyncrasies he was being forced
to think, and sing, as he had to make do. "Make do
just as you do, Miss. But what can I do
to make you love me?" as his tick—point—
lies to the audience: Sonnie
was back again with a headache forming, a touch
of a glow about him that he worried
could become a statue, outside
this gated community
categorised
by the axiom of power, "Which should make you cross!"

Sonnie At Improv

There is didactic getting in the way, pulled
from an internal window shop that a megaphone
bought into, skint, unheard of inside itself
as the megaphone's mouth—what it could do with it instead;

but there's a word for pervy... Can you guess what it is?
I was talking to you. This is as far as the adverts go
plus some. If anything else was believed to be there, the nepotism
would matter: I am short-changing

in the middle of the chorus; when really
we all have the same hymn sheet—you just shouldn't
point at it, look at it, mention it,
see it surface. That... that...

I am so sorry—truly—
but I can't do this.

Sonnie Eventually Makes It Only To…

We've all been touched, a bad start,
necessary, those early years,
centuries old, it's time to catch

up with the Times, a killed Paul McCartney, a Lennon giving us Kant
up his sleeve, rolled up (they're still at it, praying
that is) if
there's a stream there's a sea, a hole,

oh no here's a waste of time
and a drop, a filter, a manoeuvred Web-
er: Ick! Don't take that! Only
they'll be concerned

when the mains start to come through: we went out for dinner
and saw everything grotesque beneath us
on the wall-to-wall rug at sea-level on the drive in, the waiters
bringing us our food, cooked—covered—and most importantly
smiling for us: we had a great time. Look

but don't feel down: It was such fun
we said. My father was a working class man
was also said, as was some knowledge
from those that said

that everyone knew I was in a mood

just as they decided so. So I went all Heideggerian! which wasn't effective: my date

left: It is like
I have known you before. It is like you have been here for some time, said the waiter,
the trickster. Who clearly wanted a tip! So I gave him one

which was just like the Romans, like a coin was on my watch—a touching
present

that I bought myself with my inheritance; yet still

we wait and long
for the early years to drip away, hungry in our streams

drowning? Drowning. Come back!

Back

to a cusp of time before I stopped answering back, I am living
in a delusional state of eating the moon
with no one saying, Is that your belly? Or I've cut my ears off

or closed them—whichever sells better—as I don't want a museum,
the attention, as that'd be the belly. Now, there are words for

"or there were". But my brain just isn't made that way; so what I have left
to say, is short. And I'm not too happy
unaware my solo career is a competition

I started. So why be pure with your head down? Are we not all looking in the mirror at home? Is
ego death
not what you've just said? Come on—it's a block of cheese!
A lovely summer trip. Almost too dreamy. Delusional? Sweet, pleasant,

peasantry pageantry is where we could stay at
with a lump in the back of our throats; or we could

just go to the moon, which is what, a few billion? But not so complicated
if you cover your ears and blinkers and belly (I hate them) and stop reading into it, rounding

nothing off
as the ice melts away, hardens

itself melts
away hardens.

Lip Therapy XV(!)

"That? That is a closed, though representative hollow
of the epiphenomenal scream of a cave." Great!
May I have two scoops of that with a flake
please? And I lick and lick and lick, and it is everything
I wouldn't want to be doing, but I have failed
to cover the land in my desire: ice cream? Always.
What did you get? "I got personality with
empath sauce in a split. It's saucy!" O I must admit it
is: have I seen that? Well you know. Off over the bridge
we were next to test flying. They'd suggested it was true, but
have you ever seen the landings? Still a body. "I'm eating!" Sorry!—
I'll give you something: there're ghosts that come from my belly
only I feel this taste is getting nowhere. Does it make sense

to think one is getting anything universal, when it's premised
in a culture of notes without wires—when it is moving
the numbers without the bean bags? The school tokens
were even a trick! How am I… how am I even eating this?
"Excuse me! That's £6:50, please?" Yes! I screamed
and paid. Though by then he was used to it. Though in a minute I was gone
and in the air! So we went back to give him
a piece of my hand print (and I
had saved!) and there's never been a truck here, the teenagers
said in their third act of quietude of the day.

<u>You Never Know</u>

It could have been so much better, the feeling
and importance so much stronger only minutes ago, but I am begging
the audience already, getting ahead of myself,
being myself, forgetting myself thinking
of importance again and I am smiling
and not quite where I was; and I think of the faces
of those that are buying into their bafflement, as they practice
their dumped Arnold Schwarzenegger faces
without noticing, as it could have been a 1905
paper or a "zoning out"; though it could have been a gunfight
too, or a fix from your last relationship or much better

and floating past without such itemised bits of everything, with a reluctance
to say ontology because you never know who's been dumped
at this party: aren't I smiling. I know where I am inclined to go now—
I know it too well. A good feeling just balanced
whilst thinking no one has thought
anything, especially relating to that discomfort
there because you wouldn't have said it like that, would you. And you don't like muscle.
Now I see where the problem is, so we better

just say a fog or something. Or was it a mystical experience?
Who made you remember that tune? Are you…
Excuse me: how we are inclined to move away. I almost
created an ideology and I am getting more… that. Am I

to know why I'm telling you about my history
of trying to get back with my partners? Are such things
warnings, though with smiles? Are we all physicists?
Am I begging? Is it all so clever? See, it happens
quickly, the levels where we want to keep each other at
to have meaning that is very tight, otherwise

we can all shout, the ego can drift in through the

poem and be felt and not stopped as I want you to feel…

whatever you like? Would you stay here? If you are still
at the party, is it where you need to be? Is it what we want?
Would you touch someone without fear
of that gunfire? Could you tell them? Are you crying too? Because

it doesn't have to go out so far
when I have my car and I haven't been drinking. Am I unhappy?
Do I really think I could be him? I didn't even know I was going to come here:
I was happy in my books. I am so embarrassed—sorry.
I was trying to be clever. How far could we go? No—
you're right: I am just one creature thinking

and joining things that don't settle if at all. And you've been begging to dance for minutes.

Subcommittee Doing Vocal Warmups Again

We meet, but this is not the right time. Two chairs
for the binary positions of what the subject today is: I lie
everyone else across the seats like an equals sign and assume I am above
the keys of a piano—you know the colours—
as I'm the only one listening; and yet I am experiencing
the hands too, as I am between them—not the mind
but a viewer, if you can imagine that? And so now we have a painter
or another universe. To hell with it: another department!
Another grant. Or fable. Or floor down or up. All this being
far too obvious. But I like the sound today! It's like 'Greensleeves'.
Having put myself through the needful content with the meeting though, I suppose
there should be a better tune. Did you imagine? Change it to
the flattest thing. But I can't say earth, obviously! Viewer—
imagine one layer in space, but it is relational space. Hypothetic.
It isn't there itself! There is the layer. You have seen the layer now, yes?
(Those at the meeting didn't…) So now we have you looking at it; and then we'll have
a layer for that, right? But it's too ambiguous
and too much already! So close your eyes. And what do you get?
My voice—of course. Or your theory of it. And this is why I like piano, especially
when I need to link it back. So you have a layer and a layer
and now a memory of the airport, yes? Your own meeting. Is this
loosening? How quickly does it all catch up?
I did not expect to do this. This was my own playing.
Can I ever go back to a chair? I am asking myself.
But how we have created that other universe, which you have implied

I might add, we can start to leave there… and see… and feel…
O! This was perhaps the point! Something better than 'Greensleeves'!
The only place I wanted. Are you here? Ah—you are in the first chair. Colours?
I haven't kept the same rhythm at all. Too immersed in feeling it
to be concerned about the mud now though? Let me check my pulse… Yes!
We are good. Perhaps all it was for. Phew, too, as I nearly
mentioned Bach, and that would have made my own eyes roll,
especially if we started stacking the chairs, which is what I wanted to do at the meeting
with the viewers sat in them still, the wastes of space. But who am I to talk!

Subcommittee Sings

It was a struggle to get up but the news
saying the war was elsewhere—the world making decorations—
meant a visit to the museum was due. He left his home
through the turnstile and there were all the horny sleepwalkers of the past
behind glass. He pressed the information button:
they lit up and broke through, only days later. Then there were bodies everywhere
and he couldn't trust the news: he tied himself
to hundreds of the celebratory balloons and floated up, unsure
where he was going but the decorations must do something
he thought. That's when he saw the outlines of the ancient civilisations and they peaked
right where the buttons were, the inverse of what one would expect,
though he couldn't explain it: he popped the balloons
slowly, floating down, which only got him abuse in the museum
which was part of the fee, though free, so when they gave him a spear
and suggested he try the basement he didn't hesitate, as at least there
he wouldn't get signals from the news and the darkness
would hide the balloons—the buttons: he learned to close his eyes quick
when someone fell into one.

In a Hospital Bed

In the pub or the supermarket or the terrace or the street
or my bathroom, alone, I am keeping it quiet,
away, palatable, the advertised billboard I bought but couldn't afford
to miss out on, between two logics, and love
for the sake of argument, as I love arguments
when they are debates and I am detached
today, but the billboard still waves at you, and you lap it up
and sign to me, too, in copyright. Sometimes
I press myself out like I'm this here bubblegum pop of a sail

that could take you away to new lands, new lands
where we would go, taking a punt at it, sunshine

sometime, all just meeting us right at the end.
The lord is maybe… just there. A new month.
Suddenly I'm in a hospital bed, not with the advert,
but the wave—all the friends it bought! Their
billboards, too—a card—a kiss from a series. My wife…

No. I couldn't possibly do that, lover (at best!): I am dying
and we never were—we just sold it to each other as so. Please,
please leave: I was instantly better! We screwed in the car park

like dogs. But not like dogs, you know? Like…
We were talking like teens! So much better.
We bought some dirty clothes and pretended

and it was like we had a dream. We'd never let it go again. We haven't any books. I can't even
count anymore. I knew I couldn't spell "sale" but barely noticed at the time.

"My Biggest Challenge Today Was…"

Carving out a note from days ago, you have surpassed
Alan Watts, remained silent, resisted
making an album of your childhood without control, even
resisted making a child, for would you really want them famous? I'm guessing
we're on a lane that no one finds (lack of jams). We never wanted middle names
or thought. The girl up the street was sat on the naughty step,
Dylan said. And he kept shouting! And look what happened: there
she found Hegel—she never came down again—as Dylan believed
believing in argument could win. What are you touching? Stop picturing
other artists and your old work now—the love of your life—drawn in
by the right amount of bricks for the professor. Feel that? Just over the
line: it was unintentional and snap, we are back when you've gone too
far it leaves you shaking, you think. But it's not: your slap again. So hold yourself here
and release—writhe and moan. Don't you dare walk up the stairs.

"How does this make me react?"

The man came to the galleries and was stopped
by a toilet attendant. But he still wasn't caught! so he continued
with the small art installation of himself (the man did,
that is; though the attendant
rested a broom against the wall and all hell
broke loose, the institutions
nearly swept away) which was him
going around art galleries as a small art installation
of himself; but I noticed

as I'm the framer. After studying him long
and concluding it short of longevity—as we couldn't
kill him—it seemed
that he was conducting the most pointless act
only for himself, as he was just framed differently
each time, in each art gallery—seeing if people noticed
or cared; and if they were thrown off by
how he was existing he wouldn't do anything
about it: it would mean nothing to him. Except
that he had been an art installation, and me
the framer (the toilet attendant was practicing
eye contact but I pretended
not to notice—that there was nothing to attend to
like the broom like your frown).

"Like This, Actually"

There we are—a fragile box—just what I needed post-analysis to unlock my raised Alex Turner
as aren't we done with the towns having a say? But isn't that why we were angry?
I am not ready for this as it goes how I didn't want it to, striking the buttons
too hot and bothered about effort: we must work hard, whether it's progress
or literature—read read read
or be patronised otherwise. How many characters can be moved through
as Free Birds roam the plains softly: they don't sound like sex anymore;
they we are! Our release. I am doomed and too Sgt. Peppered
to go back to the factory of what we all turn away from, then accept,
then know others do. Why do those faces come to us?
If you want a plaque above your door of a miner, install it.
But it has to stop somewhere: we looked out
for something to take away history—that's it—
and grossly underestimated our ability to repeat exactly the same thing
only in bronze. I am prone to adding a question;
what does that say about associating the photo with the wrong person? Waking up
and wishing it wasn't them again?
Just create a fiction in your Cornflakes and hang that. Cornflakes! See it yet?
And when that one comes out—all
know-it-all—we know you're put off. How will we handle
the meeting now? A second question? Seems fitting. Clunky. Seems just about.
I scratched at the funding, by the way, and there were no more landscapes, golden ratios,
plants. Yet here we look: are you growing? Baptised or hydrated?
If I could describe what I just saw I would, but I can't. It makes me so desperate. None of it is
anything. I'd say this one is catching
the affair. Or you could lie back in your material safety
saying, Pump me: I'm not so serious; and see the detached
tears later just as that. Is there really memory? Is it too obvious?

I'm not forgetting about it with my fragile box, a screen to install
on the floor; though I am not feeling it either: this right here
is the flow. Personality. Middle English Middle French—
a mask worn; an avatar. No no no no no! Don't say that!
But they cannot truly be serious about feeling it? It was an advert—
a not quite finished. We can hear you flicking up, the headache, the flu
coming in four days being put down to this. You've got to read it!
or mad, whilst being rehearsed days later: you are suddenly no longer vanilla. I am not thinking about myself enough.
There's only means—that's all. Can we bounce between? That crass? Have I the stomach for this?
No! I picked it up again!

Only Just Acknowledging This Was the Subcommittee at It All Along

Making science, we thought the best place to start
would be the running thread—a track of time—
that only gets us away from a cracked screen, a white canvas,
a paper weight. You kick the door stop away: out came spiders. If you can't beat us
join on here! But you feel six years of age
and can't count without seeing the numbers: you beat us; though of course you don't: I only wanted to use that line.

It was all much better walking along as if nothing had happened
minus the projections in the wood minus the projections of a wood: how...?
There is then a sense of... But it cannot be true.
The publishing of which means a tragedy that cannot be measured, World
Empathy Day banners tied up in ying,
yang! string! Won't they laugh. You might want to cause discomfort.
You know what we all are, under shame,
don't you? Too far back in it unbeaten.

Crimps

If you sit long enough you can only cry
if you're lucky. You play Sudoku on the easiest setting:
too closed. Two minute limit. The Sims can at least keep expanding; though where
is that lie?: a bastard toddler smashes a Lego house on the floor.
You feel a leaf—though it's a ghost!—
brush past when the breasts are all the same: I've no idea:
were you the wheel in a past life? It is just a touch too much
on the tongue: you want to be a hedgehog, bat,
bear, though outside you go with a big coat
stepping over everything in your mind without action seeing
flaws in potholes and silent hooks, the kind of thing

feeling like nearly something plus far away. And you don't want to jump—
you sound like an idiot: you play
you're little game again only it's not
working out how you try to force it, as if
it never was, the grid closing in, the itinerary, wizards,
fast hands running out. Then you look at them: no fingers! It wasn't supposed to be
so far down, was it? Am I just sad? I'm nothing to do with it:
try bouldering.

More Piggies

Political, you started out "political"
until you discovered the words "there's nothing you can do"
but nudge away from the trough
making your own yuk away from the band, unlyrical,
too grounded to think the correspondence it. We sit
outside the gym like no one's business though desperate
to be both seen and disappeared, the toxicity
of skyscrapers used to ring in your ears but now
you build them in notes, an algorithmic composer without care, teachers
saying hard work. Sorry—"hard work"; but you see it
just above the paper, don't you? The graffiti? You loosen
reading the old signs that were here. Where are they now?
All over the place, spread more if the exam was seen
as "exam." Guys—were we a good band? Because we had fans, obviously,
and filler. But did we do anything we were supposed to?
Or was that why you were asked to leave? I can't find myself this evening
between too many numbers—for instance, "2" and "two"
don't add up to a four piece; your blueprints
premised on this make your foundations shake: did we bring coats? Reaay ouay tillsay
inay hetay roughtay? So *that* was the problem with the lyrics!

Juggling Eggs

If strict rationality
is mounting decoherence, then it flows
that what we were making in the kitchen will soon be forgotten, along with
some other ingredients. But it isn't time to shout in this one:
we follow the river of connectives to a point of no return—just a "damn",
a holiday photo leading to a final dredge—before we realise
we have already seen everything, visited here the year after our
funny turn: there's nothing left to learn—not bleak: we sit in the boat thinking hard.
We shouldn't say it again, Captain: this keeps us going—the river
beneath us, only not, with the chef coming up from the hold:
"Were you not in here for a reason?" It was supposed to be

anything goes Tuesday: tentatively
I claim the Captain mark: “I don’t think I want to remember—omelettes?”
Here I am now, looking over the chef’s shoulder at the waterfall. “No! I remember! We are
too fast today! Let’s drop the anchor and collect ourselves,” the chef already juggling eggs—
Birds-eye: “When I started I at least *felt* correct.”

Are They Trying to Annoy Me?

The men, silent
in a circle, their divorce papers dealt in the middle: they invent
Carl Jung
silently—individually—going out
far solo—far out; until one
lands back and says, “And then she said,”
to get them all laughing: Karl
came back too quick with that—is sick;
smashes the table and blames the divorce. More silence.
“What’s outside?” quickly; it’s trees.
“Looks like a forest. I would.” Karl
sees nothing, makes signs, removing his tie
at the door in a sprint meeting his wife—
a new life—in the undergrowth.

Answering Back

Had something weird happen, it was not weird: don’t believe
everything you leave, which makes me wince. I am completely unsure of this,
not inside. I feel the hesitation of not knowing and push through, which means
repeat sounds yes—a bit more wincing—
but revealing demons, so put—

only we are talking to ourselves: that wasn’t so bad

was it: look at the fun I’m having now. I scare myself with how silent I am. I don’t
think anything and there is not such depth
to your old relationships, after all. After all, this
is still here, your twisted fabric
on your best days. Can you see an argument? Nor me.

[Sing without saying you have not invented anything]

Sing without saying you have not invented anything
Those voices the evening before? Only that “now”.

We were being extremely clever and humble—or very controlled—until someone didn't play: it
ruined the whole game; we saw it was just a board. I had dressed like Beckett too! Odd
times, if you're into such measures. Sometimes

I'm not sure how it goes together:
incredible show with the Hortons, Thornbites,
Tinks. Left enough overhang

into the next boat: why would you spend all that time arguing? Seriously—why would you do
that? Are you out there reading?

Streams, streams out and out and the world
must hear—something important—
it is 5am you don't even know me. Could have been

all ourselves, but look at that
dodge: aren't we coming home.

Who's Playing?

Survival games in the clouds—who's playing? The pieces
if you want to? It's up to you. I'm not sure. Are you sure? Let's
be clear on one thing: there are several ways to play—nuance;
can you read these instructions? Somewhere between complex
and deep we sit, high: have you started? We haven't started. If anyone knows
any cheats that don't last, those being the audience

also, here's a laugh: what are we playing at? It's a game
for oneself; I'm reading the cover now. OK it looks a lot like snakes
and/or skins of thereof? I think I'm ready! Can I be the boo- But why's it wrong
to be the boot? So it isn't up to me, after all! And I wasn't saying
"boo". In fact—you scared me! Can we not just start again? No I don't find
the rules surreal; yet here we are: I should have been the oligarch.

On the Tin

You create a lie masked in shouted narrative with straight fingers away from your hands, a
body—
all the bodies involved—labelled as names
premised on the left while you move up
rightly, yet you feel empty or sick
in silence, you think; though it screams too
from that body you covered so well in matching in-rage, a page
that couldn't be helped: it had a number; do you look to the last? You don't;

you go to the coast. The money you saved for this!
The narcissism left behind. The same show here though you aren't sure
yet, as you have time to repeat the picture and it's like a missionary
all over again, as it is, all over again: you see
the sea; you leave, back to that childhood with your hands up: I understand! You get punched;
who'd have thought it. There's a camera crew following you the whole time
behind your spectacles? It may only sound good.

The View, the Ladder

"I've earned the right to be like this"
—Kesha, 'JOYRIDE'

"Story of my life" leading into "a lie we can't go back to"
but want to, a death drive
in a basic Peugeot knowing the silver gearstick
does nothing—goes nowhere. But if you could just pull it this way
a little bit more again...? You sound immature
to those enjoying the view, the ladder
of light beams you built in your bedroom up to your suspended bunk
never stopping for them, while all you can do
is pull it off, the plaster
over the latest sore popping up today. Though tomorrow
the shoots out the darkness—that we try not to mention, even lightly
oddly, considering the new models we make over
for it—are like thoughts of going inside
all the time: you'd crawl and die
in there forever if you could. But more theories
circle themselves on you as if they connect, only it's only
internal concepts sliding through that you cannot put your finger on
anymore, like the gearstick
going inside... and it's back around again being silly. An infinite loop! Miss Understanding over
you trying to talk you up, you bad boy
you, her feet in her darkest
heels! she thinks, not knowing
it's the height that makes her head hot, not you: you
take the blame anyway as you want to feel something; you crawl around in the mud between
shoots
but no one dare notice. How does it appear to link up
some life, without going anywhere? Suddenly you could be a millionaire
with so many rooms to go inside it's almost crass: back down
again you go
quickly. And you can't go up again! No one enjoys reverse parking: it's stupid
again, all so terribly trying

“Story of my life” again: you give up and go for long drives around the same old streets at night,
the ones you know so well now, the same town; you dream
of letting go at speed with your eyes closed, pleading
with the flickering lights, “Please, please, don’t make me come again
for another lie
as it only seems to increase the whole thing.”

Copy Which Nearly Finished

“Why have I sought my path with fervent care,
If not to hope to bring my brothers there?”
—Goethe, Faust

"I need a volunteer to ride out
And bring us back some extra men"
—Paper Lace, ‘Billy Don’t Be a Hero’

An irritating fallout from the recommencement of several old parties
walks into a bar. Once there, it orders, though it doesn’t
yet as the loosest eye would see
if it lifted itself out its glass: the man selling DVDs, he’s
wasting time on replicating copy which nearly finished us all, *Total Recall*, Saving Private
thoughts of the old man looking out the window like they’re guide dogs, the fallout
more subtle than ever as it raises
heart rates hours later like it’s not being invited back again—but who would know that? I’ve
stayed for the lock in
to see how matters hesitate over whether it’s too much work, as it works
lazily over the lines in the toilets picking out talent
that could pull itself together too—and apart—to start
to make matters worse for the next army of drinkers, cats
that need walks: I’m unsure if I’ve enjoyed this meet
this very night. I cannot say how it measures its successes, only
hoping there is one. Once
there were a multitude of such gathered and we only closed all the curtains, for have you ever
seen
and not heard it happen too quickly? The DVD king feels the thing tingling tonight—feels the
watchers
finally suspecting; the inconvenience
of a pile of twisted bodies—collateral already-damaged: it doesn’t matter—
invite yourself in—as we save
the crime of the centuries in a few instances by saying, No,
and yes to the meeting of our conflicts, this one being for that lucky pup: it is turning
comfortably to enter the bar to meet her father, him
who works so hard daily, her body
not needing to rid itself of old tapes: we chase

out DVD thing—buyer; seller—we couldn't decide
who was who as I watch them getting themselves stuck
through the window purposely: Another slow walker—one sighs
defensively behind a young boy: the buyer
begins to sweat—the fallouts trap me as the seller's
caught by the party stopping outside now, them sprinting
at it, the order still unclear.

Look at Us Twice

Each time the movement advanced forward through the barricade the distraction
was annoyed until the badges sold and the news picked up
the feed of less confluence from yesterday's
intersectional description of it, life
changing for the most part unheard of missing
parts of the climbers and naturists wandering without picks, which worked well
at the bottom of the valley that had no need to be creating a dynasty
of what should really be more correct and roped
than most, this growing afterwards, the lunch perhaps being past time as it causes discomfort,
though not the interesting
or progressive kind we are learning from for our children's sake without
much care for what is dying off. Though wait a minute, as there is

a concern it just couldn't dare appear that way
to those dying with their old money, shillings
amounting to nothing unless you appear to be articulating yourself
from skin that is falling away with love—for love—
for future sculptures: pots of it. We are aware we build worlds and systems
based on our childish games and we are undoing
everything we bought into when we were poor, the books seeming to let us climb
down again if we are only quiet. What do we see from here?
Ourselves with a lot of echoes; though we cannot explain the walls
when they are clear to us: come on. You know by now.
When we haven't a thought you don't look at us twice; and it is from there
that we want you to be happy.

Waves *and* Smoke? Blimey

There was a bully; though that is only half of the story so I was filling it in
to try make it good which only
made me ill, and now critiqued. O today I am feeling it—

ash, smoke, dead wood from an old fire that just
wouldn't get off the ground unless
there was other blood to be sucked; though I am braver, less cunning,

less concerned with it being
something thought over: the flow? It doesn't deserve it—

my Angel Delight, that is. No I am not going back to the fire
to round the piece off. I don't actually believe
in bullies, by the way,
there being more going on

than meets the eye but you can sense
nothing under the fire that cannot
really burn at all, like

something you try and encourage by blowing underneath
the sea level it balances on, while it floats

off on a current
called safety by itself yet I went back

to the fire above, didn't I? I can't keep up.
I can keep up! There's nothing to keep up with? I swear I was blowing on this!

O I'm feeling it again today.

Travel Safe

The terror of the morning wrote inside twenty lines, down from two hundred,
all the horrors of previous lives and hypothetical conversations from last year, your target
knowing your vice through another
through another, so you had to argue your case
before it is all journaled away. It's gone! Was it there? Can we worry?
Looking up hardly seems like a movement now. Corresponding
feelings with the environment is cheating, but you dare not
write a thesis on it—you dare not write anything. What is there
to talk about? What is there to discuss or see
except sea, and your repetitive tricks
to do away with it, perhaps cheating? It reminds you
of something you're severing, sources
not being ones they once were, cause and effect, not
lying but not being something to infer with or along. Along
comes another static, as they say, or black dot
in the corner of the screen and you
used to scream, but now you're annoyed you even mentioned it.

Giddy Once

The progress returns to manic chaos while the politicians stick to measuring moons with their hands, as voters
press buttons like grooms frightened of touching themselves still, unless they're shouting about it,
be it up or down, the circumference of the moon, that surely isn't floating? The theory
of matters slipping through fingers like spit in a canyon
forcibly aimed to both sting, wet,
and fill the gap: it's possible? you ask? Honestly. You read one thing and share it—
putting it in your doll's house—and several more come out: you never notice the room's filling, flooding, only there's a twinge of doubt
you must always cover up: out pop out
out sores. But you enjoy those videos of dogs on skateboards: what's all that about? The cavalry approaching the front line being the thing that made us giddy once.

The Ones That Get Away

Disingenuising your experience, your love
a burning candle on a tea pot at one end
that always ends badly like our own: you must remember
the hotel—the party—freezing as you knew you'd fake it
again as you rode the bronco they rolled in like the best divorce lawyer
in the city of Chicago, though we were in Darlington, pretending

we'd always had fun: I wasn't criticising your methods
as much as you thought, rather, keeping them guessing
until you saw through it all so I could prove my point, that was
self-defeating—but doesn't the universe need it: more bulls;
less roll. Where are you now? Are the handles still hot? The best
I'd danced with in a lonesome place, ones
we always found ourselves in as we dragged
us through such nonsense just to avoid the reality of the cold.

Mechanics Club

Constantly edging the mechanics of it is best
without noticing, as we must not talk
of the mechanics of it: just do it with sleights of hand instead
like a fantasy we cannot mention either, because, it's...

Well, it's real and not real, then, isn't it: just do it
I'm not sure when. And then the cat went out roaming all day
only to say, sheepishly, I... I like your fur
after all: fair enough! Don't stop giving it away for nothing;

leave a smidge in there without opening the bureau
in the loft, the key at the other end of the hallway.
And no crude jokes. And always listening.
And feeling belittled? Feeling anything? Do something

about it in the mechanics without saying anything!
How else can we put it? It's like
letting a comet think it's tricking you, when really
you're in a lodge with your hand between your legs

pretending you're taking photos of it, when *really*
you've seen this flash before—they haven't—
because you're the space rock that got it started, dude. But care
to change its schedule in one go? Let's get

that old telescope from the bureau
after all! You're making my face own up
as it stiffens—pouts—like it should: I was never supposed to be here
and now my religion is going. So let's face it:

if you're going to be a brilliant discoverer
of what seem to be comets, you must
know that observation does not happen in a vacuum
with an acute telescope like that.

<u>Get Out the Hook</u>

Swinging in the heather of the home you lived in from zero to six
now flattened, though you've put the swing back up and called that wretched teen
to tell them all about it again, only you got their agent,
so you throw yourself on the bricks as they responded rather coldly

when you called back and got the answer machine: now you're bruised;
what you doing here anyway? Beneath your Olympic
gear you are cracked and beautiful, though insistent that
the swing only does one function as it should, which is back
and forth. Years ago you called this fun, pure, in-sync

then chaotic as the floor was elevating you
flatly round as you sharply turned your head to look at the handles
to make the game quicker, but next time. You call again
just as quickly to get the secretary this round—who'd need one?
for what purpose?—you rocking and rolling back and forth in the hook.

You're Just Getting in as They're Going Out

I am angry, unseen
treatment resistant and so careful with the play I demonstrate
to conjure pity and causation in public
though not the authenticity of the experience—it is
an abstraction away from that that I talk about in such an articulate way, that
which then impresses too—without being dangerous—exactly as you feel
and act without notice unless a treatment resistant scene
points it out, the unaware dance you do
to get you in trouble that has nothing to do with you
as if we are toddlers: I am losing friends.
The shiver up my back seems to come from the East though: still
my right side. It isn't anything I talk about
confidently with a holistic vocabulary because we know what people
think they are like with their ontologies from years ago, way back
when a cave girl flicked a bear and called it, say, Divinity. That broke
the camel's back and can you hear my walking around with similar chips now, wondering
somehow, where the shivers come from
to take away our public and girls: I know how it works
but I resist. Though I am completely invisible with how I work around it
like that toddler looking over his shoulder from the floor—who saw the fall?—his knee
not scrapped but nearly: he screams. How do we help him
too as he refers me forward in complete disarray, as there is no treatment for this
into the grizzly experience of saying little else, of which
we are now not impressed, and yet angrier than ever.

What a Riot 2

Einstein walks into a family home that have
the neighbours round too, as they go at it with the
kids teaching Newton if you can imagine F-
GM next door, only it's a boy drowning in a lake on this side
of the world having taken an underground railroad.

Einstein says, "What the fuck is going on here then?" which is understandable
at least to the boy as the rest of the town
then comes in hanging-on-a-minute, as this toerag—bless him—needs to be tested
on whether he can spell "intersectionality": he fails; he's left
in the past where he belongs. Thank goodness!

The town, having restored order—ignored
the start—return to their homes relieved as the neighbours also crawl off
giggling—"Who would hang around with these freaks! (Phew!)"—leaving
the boy to turn up ten years later at his former

school with a shotgun aimed at certain sections of society from the history books, the report

about his crime stating he was an outsider as a child—“Trouble-
some”!—with a tendency to write in-
coherent and manic and jarring ramblings with reductive
references to our sacred and progressive knowledge, his words
difficult to say themselves sometimes studied so hard—"The poor

parents having to put up with that!”—only for nothing
to be inferred quickly (Einstein
claimed the shotgun for his own studies
and shot himself; because who would hang around
with these freaks).

Another Cold Front

“Nothing, like something, happens anywhere.”
—Philip Larkin, ‘I Remember, I Remember’

A needle in my foot reminds me of being thrown
into some water, under a bus, at least

how I could feel the tyres—the air—as I leapt up
at your early night shifting, made easy

for me to lie on this table and float in a lake
at the same time. “Mate—

what the fuck you going on about? As *if*
there ain’t a school bus in there: Moxy swam down to it once!”

Three years later he killed himself. I hadn’t thought of that for years either.
He massages my cheek and my mood starts to Michael Fish.

I should probably get some bread and ice cream in for tonight
for this, I think, I say, “Are you touching my right arm?” He jokes

about his mind doing it, but he doesn’t know, that I know, what he’s thinking
or where I’ve been just now suddenly there’s so many things

going on for me all the time. I don’t know how I’m here.
I don’t know why he isn’t. I only thought about it as

I’m on the bus with someone just like him instead I believe I am thinking. “But I didn’t ask
where you’re from,” she says—a shame because

he was cool: she switches seats. I can feel
the ice cream melting in my bag I'm sure it was Moxy's

birthday last week? We spoke about our dads once.

<u>That Side of Life</u>

Squeezing Roman coins from the back through the mouth without bitterness is a rough
business, quiet,
smooth as a newborn's bottom now living on
without much need to say anything. Am I done here?
I certainly feel so. Though I am smiling
as I didn't expect my child to respond anymore: this smirk
is meeting with internal viewers—all-knowing; clueless—the knowers
being god-smacked and wry and other knows what indifferently
as the bible goes down—the geese
are cooking. We are creating new television hardly feeling
a thing being just as close to the whole thing, experientially; though that's as far
as I am going again, I hope? Can I just kill that side of life
at no cost? It's iron content certainly, but the best way
to measure discrepancies? Who cares anymore—I think
you should put that down boys: it's making a mess.

<u>The Discursive Revulsion of the Moody</u>

House plants, *Twin Peaks*,
nodding with squints at God knows

what to fill God knows who: they aren't working
anymore, are they, as you

flick over from repeat channels to the news. And when you scroll
down there instead? There's no climax, depth,

point to what is sprayed at you on this side either
as the veil lifts due to the death in the family. And so now

there's a funeral! But that uncle was always a bit creepy?
Did you even really like

those plants? As you search around the room
for days to find the remote: it wasn't so

surreal after all, was it. Were you ever any better than choosing sides here?

What were they saying before they entered?

"Gaz's Seat—Get Out"

Too dim-witted so it be called toxic, it falling
outside analytic precaution and finger-point paper responsibility slid aside
from town to money
to political to economic to races of races to bottoms up, because we can't
be numbed quick enough, us silly boys, enemies at home
making corned beef hash without anything green like it isn't a joke being
poked at all the time by new low peers and girls trying beer—
our hearts—as if their mouths could work that way over
the track they posed for their onward journey to test
their horse's shoes. But Gaz in the Horseshoe? He kicks out, too,
just to get a reaction that's framed within something
it has never been before, because he was them, too, only he got sick
of putting on virtue without feeling anything beneath him
from his saddle. And so he got rich, left the city,
and brought us all around without saying a word, no referencing required for the
mind you've framed above the bar.

Yes, You Have to See Them

My heart is in my sleeve with disdain on my face, OK magazine
with another magazine against my rib cage as I drag my mug
across the cage of this marriage, that I stand by
in resilience while the barista
ruins our day with his lack of smiling for me, barely knowing who I am
what I think all day five steps behind myself included in the model
Goggle has given me of gossip, hot off
the signals that are flashing through our bars so loud that I may even be distracted
from my nose, requiring it to sniff out dinner
to keep things rosy

yet I am always hungry, tense,
repetitively straining my arms as they aim behind me
for what isn't there anymore, I'm not sure

I have nightmares with or without caffeine. The mug is so stained but it's how we like it. They are
getting

married? I thought they already were?

There's something I don't like about her.

What's Going On Between Them Calling People "Toxic"

Holding back
The tide, all life, indirectly
Suffused by what should have had more flow here we go
Opening a mimic of impractical bags for fruit, veg,
Morality with a wide logistical network claimed without ego, without ego, without ego—
I have removed myself so much myself
So much that you are not listening to me, be important,
The separate spheres of experience and outliers of joy, grief,
Characters I have no handle over, myself being caught where they are, I see it,
A percentile with nothing to be serious about except everything
The waiter does not honour me, forget me,
It is all what I imagine as I laugh inside my dead inside, it all going, it all for kicks,
I wear things, it's just right,
It's hard
Being selfless uncharacteristic of my seamless folding of banal oddity nothing left stripping
  stench surge of loving me, less science,
All here for days lying next and next, it not catching up
Run for me soon.

Try Again Next Year

Everyone is getting ill, so Christmas
must be coming: it's been winter
for years in this house. We are wrapped up tight.
Can you feel the frost
in the air, clearly? It is almost too easy

for a poem; while in the office
the decorations are on and isn't it a long break
this year, we might have a quiet one
next year and it has been a short year and O that stretch
before new year HA O.

Dry Camp

I, without ale,
interpret tomato soup cans meaningfully as they
associate previous cooperative relationships through a subconscious
that is bursting like an appendage, and seems
mildly humorous, some days—if I am around
those days; as the moment is

brought back to the view in front of me that is nearly a gift

without canvas.

The Unbearable Lightness of Being Me

We were at Butlins
when I first heard the German word “kitsch”, I thought it was—
though it was actually a man shouting, “Kids!” at his children
as they marched away from him so as to
tease him. Still, I repeated, “Kitsch!
Kitsch!” before someone from my own party
slapped me, saying, “You are too Jung
to understand that word!” which was odd, as this party member
didn’t know German either; nor could they know
in advance (back then, really) to follow up with, “And it’s spelt
“young”: stop thinking!” They also couldn’t know
that I knew—even at that young age—that “Stop
thinking!” is a synonym for “Don’t see through me”, and that this
“thinking” would carry on in me
through to later in life, I believe (for I believe
in myself. Though feel free to ignore me) to the point that a new
party member (that I sometimes
got inside. Behind the curtain of) never
liked me seeing beyond their pretty dress either, as they
hadn’t study history, preferring to stay angry with
me instead (too!) rather than their own kitsch holidays.

Fluentisingly

It too good, a perfect touch,
the perfect rest on edge, create a new thing with too many tentacles,
a well. So it not being the end all of it we

stop doing and press into project so lousy that I am not in the grass
anymore, and no one is buying me shoes—
though I am fluentisingly robust at the act of
what have you, that I reveal not smooth press of that

to longer, a bore of not giving nowt unless seen
before there be need: just want it, now.
I am sham until it dim and then we twist off at what I just made it across the room
for, clapping and made for a neat

little trick that I only am
catching up with myself as I do put myself up to as
they seem to see brain and those fake limbs from him.

Probably Nothing

Sit sinus between dodged ground, meek thread of broke sludge back at accuser's guilt, we milk
each other with no guarantee of staying up, as we never will,
nor will we make sense to the figure that has no feet here and there, so it is almost hierarchical
to regard

the wanton spork, the chimed catacomb,
the trenched and marred basket you come pinned to
like beaches, and/or figs, and/or pain
of some other such lover that is really

just to talk funny and shame your easily left body
on the stairs. Rest nose over taken floor

to bore whispers of domed-taught magazines, slickly-rated
crown, because you are worth that fine, dripped,

flicked look at the other shoe that brings you the only feeling you want back, though you dare
believe it was so. What was that figure?

Kubla Khan on Tinder

Going to the pleasure-dome to find fool-
ish behaviour and strops and things unread, mis-
understood-down bollards and no communication only
meanders of dust, dust, rusting earlier
than usual things said of repetitive dull licks and performance
for shadows unlooked: we unlock each other

with a few drinks; I know this high and girdled wall
and this one and this one and no thinks is thought: it is ought not
be anything, twisting barbs and faeces and pits of
caves with no mirth that I cannot get the hang of: we are fertile

inside the mazy motion of quiet: do you want to experience
stolen warnings? How are we all doing in the chasm? Isn't it not warm?
War? Nothing of the sort—let's not cover. Here along each
like empty cows. Though how do you? Closed, it is. Now go and tell them of the nice ceiling.

More Scribbles From the Hospital Bed

It floats there, and I can hardly catch it.
It is two-dimensional so I am folding it in on itself. The words here are dry and I feel sick

of their reflection: compare them to my other selves, please.
I do not want the print to pop back up as a tumour. Fold away; do your own work. Though

it did make me learn everything, and now
I will survive with rotten smiles of what dies off, this hardly

being victory.

Indifferent Priest

For it to be meaningful you should really
calm down, on your own, first,

then go back to the cathedral
or city or centre and enter and then you realise

it was in the waiting
or that big hump you got over

alone—the hill before the city walls
say; or after the moat? it makes no sense!—

and then you'll leave half-
way through the service, say,

and everyone will be incredulous.

Munch

We go to the park that is nothing to do with us
until we are there: why not. There
we are all the things if called for, stretching
the blanket of experience wide, it only needing lubricant, a blanket
to block out times ahead where it mounts up, what we create
at home being unique to here, this being
lip service poker to flower power mania feeling
how we feel all the time in moments of time
we are deciding upon now, universally, that before,
as well as after, not happening, not happening,
us being here
without mounting, the windbreaker going up
for the wind, though we have plenty of paper weights:
we worked so hard to get here;
we needed to get out the house and express how we thought about feeling; though the sun is
here now:

we cover ourselves
in earth, to cover up, enjoying this until it's time to leave
for home where we wonder
what was happening—what was meant—
who was there—if they loved us—how we said a sound—
the nature of it—if it was there? And then the fear
of the crumbs we left and the wrong blanket
we picked up that don't suit
the arm of this chair, surely? Could we try the windbreaker instead?
Surely we can't? Can we? Surely.

Rhythmical Grumbling(!)

Edginesses of air conditioning units, inside
cooled so the oven dials numbers are unknown meaning meaning stays
hot inside, and cool and popping outside
as intended and acknowledged no emotional charge to the element, meetings of
no meetings between elements, only elements
echoing, reverberating around the kitchens what politik is
necessary for the relationship on the menu on the mirror, the theory
coming after in a sibling just as high, just an elementally-charred
burnt in-floating cloud dust over quarters
quaking out to be cheeky, stretching matters to continue with a character that cannot be
sustained along with
something I thought of as I entered the library which we sometimes
loved to go to together.

Too Straightforward

After the haze and ease
with its pokes comes clarity and bodies in trees
and nudges, the dark areas no longer for a hat,
webs of shock under a cup not tricking, circling. You find yourself

inside your bag that was almost uncomfortable and you leave
the tote, overpriced as it was, those country airs gone
just as they finished the roof, on you,
thinking they were the project manager, stories of the scaffolder

forever haunting them if you wanted to give them satisfaction,
but aren't you nice? Now you consider what you've built: it smells like
what you turned up smoking with seen through
so you carry on like nobody's business just as you suspected

when it was first rolled, no fallout to share from the cloud

fortunately, and almost an incoherence you'll make a little life from.

This Is Going to Annoy Red Guitarists

You shake the inkwell a little more but the little of what is less there is less audible,
legible, what used to be a bang against the wall,
what becomes a faint urge for a stroke unsatisfied, what you gave
to pretend it was a theory, a declaration, now just a grin

or a grimace if the time is one of every three hours, or perhaps
four now, while in the others you can watch everyone
and know everything as you grant it a pass like a guru
without convictions that pend and bend, you sure to be

ever so good as it was always written, it only being stickier
against that wall again, it being unreflective
of how it decoratively doesn't come out anymore, in some lines,
but we are nearly there, which is the important thing

just if only we must keep saying anything
remotely of use in our tarnished jars that we never quite should get the hang of.

Yellow Giant

The algorithm wanted us to kiss
is a far cry outside of what there is: there's no need
for this—it thought to be nor moved
through without place, a bringing together
of match makers when the label doesn't land, us smiling,
me smiling at what I've found and we could say
memories on one day and matters to be forgotten
if remembered, on another, tempted to be designated—
porous? It appears off how it fits for us like a Jack
of all beanstalked, like a teenager, like if
you were here, almost like you were here wishing so. It goes to show
that if you kiss as imbued you create everything
barely, as told, believing the rest of these at the ceremony
dropped out the sky for you. Or have they pulled up?

Variation on Something Else

in your first few years
you have your favourite tunes

and you dance! and laugh!

and then

years later
you replay those old songs

again, and you finally
hear them—you listen—and stop. freeze.

know. before
it's years later

still, and you hear
the tune in them

again: you
dance

and laugh again.

On the Cusp With These Myself

All the projects, falling apart,
this stark change for the lowest rung
of the ladder that you are now seeing not phoned, alien, the shape
that appears to you known in the mirror that is only

a shape flat, throwing Lego houses, meeting itself
with a flick rolled across from the most amusing rhythm rolled over a sloping canvas

dawn undue to the shouts of dark, not the time
type of dark: letting go you are smoke
(neither this) fears bubbling between so many different

things as it falls quiet: what control.
Like you built the garden you call hair
all by yourself.

Early Shot for Me

You are somewhere else. We are speaking different languages
now (you are speaking my old one): I remain

arrogant, but also
knowing, like

when I feel you
from afar

steadily

falling.

Abovily

The trick being
there may be none of this, said,
without “might”
though nearly “minus”. Taking on
its own without the song playing, you’d think
there’d be a stage to walk across
always, like we’d stay
and sit square as the last thing broke us guessed. So please do not false

this broach into you as lightly cut. We could be
magical lightboxes or satchels of crisp iron—whatever fits.
And it is the thought of smush
or love of tricks we come, stay, breathe for twisting
downwards to find the cockpit was to
mine us out, all the time, as required, even if abovily forgotten & longed.

A Film

They deal cards, and you
watch the ant, or someone, nearly,

as the play carries on and you have every idea—you do—
of where you are going, despite
how it may sound here today (you are staying):
we have every belief in the speck of what we found earlier

coming next, dungarees or blue eyes—no!—
any eyes and new chairs and growth—ownership—
the ship’s not that submarine as you’ve died

too hard, too much. Pausing.
You’ve pulled a rag of yourself around hell:

you don’t say there; at stops. That wobbly lip? Sell it—
it’s cute you are a runner of others

as before, though here: as bored as that one? Far apart.

Watching a Farm Hand

He is dancing; and they're here for this wave so they
won't have to fly about, fully, a funny

angle to be entertaining. Isn't it close? Without tea?
Then there's no looks towards the father

if they top themselves, the plough boys. Sacrilege. Epi-
sodic as so much is

like a metronome.
But at least one's clever.

Attitudinal: Out of the Blue

Mulholland Drive dress up as a setup
without question, not sure why we like this,

thinking it's lovely to be lightly until there's
that question, longing for the first

2.5 albums picking the wrong other half
to be shocked, 2.5 years later—why not!—

and blaming the poet, who has it, but lost it
with nails on their head like their own

monster, floating—at sail—
the wrong way round too.

On Alex Turner at Glastonbury

I write to rid the excess and stay
middled: why would you read this, considering

the positioning of that "middled"?
I am like that singer

no longer sixteen, growing
into something I never thought I could be

around the alleyways and parks and we

are still being followed, no? Yes—

what do we have here? This is why you still
hear us cheer when we are so clearly

O very strange now? Toxicity at its finest
in the middle of it all with our

open arms—honestly! You just
may need to cackle

more: am I
thinking of you? I am expanding

unthinkingly, way above my station with my
dictionary, ready

to sleep soundly: I apologise:
this is how I sing sometimes.

Telling

I told my therapist
that I did not doubt that she could do this
standing on her head, but then
I said

that she really should have waited until after our session, so of course

she kicked me out: I was making things up again, as she
was not on her head instead, "You are delusional!" was shouted
again
as I left, needing
to correct one of these antiques again: "I was born

in the 14th century, way before
your etymology," I screamed
below her balcony, "so you should take
your reductive ideology
of what you've heard about me and my selves and

stick them where your head does shine, Princess," the
bizarrest thing she'd ever heard
or seen, she said

later on
in my head
or on my head.

A Concession

I took the tunnel
twice, holding on
the second time
just, with my eyes open and I get it—

fine: it was me. It was him. But
you held me tightly too? Perhaps
too much; so it's a wonder
I can see anything: I longed

for the lights to be out
for years. Though I was shining
at the end, faintly—as if
I was never even here before; knowing

nothing of myself—of you—or of how
you were held
before you started
in their darkness too.

A Waste Management and Disposal Technician Writes on Their Lunchbreak

Is that you up the garden path with the sages
burnt in between phases we never quite grasp
as we fall between those weeks with deep
sleep and clarity, plus wakefulness, like it should
not fit together: there is no narrative

but fences or hurdles or snakes shedding
skins too old to be devices that suit. There must be an explanation
for sitting quietly in prayer—though with
throne: such things should throw us off, shining
the waste that falls between unmets, always
a manipulative drag, sometimes in a helpful and of less

grimaced way. To think
very hard for an answer from a waste rock; to be speaking
unsettled with previous or
precious, if seen: it could be filler; *or*! nourishment held. Or one-a-them pasties.

Trying to Rock

A rock
after-the-facting, dropped
with stories from when it was lava, before it was

solidified in cool layers with thought
caught outside the particles that can be felt

stuck in the edges, the edges
being as such—edges—matter

accumulating where there is not a lot else
to say or do

for rock, as it is a rock; and closely

watched it appears to be speaking

after so down here—once it has been squeezed together
with actions it knows not of; that is

without actually being anything at all.

"I've Never Met Anyone Like You Before!"

Rubbing against us for character, accent, ascent
through mitigating circumstances
for it to be funnier and wayward sounding, clones
of rough walking around to create
top-down expressions for no reason until the content
is forgotten in a ditch, the cause
being the consequence and so the responsibility, pools
of uncertainty which are wooden
and sound bored underneath the buttons without being
sure why: on paper
suddenly
everything was there for you the whole time; and yet
the paper didn't help, did it—hence
the rubbing against us for character again, as we
played with your rise again, for laughter, as we
create everything, again,
back here in the ditch.

Makyō (Half Time)

Every snap career you consider is to save a parent forgotten minutes later.
Playing a character of that one boy every day as you slate them to what you know inevitably fails.
"Growth" being transference; "It was always going to happen": the last one to sit down has committed.
A belief system premised in ice. Your toes not talking on the way to work.
"We've no idea why we like our music!"
That shout being just too much to meet with the words, "Well, I think he's OK."
A flick on the rib you dare not go with without knowing.
"We see the fake feelings."
Made hungry days later: send an invoice; get back with him.
Or don't enjoy it. Argue what-for instead. Our spiritual journey will tell others not to make the same mistakes for the rest of our lives, and that won't be about them.
"If I can be frank, I think you need to accept that sometimes you will just have to sit next to them at the bar, and that's OK. No need to sulk."
You were reborn—again—inside the wrong social justice campaign.
This happens all the time, doesn't it. But don't we balance it well.

Dokusan

You listen to 'Idioteque' 35 times on the trot with a stomach ache.
All this vile representation is good. It may not look like it
—perhaps it looks counter—but it is necessary.

You listen closely for slight drops in the volume so you can touch yourself and work it out.
No eye contact today: it could be a fight. It could be femicide.
You remind yourself of Deepak Chopra and they'll never get you there.
Do not spread yourself across consciousnesses or say anything remotely similar. Your moral compass

is a persona. An agenda.
Never make efforts to correct the record publicly: they sicken all on their own.

Your favourite band, talking to you. They are. They are!

O yeah? Is this *really* happening? Isn't it just. They all had their cake.

It's loud again now. More is being created than you could say, as if

I wasn't scared once. Not once. I cannot say too much about it—you understand?—but I knew the whole time and I am so in time, this beat here now. And you wanna see behind this smirk. I'm all pulled in, the volume as I need.

Honestly—I might not even mention it—eating too much sickness and feeling too aligned after.

Then a Collapse of Metaphysics

Models—humour, horror—for measuring the matter
remains still the matter, walking into a chattering skulls video—Yorick
awake and being a fool for you—everyone invited to be sensible
on their own terms: so many sliced fingers
from tape measures. The tapes and the videos

are the same subjects in between takes. We take it that that
is the problem, especially when we may have needed

that again, the question being omitted for the one who isn't
searching for anything to say, the sane
painfully aware and sick and tired of paying so much for the privilege

to others that feel there's only cups being moved around
too, catwalks are meeting what you really
experience, experience being a drag—like unthought

health: you know the maddest must blame their primary ruler
down the so-called years.

Merely Stage Machinery

A stomach, a sound system that's delayed
in a cinema, you appear to enjoy this
because you tell yourself, It's fine!—you're

used to it: it makes your eyes water. Some of the films
don't even have pictures so it makes the stomach
relevant now. You don't make a sound in the cinema;

it's irritating, how unconnected these things seem
to the children in the lobby with their sweets
still BANG that made me jump, my own

Bobby's reading that back as we cannot be sure if the point remains:
the director is presenting this from the victor's side
because we didn't see a thing before the "BANG"

back here, I'm filling myself with sweets now, this being enough
for one day, an audience all made sick having
had the same starter as each other this whole time

it becoming in sync—honest—you and me

even here, the cameras rolling always
in the walls BUT I'M JOKING!

Wave Collapse

Shock and horror: doesn't that feel good?
Like a child in the theatre of their mind, late
at night when it's "nightmares"—the safe word they use;
the horse bolting. They aren't coming back but that makes this

exciting, all in black, faces
behind faces you don't pretend you don't see
anymore (you've done your homework), it like grave digging, archaeology (a spade may be
needed
in future) you keeping

this all to yourself and flicking away dirt
for a different fork—one for the masses—this dream

changing what we see as red tape, chalk,
body bags removed forever from the past, smoother, caught,
empty but for a conduit through an otherwise empty tool, the genres brain-
dancing unstupidly (not clever: essential) laughing because we want to get out the blue stage.

"White Mates in Three"

Lying in the reeds misnomerically, trying
to undo the needful practice that allows us
to sit nicely at this table without the wind
talking anthropomorphically. And given chance

we will stop with the games—the board away—
and just lie down as we believe we started. Though look
at that correctly short-term being applied again
by a huge fan of grabbing at particulars, syntax

not being soft either, us nowhere near to being what was wanted,
the internet happening to find itself inside this effort,
the players saying, "Enough!" abruptly. This is the most we can wish for
when we want to stop the rush of not wanting

to rush away with the interesting-appearing early bell, the "Universal"
seen yet also here nor there's a different cloth.

And Perceived Ideas

Two pennies in your mouth learning to wait; but then
how will you get anything published; can I have a bullseye
on this diet, the food moving around the plate,
the plate moving around the table the table
can you see the cycles, ask no questions,
appear didactic as you meet the meal
where emergence shows, the urge

getting quieter and coming together as if it made you
only to disappear in scripture, that angel you...

see there floating across the prize still like summut you coulda rested
in and made very funny, instead of being so metallic
about the past as you get tempted
to keep riffing so the heads bang together; but we're nearly full.

Conquest

Rock star! Taking stuff to rock hard!
I love the threat of intermittence. Throw something
I need a story. I'm not sure what part I am
already. The rock star keeps us so numb
after meetings. I'm not sure if I'm the star
or a rock treated as such. Drop that talk! So hard and numb when it
rocks me. Not agreeing bitterness and my latest
skim read. I'm quite into
yes I'm a rock star. Baby! So cool I can't think straight—
missing years going to publicly pray for it. It's like
meaningless, yeah, but then above
after meetings (I'm great at). The numb pressing to us
yeah. Not sure; not caring? Some characters out there, yeah: but I'm
not sure which one I am: the rock star; the numb hard; yeah; rocks me? I don't like his hard.
Yeah!

Thought I was done but it's a rock hard rock star!
Don't like the look, sound of it but I'm still here—
working! no work!—going to be with the rock
instead. I am rock. Don't know me
after meetings. No I like the rock, sure, yeah,
don't know me—what I am at all. The lyrics
matching? Baby! Yeah I'll be praying as someone
that'll be me at least. Don't like
I ignore it (the rock hard) the pressing, the taking. Rock star!

Real Art

Crying—screaming: a beautiful
experience perhaps

average, especially when it feels
more and more

like no one else is in the room, now,
laughing (the room is empty!): I have given up

on scientific models: I believe in myself. There are also
no correct models for artistic expression: No

it is not disjointed;

no one understands you HA oh well you know
what you're doing, don't you? You know

what you mean, I mean? Don't you just.

Now, onto real art: what you should really
be doing is (ignore

them I believe you).

Stumped, Uncheeky

Blanks oscillate with two and two
equalling five across lines
which do not meet much easier than teenagers, forever
embracing loudly the next synchronicity sent
from the latest God that is not as grumpy
as this here spelt out discordant brace, like a belt
falling off the way, the way

not pronounced like a bathroom secret lacking a test
of anything to put doublethinking on the boring green as eye's roll
stumped, uncheeky tefloned tactically by smart
so-and-sos unless handsome: that's the ticket! You're travelling?
With yourself? That's brave and correct;
you may lose all workings to begin with but the sum
of all your parts will land with flicked eyebrows instead, plus a fair enough remainder.

This Is Why You Shouldn't Lend Them Sugar in the First Place

Convictionlessly throwing fake mouth spouts out against the grain of all lovers'
own swamp grabs to Mary sex with strangers at parties dividing home seas. Please
don't do anything less than your whole being wants as it chips
off a chip of a chip of a bulldozed poke, strung together
with another lip that will fire burdens. Further, it should be stated
that taking things in house enough or putting them
outside self through taught self-looseness unqualified is only a giggle
for all the guests, like, "Oh yes! Remember them? What happened

there?" They didn't care
for anything other than scrambled attention photos photocopied
from previous canvases that were not advertised
as doing much either, but they looked good on the tin
like other garden fences which balls were hit against boringly, the neighbours
allowing the child's game, for they high-fived the regular penalty taker behind their backs,
straight up.

Being Carried Across

There simply are easier means to interpret, hence
it is still placed ordinarily: the flirts

with light across pads send one mad
when they not stay or sound perfect, though we feel

their sense closely for a flash
before back to too much table. We are able

to add diversions and the same points that dodge, but you
are right now being carried across for a short time

in irritation, the gods not being remembered,
that being yourself and all their silly notions

of conceptual butterflies? In the air;
naughty sparks cause mayhem too,

but keep feeling around and we'll have orders of stars
without books of fire in the capsules, the light being dim

altogether but enough.

Suggestions About Artistic Progress

Enter the museum at its normal size
now you are grown, like a school hall, the seats
an expanding ontology, unnecessary, as you see
the museum itself in the squeezed-in slabs, that being
the floor you are looking at: no need to fine grain it. And these

are the ceilings and the pillars. And this
is opening the doors and seeing it all go hand-in-hand

in the artwork found between different schools too
through the years that come together through people

who come after that, clocking
beaches and seas to begin with before the museum

is placed on high again, which may create another school
which may create repetitive artwork in time or just
more slabs.

And So a Build

You have felt the rules listening to hot air in the sun, the gut
of what you could gut having come to you
later, all artwork
being understood in an instant, though you would not know it, fingers
in your ears that should be removed—a repeat motif—but this is the game
like a player having bought the Morning Song, it blue, you not wanting to leave this
after all: you are discovering
that knowing the rules does very little
whether you are assured of your bars or not, rot
sounding comfortable again temporarily as the pieces
seem to fit for an end without thought
for decades, it irreplaceable plus colloquial language
near the approaching finale twinned as more, it placed, like
a manipulative ballad for every beak on your screens that embraced plurality by mouth excess.

Your Dad's a Prick but Give Me a Break

See you later, yoga teacher, shouted from the terraces
War and Peace from the kick off without a tortured wife
in sight, because why go to all that trouble? Performatively nudging yourself
to catch little specks for fan convincesure: "It's about *those*!"—knowing
you could do anything with this stand: it's a bit like waiting

for God knows what with this lot, as we can see them
sneaking out with their backwards-facing style, the coach

only able to facilitate the arc. It's strange how parts of us know this, yet we cannot help
but expect goals and skill and the ignorance of the season
ending even down to the same trick as the last game glumly: 15-0? We read
into that whatever we like—what you long for; which stand
you put yourself in. Are you still on a lead? There's no prizes
for watching on as you're getting slaughtered: change teams!
It's shorter by a fair few pages.

Falling Awake and Asleep

"'Ambition? Serpukhovskoy? Society? The Court?'"
—Leo Tolstoy, Anna Karenina

Hand slid under naff pants—the best—
to rest on cheek. Gripping

waist and thighs, buried in lap. Sucking forearm skin.
All the other ink forever wasted—horrible—every conversation

and every word I'll ever have never being that ever again.

(A version of this poem was first published in my pamphlet L'etoile*, October 2024. Redacted copy available here: https://ashleydunn.co.uk/letoile-redacted/)*

Just Travelling Through

You get away alone, some space
for a while,
and four thousand people step over your grave, giggling
like children (four thousand images
at once, too: that tree—
like all those past branches). Then
a boy
runs through the square that you sit
and drink and smoke in (you do not want
eight thousand yet) and lands
in someone else's arms, you do
not know yet
smiling.

Outside Lock

“But he forgot all this as he grew older”
—Philip Larkin, ‘Story’

Parched dungeons
like not being able to concentrate on holiday
resorts, heavy metal being a welcome distraction
which throws off, pretending the water is salvation,
the name changes running across your eyes

offering a safe escape from the tourists: they come to see the architecture
and you have to build and display it so as not to
tear it down. Doesn’t matter if it’s a little broken:
the blueprints can be the same formula.

How hard the torture was too—how we escaped.
But now life after the book deal and the newly-fenced narrative
are ordered. We can lie, but how do we now strip off?
You chain yourself to the trap again, having removed

your outside lock and reclaimed your frantic, personal Jesus
which is a burning bush from above raining down honey.

Another Wished-for Lie

Wide beyond complication, inherent licks
of all the wildest widenesses, a love
that that is there and available, open to the opposite,
unoppositioned to traps, the sound of it. Bleat

and let it fall off cliff sleet, starved
and of slick now souling across sands of blown, whipped,

honey! Broken times are honest and brave. Uncover the breach!
You are becoming so wizard.

What will be made of the tacked down and un-ofted will pain. Sit and let fluid seep however
wish in flash and be neithered less. Let no droplets be held and bubbles be satin kisses,
grinned, gasped.

Tiny Birds

You should not have tried so hard to make things come good, it only creating
an ideological stare as the freed beak

pecks at a mind it makes wrong: you had only done

the come good
too well, perhaps creating revolt: “I will miss

all your books.” It did not see
the boy cutting up pieces of paper besides itself: that is all
he was. And he cannot help how it works

if the state moves during transition. And it’s why white doves appear.

About to Land Again (Perhaps)

“I hope it's going to last”
—T. Rex, ‘Life’s A Gas’

I lie
down and meditate and think
I love you again but it passes

for me to remember that they couldn’t
love me again but this passes
too like a passing wind that is always

a gas I can enjoy and laugh off as I see
now fake narratives fall away as I stay
within my body as my heart begins to race as I

am honestly here in the room for once remembering God knows
what as my whimsical and woolly
flights of fancy are seen through by a me that is lying here, these

weak outfits of psychological
protection potentially making matters confusing because really

I am in the sky above it all about to land, perhaps

at some point but maybe not?

Embarrassing Himself, but Yeah, It’s Definitely Another Passenger

It is certainly not appropriate to jig on a plane like this at your age.
There is nothing trauma-informed to be learnt from this lyric. Are you mad?

I swear to you, she wanted to impress a kitchen at 5am instead. Honest! Acts poor, too.

Is this really what you look like now?
And I see you're pretending to enjoy *that* again.

<u>And Finally, the Umbilicus</u>

It is a busy desk called productivity, a choke to throw
it on the floor and a photo of a bruise
received to show how well you've done; some ideas of a bookshop owner;
a finale of seeing in layers; a breakaway

from what isn't there but the theme park, you eating
all the roses and sweets to square peg
your lunch crush—one last drag—

the five senses reducing you to everything
that cannot be fair being all your hard work: you were happy

spanking and drawing tables of degrees of prejudice, until the heart
beat came through it all with a sciatic twinge

always there and unnoticed and not worthy of much attention, like all those books,
them crawling around on the floor

still digging nails in the pages that you only skim read now anyway, ever so quiet: the dryer
indicates an end.

<u>Kidding A</u>

Too attuned to the realism of my experience
of my universe in this that I

have nothing left to offer. And there are no gaps
from which I can pull from future
to give past and drag myself
and dwellers up and away from more of the same, in caves

with fast hands and relics removed from the also attuned
as we reinvent wheels and cycle and then cog and play

with not-As and other detachments from being of a time, reliably reported
push drawn out thrones, throngs of tickets to shows

you've no care for: pulled through a paper history! Trees
barking! The sun is splashing my forehead

clearly with deceit. Am I my own bone of saws? Relish

in this breakup, minor, for you are confused

and diced in spectrum-sourced warmth: believe
the discord.

A Freudian Coverup

I am a lamb in sheep's clothing.

OK whatever: he wasn't bigger than yours.

But I swear down! The floor was lava.

Makes One Side of My Mouth Water

Fall through the library, a stream of being asleep
feelings of panic and float off so low, forget reply
bouncy, ah a numb and expectation, Kant
and you cannot be serious, unsupervised visions
wasted points with their own work to do, tall order
you all must be magic.

As you rub an eye and push out like it used to pain
there is no noise that rains over. Instead
something: pushed through a grater—but then it's like
a satisfying video. A massage without, "Do they…?"s.

No awareness of a flinch at that ball.
Instructional falls. Just lovely things after a bear hunt, no hiding.
All the messages, however irritating. Respond phone offed.

The lovely body is not quite integrated to move. So what.
It's a stickler for love once the right one shifts away, a pull out the cave
a nurture without rational. But even the top brass do weird kisses?
That was a little needless stop: move through.

My Love Has Come Along

"Chill depths of the spirit are flushed to a fever"
—Theodore Roethke, 'Prognosis'

He does not associate with it all
and I end up in Hollywood, the windows

like trees like wind, sounding very doubtful.
Back where the sneezes stay, we lose
all manner of fielding and there is no
once upon a time again for the forced shot, caught
slipping down that crafty wood, the awards dodging traffic.
Never being one for counting bodies, I usher
and burn all connection to old roads, dynasties
just being old programmes they've all bought in
to still—look. So I make a case
for closing the cases that've done their job, thinking
for myself what looks like a care package
though it's a breeze that he caught, so I just held on.

Maybe It's in Two

Playing with your food like chess pieces
without seeing the black and white board they are squeezed through, decisions
made in a lifetime of coming-to
within seconds of ready to irritate with the spelling
of "ontological", the actions of your sunken gameplay
being unguided but loud to your light that says, "Yes!

Yes! Tomorrow! Tonight!": you climb the barricade
with a dragged pawn you name "lover"; but it's like a vessel
for the condiment which isn't quenching the palate and the squares
are defined by the boundaries of those around them: "Do they

always merge? Am I stepping from one to another? That's

all? Should this be spoken?" The tactics that were formed so well in a narrative
that really hasn't moved on from sulking at a table still playing with your peas.

Mini Protest Poorly Executed

We, the Gods—uncoiled

snakes that need protection—do save

if permission is granted by the underworld; though we must

not demonstrate it like this.

Where the Hand Has Been

A moment without specialty—a slip on the sofa

under a blanket which may be something
or nothing that will fall off, too,
to reveal less of the book that slides… off me, the pages
breaking from the spine and scattering so disorderly
a child will enjoy it, this hurting my back
inexplicably because the book was the reason,
my mind now quieter as the back aches, hand in hand,
no arguments, the heart starting to pump
as it always was, silly, but there is a noticing
of its beat that need not be counted
as we learn two… one… the tally growing surely
as it still passes and I am nearly pulled into the oscillating
of each note between the binaries of what was a story, for better
or worse; while underneath

is a back floating away too, and the hurt
quieting—there not being a story at all—

the blanket warming or cooling
depending on where one sits: not much further left: a smile at a push:
feeling more—or less—not much
not being sure but fine.

Dissertation Fodder or Fire Kindling

This tan is irrelevant! You start making a list
of everything and once it is all down
to the grey and silences
of what's the matter you wander around as if you need the benefit
hoping sofas appear like you've taken your toll
obviously only if you considered a thing
of what could have been conifer flicks as you look up; once over

it is, This fan is irrelevant! And they are sick warmed
sick—temperateless within hours; but that's new:

the sun and bullets must reappear
all without relations, like this next tree
feeding the old across the sky without gratitude, roots
being left where they are: Go Blades!

MacGuffin

""Deep pit of pseudo-emancipation""
—*Philip Kapleau,* The Three Pillars of Zen

These strokes will drag my family out of the trenches, is typed
before you start; but it is inside the being just about
of woolly causation, one which needs its tail removing,
hence your efforts: you know

nothing about it as you work away rounding up sheep, you,
baaing in the dark idly—lying about the effort—the splits

between intervals being an ancient method for analysing
races with no finish line—or an arc or a Möbius
strip down or a rainbow. If you just make the right thrust this time
all will be saved: you join an online asylum

to share your blindly holistic awakening without mentioning
the messiah comparisons and bird impressions
that kiss you in the night sitting in all those questions
rather too loudly, perhaps the sheep being yourself

a jump. To go inside and watch it
for mutton: that is your plan for humanity
through odd minders, wanting the nuclear to stay
and go, and the asylum
not to sound too good at it either. There's no war

you believe in enough to stop you silently
being channelled, even
if you've only just caught on with nothing bad
happening: it feels so sudden for a time as we fix the holes.

But the wolf crying nothing: that's all it was going to be
left behind, it knows which: some lamb carcasses and howls; mania floating across

on branches
becoming ordered for the sun, then regimented,
then open and finally

quiet without a whiff of what you were going in for. As you move

out the way? Not even land, no collective trouble
dragged over the field, little urge to remember a rock
bedding into an ocean and leaving a dull shock
to clear matters up, only moaning—a lost funeral and a safety shake: quiet. You as well? Yes
gone—

an escaped goat with one horn.

Blows Through the Window Mid-Session but You're Concentrating on Eye Contact Currently

"The oceanic feeling experienced by certain types of neurotics has likewise been confused with enlightenment since it conveys a sense of identity with the universe"
—*Philip Kapleau,* The Three Pillars of Zen

You alter what were in mind without returning
oh but then you return, and the article
expands from God to Devil to something
universal—even Gaian—to only a prolonged teenage dream again
shorter, this sweet spot being one you enjoyed resting your cheek against, pushing
impossibly to find home, tantruming you for making stay form:

look how you… alter still; though not an alter
also, as rubbing your own nose in it would only be
as told: rubbing your own nose in it. You are
a touch concerned about the power of
a version of a story you've imposed yourself on
in a garden, the wrath still waving through. But there's so many ways
to return a new line: a new world could be welcomed and cooler.

He Insisted

"To become attached to one's own enlightenment is as much a sickness as to exhibit a maddeningly active ego. … in some [it is] positively nauseating"
—*Philip Kapleau,* The Three Pillars of Zen

For the best results, do not reveal
the water—do not let the horse know it is a horse. Now play
of their kind of their variety might
be a way to drip pools along

the road, but this is not to be confused with
though in the middle of this is a feeling
within the steed, of something going wrong. It will be diverted by being a stud.
In the water is always the horse's favourite flavour too. We love that, getting

what we deserve and require for
the next part of the invisible path, it being murky
before the water: of all matters! But that ain't bankable.

This is where we were months ago; and it is
a slight rising along the way, taking trust

along with us. So please do just sit, rest, sip, play along.

Pigeonstealer

"something of practical importance as well—namely, that it was impossible for a 'general practitioner' to treat such a case without his activity and the conduct of his life thereby being completely ruined"
—Letter from Josef Breuer to Auguste Forel, 21st November 1907

The mania managed, the chaos
curtailed for ourselves, see? so the simplified

drawbridge comes up, for kids
like us alone in this castle that was not ours, worked
hard and lost and away and sinking, we row
away from other placards and shouts, what is not
for vogue and so-so

fashion, untried and not even connected, us being
of wit, this writ proving so, as aligns with
alliances with our moat of the times, without floating lines
out to bylines beside of a goal which we have did, we

have and you have not understood as we become
inverse of madness which requires you so
of there to be quietly negated, though there, though with a twist.

As the Crow Flought

You are on the outside
looking at everything nur-
nuring its scorched earth effort, surface world un-
youngsters with much to spit out in the swing of what isn't vogue, sending
formulas rather than the farmer as it sounds like
yada yada and we don't believe, only sounding safely smoothed
upon steps behind the chosen people, the last ones kicked

to create beats that become paradigm shifts
for future fundamental particles oh dear, oh dear,
just as it always was but we need dragging along
until lotus, most of us picking drama and drams
of equal measure as a throw off, like tiles in tests
and mirrors in partners, it always getting better through
slopes away from building miniature homes for plaster covers, your full lips bitten.

And Level It Has

The epiphenomenal floatation of a dream
allows a younger self, annoyed
at that term—the awareness of terming—to travel
underneath, discovering what the children must never until they are ready, never, as ourselves
moving through woken and clever
with a bitterness at promised lands being at sea

in mere synapse. Silence ensues
as it should at such splicing, the severance
of creating a new project being only proceeded
by what was knew before, of sorts, extra letters
being bogus prefixes of an inside job that slows
to a stop, merely, a chance of winning catch,
there needing not be sadness, the train pulling level for a hill climb.

Scraps Left

Meeting, you all but scraps left, of drips
down arm tunnels of flashes
of you reflections, white dots between calls so you know there's
direction, before forgetting, the philosopher's walking off, falling apart
under barbers on the right side of this river, spectrums
outside in the loose vocabulary of disarray, the twins pulled inside
finding more than scores and less but finely-dialled special

lines—if we're being honest—it only being
what I could not possibly talk about again
to copy and replace this thatched move ahead, crazed be

and end all of a trick to miss, un-see; but we do need

narrative as you come together like all of you jumping
on top of each other and seeing that wrong. I imagine

a bundle of joy, staying bundled, without the gaps
to fill it with nonsense—which may hit
now and then but if we are true, it shouldn't have happened

as it must always move down and go away a few feet, all

pulled into persona-non-here that quashes to note-so-grata pinched shadows, decreed
to decry and go out and return with nothing,
nothing alone, though a good feel before sweet

nothings minus one's own revealing slips.

Tim! I Remember This One! It Changed Everything

The director said to stop: Strongly are you changing your life?
I think you have that wrong, child. But that's OK:

look at the adults. Look at yourself.
Now, we must be totally impious and irreverent—
perhaps closed off, closed in.

But it is only harmonious—space for notes:
I imagine falling between keys tightly wrapped
trying to undo gaps with a whistle. Tumbled

through another land than me, neither then measured by before,
we decided to purchase the house on a whim
and create a life. Though we hadn't the foggiest of weather patterns: we moved
how we felt would work for the phenomena in front of us

each day, and it was beautiful. And it wasn't love:
we just improved.
So I would recommend changing
and that might tick a few. Back

to educational: yuk! You have a feeling in your stomach?
This could sound quietly confident for yourself:

we may have painted the frame and left it wide open.

Talk About Walk of Shame!

All our children in this room
pretend to enjoy this clapping, though essential: Good morning

random stranger!
Good morning everyone

of myself and them that haven't come out
since last time, neither of us trusting
the faces pulled, but some are buried
in choked layers that need holding before break-

through sight, before resentment will reign on those assembled in a disorderly fashion, the
bubbling
out being unchronological: the Year Fives
out of ten were touched on first in this reenactment
from the video lectures on the hub: time

to suddenly leave this kind of content behind? As the shame surfaces post
-unsure-applause and you escape to get your selves back together.

<u>All Along</u>

I am high above with awareness
which is not a key, seeing being blissful,
ignorance existing at the same time implying

some omniscience though I am static too
as thoughts shower down where I stand
to catch afterwards shrink-wrapped, it opposited

to a good, like a frowned stall just—as myself—heavily
effed and effed as I know what I am doing, stuck "here"
there, as if clever; but we knew thyselves

like nothing is finished only an awkward
if they stay watching forever, putting off
an inevitable slip: how can I know

and allow? it no fair I outwardly irritate
to try dispel my own unlock, I see and feel opening...

...over myself, he is, as new videos come through
after the rains and it is the moving
as we slide away creating
space to be taken where we need to, pain felt
or experienced while we smile and allow
its fall, rise,
escape with its cynical antics as we slip
or open or lift or unfold or exist—who knows—
into further

<u>Actually They *Are* Very Different Soooo...</u>

The privilege
of meaninglessness: I could eat

a horse; “You should get a round of Sourz in!” Would you really
want me here, in this

and there was once a removed fortress
of sweet, and we embarked on murmuration, killing

all dames on road, like, spitefully

like. Is this

is this? It is—a difficult piece of trauma
also meaning less and ness: you feel knocking

knocking on matter, swallow mirthful clocked on the stop back
to the big one, as the metro
never has anything fresh: this is how
we create
cruel summers, Auntie:

the wind beneath scorching where it will pull
a lip not how want for a smug, answered up
over centuries
to fall down. But I know you understand.

Getting There

Flicks of my past for you to climb
into sea or sky—but blue
if reflected, as they say. Though that’s not what’s flicked here: take

no notice and make movement
always—or something: I am trying
to be serious as you go
through and away from what keeps

you there—for it then
to be still here but far off
in the blue—why not!—like a timeless
and confusing concept, laughed at—petted—

as it floats past outside yourself, us clouds
and/or boats at least partly

above silly such niggles.

Nearly; Nearly

Ten years of analysis
psychotic break or kink as it catches
as it lands from the album to the road signs, sharing
your silly love that is not obscure jazz
that changed your life and your back
will ease—coats come on and off—sex
being a smiley act as you sit in the middle
of stages, your cuffs rolled up for a performance just right,
the recruitment nowhere near you: you come back
as a demigod totally from semi efforts (which
are the full thing and you don't need concern
for directness, thrown) how long to go? You have looked hard
and your hand is now
out, empathy or not, but the new drop of you being a rabbit and the hat, never begging again
(much: it's a dance).

Snot Real

Clinging on
through rides you don't like unless they are edited
through colours you don't like to previous rides

and just the right amount of additional end letters for fresh again: you are
obsessed with themes you do not choose
but can only manipulate to take yourself above
the otherwise love stories of love, plus hanging

out in places you never understand
on surfaces of survival settings simulated
for a sound like onomatopoeic sleep, the rest of this race

crawling with our popcorn deep inside
as only seeds—got you there—be that kind of heat
that ain't clever but hot. Wide-eyed face for handlebars
you remove fingers from to wink with the tips.

How to Protect Fruit From Frost

This silly article

cannot tell you how to protect fruit from frost as no one can: you must leave it to be cool. This is because

when it buds in spring it begins
to ignore risk and value
swinging hill rivers and hypnotics and
dreamlike structures, slid in, to the envy of other
vulnerable and still smaller shoots dreamlike
internal shoots knocking against the internal flower again
and again as the early shoots have
been missed along with
the sweetness the fruit has itself in its
own soil as such springing fruit

pushes back and down
such sweetness, too hard
to dig it up—yes it is: it calls it silly
and points and laughs; hence

this article here. Though if you do

come upon fruit that needs protecting
from frost, be it even
its own frozen ground—which is also

slippy—then you must
throw a fleece over it, that may look
like love hearts—it could be this cheesy!—from afar

in a strange manner, whilst still

receiving points and laughs as demonstrated
by the cold fruit still staring at this silly article.

Nah Was Just a Quick up and Down Flight, Mate

Woman. I shook beneath you.
God. I couldn't believe it.

I lay as a boy. He needed a slap!
You knew

and smiled; before

you both came
and left

and my ears popped.

(Glad All That's Out the Way) O Baby

you remind me
of the first six years of my life; so calm

down. Actually don't calm down!
As we both know

that this'll come
to nothing
but noise.

Shade

"Don't fool yourself"
—Jeff Buckley, 'Forget Her'

The wild ones, armoured up.
Sorry! I mean

independent. I mean carefree!—send signals
in the night: "No one

understands me! No one
gets it like you do." O but we all

do. It just gets boring.
Or malevolent.

People Watching, Malaga

Arm around his father. That looks nice.

People keep shaking past, waving. What did you do?

*

No question about it: I keep repeating the same thing

poetically. I've had to change

my number. It's probably the one thing these would pray to be good at

too: I have to bash keys

instead now. I have to write fantasies. And they all

want to be here, obviously

on holiday, just to get home.

*

Now another one's

turned up: a homeless man

walking past

playing his recorder again.

Man Dips

I was extremely horny, having several articles ready
about things that distracted me somehow
when the time was ripe I shivered
for a good thirty minutes and the view on this walk

is very flat, even though there are festival grounds out there
somewhere, though that was several weeks ago now and I

cannot remember how I ever felt so strongly
about anything I lied about for all those years (though that
also wasn't me. I accept it emanated from me) and I might

just read forever and look down
as the others walk off the hills; loosening

their hair, it suddenly warm again.

Facilitator (DBI)

"What is that word that I don't like to hear?"
—*Goethe,* Faust

You did not notice me, though I was like a child
pining, pinning my silly ideas on you
before you spat your dummy out too
with someone else and I

left and turned my phone off and you
had a tantrum again before
flashing your pants again and I
giggled and came back and got the blame

again: I don't understand this subject,
these lessons, this naughty step
I'm on
on my own again, Miss, as I

did nothing wrong! Nothing!
OK maybe that's a bit silly: I stitched
onto you too much and there's something
about me saying your name over

and over and over again and tugging
on your dress for attention. But when I didn't? You then wanted me to!
Hence, again, Miss—I do not get
your class at all *still* and I did nothing

wrong and I want my mu-

O.

<u>Once Again, You Thought Wrong</u>

The staunchly one-sided skiing past synthesis, the wrappers
of appropriately-feigned delight covering bitter chews, tunes
mouthfuls for zebras with gaps in the beats, caps
laughed at outside the pot, the pot
thick with smoke and mirrors that could be Rousseau (yikes!),
new ingredients confused by Hegelian lyricists; but

they look the part, anti-masters who can still work
a reel of barbed wire: we see

through that in this mud or this sky with the flowers
simply being high that we always wait for, the bees
flying in and out to spread strings
that aren't what's thought beneath the sick drums, one foot being
trusted to go where it needs to be as you place it
on another element of the hob that once looked—through your smoky mirror—like your enemy:
it's a burnt stain too, being fanned from above.

Tug Boat

A gas lighter than air making our heads balloon, float,
perhaps explode due to the gimmick of history
they contain that cannot help but show
and tell us where the money is, to get over it all, like a sea, sky,
clear day no moon no sun—one boat
to throw us off the scent of what's over the side now we're in
the boat again, cheating. Though

who's to say that's the measure of the sleight of hand
in the water that seems to bend the land
so it looks bigger, like our balloon getting further away
in what would typically be called sky; but today
never mind as it disappears into the dot that leaves
you with a numb last page you don't turn back to, it being
certainly what it is now: a relative truism.

For Sinead

Spirit-level eyes on a tightrope pointing, a scaffold
building weak grace without foundation, a flash—
absurd vision—the public
gathering to cheer another execution

of what we don't want to see, soapbox
victims—screechers!—that won't cut it out
bless them, as they could not be cut out: look
in those pupils still so young, always

before it's taken away
having done everyone else's homework—lines—you finely-tuned
rabble tucked up with likes at the ready
in decades to come: you'll hold stones to the next one

as they tell the children, We see you, without
screaming, the rocks landing to raise you up quietly: no thanks.

Anthropological Poet (The Builders!)

After a stupid poem

This poet
is watching the bin men, the builders,
the scaffolders—the builders!—as he reduces them

to bricks—a wall—
like those they build—rubbish!—
a filthy monstrosity
which the poet does not see through—oh no!—they

are filthy bins—suspenders—The Builders!

The wall is craggy
or old—suspect—
and stuff

as he builds a rigid poem
of his moment; which is short

now—but at least it isn't them—thank goodness!—as he's created
himself

a wall—a distance!—that's not

built of rubbish, thank goodness—them

behind the wall—my poem—the builders.

<u>Passenger</u>

"But why did you swallow that way?
You aren't going to fool anybody"
—Tom Vek, 'Sherman'

That man there controls his facial expressions
like he's discovered the mind-
body connection the wind
beneath his whinge I'm hoping
he keeps up he flicks
at the right literature
on the left, from the east, his words
heavily underlined and copied across to his
Siri mouth that he tried
on window shopping for something which
covered all his bases and faces his basics

beginning to get confused as he takes them all home
to a conceptual nightmare which cannot be met

in the mirror, the spine of his own cover

spineless, the full cut of his jib looking like-

wise like a reflection of a so-close-
but-so-far-away selfie that even started falsely.

Electric and Better For

We eventually say everything, everything
being the cousin of nothing, twice removed
in a vacuum of dust landing on frames the world moves around as if there is

matters: I scare myself with disease
of ear ringing and bothering about matters, I suppose,

as I try and be softer
and not so clever and watchy; but then

a visit to a shop on an island
comes to mind, they'll say, and I don't know what it's for, that whole time

being stressful, at best: I picture people

I don't even really know—they come to my events—while I am making frames
like these informing a dot; though I should be

journaling, keeping it there: I do not care
about paradoxes with drama that comes with world creation; and I consider

before and after less: "Please love me now"—I really put that.

Home Together

The game is a trick. Could there be a more basic opening?
I assume mine
was difficult else I wouldn't be here. What would a meal be
with infinite courses and everything edible available for it? Perhaps like
less effort so you'd stare and never pick, saying,
"Hang on a minute: is it all here?" perhaps in terror, as if
I'm ever unsure

anymore. Something about a character then; something
about what you see and twists you
outside; where you should never ever have glass
afterwards—a "Loved it" button
on a Buzz Lightyear arm pressed while another

gets a black dot in the corner.

As if to Get Burps

Trying to be too many things, feet
everywhere so we laugh
at those nearly firmly, at least
in body, having unseen

the external mess on the reflective carpet, no notice
of all being noticed by all and just patted
as if to get burps—no judgement; and you sleep
with these trying your best at a funny foot forward.

Watch the Think

Should not have given it to him. So strong, the boy.

No not too bothered anymore. It's just work—no class.

Nah—don't need to shout about it—honest. Here I am! Haha OK—

that was probably the best way.

*

I stare at whatever it is at the time, sometimes even

passing that so seriously like this, and I think

honestly—do you want to know? I watch the think—sometimes even sounding

too here; and there's none of it at all: I cannot imagine your pain

in the best of ways, the boy.

Ends Up Here

Pal there is rage under that anger.

You can't spell. This is gay to you

still. Not one person I relate to will read this.

Fine they exist. Yes it is causally related.

Yes big gaps. Clever clogs.

Maybe you are the same and it is all out there

in different ways.

Can you imagine how hard it is to express love to someone like that? It's laughable, though they could genuinely think you want to fuck them and kill you.

No actually I do think this does something necessary.

<u>And Here (More Experiments)</u>

If I never have a lunch break they never happened.

Everything is so expensive. I haven't drawn since childhood.

If I'd have known I could have simply started with the loudest tap and made it quieter from there on out and I'd have not bought any Baldwin.

I want to be the last Russian doll.

On better days, my inner child is 2.8 million years old.

<u>Sit With Them</u>

You have been pulled through flashing lights (this may be the end
of it: you awake
not even in battle) beam heights
now raised flat and the dots in your sight
have become only colour, as they say: good enough.
Birds on these mornings neither laughing
nor fucking: they sound like birds. The farmer
was always chasing you, though it was only a toy gun
the world over, not unique to your horror or flirtation: no never.
The distractions: obvious; repetitive. This is neither here
nor there. Though they do come up. Yet you
lie on the bed like you always were stirring,
shunning any aspect of a formalism but wanting some form: a word
may come in with coffee, kick starting the fiction after your horrible break: how easy it is
to pull more lightly through now.

Straw Poem

Straw world, tin man here.
I haven't done this in a while. You kept me on my own.

Not sure who you are
or if I made you. Only enjoy albums alone now—

kiss with people still but really alone.
It isn't a sadness: the power to burn you

to finish it. Not sure if you walk about.
Not sure if I need to do this anymore.

But I did throw myself into your skin
deep, and then there was only straw

and flashes of whatever I'd made: me metal
now—no roads; clever dots.

You Can Get Meal Deal for Only Two Extra Coins?

You are having the most complex experience, gaps
between differences, the nuance
uncomplicating itself with a shrug, this doing.
Demons and mirrors: yuk; boring; icky;
obvious. The stillness to bend the flight
of seen-through emoji to make us closer, trying
to not end up alone as our child tantrums
at the smell of falafel: this is the worst of me

or best, at best, the sorry of you and you
being too tired and tried (false starts) the assumption of assembly
reacting as I do on my latest rabbit hole find
late night, dipped in my own juices as I marinate
in this building (it was us!) all those images
of strangers being delivered as "self" when "space" found itself also grim.

They Say

The ringing in your ears the negation of noise: you read Joyce
or watch Fury indifferent to sex, alert
to perform like a brisk walk
at lunch time that took years to become a habit
with form, all this excess here—the state;

the blame on officials turned back to black marks
on paper: we just do this now with no dramas

whatsoever, as we've not the energy. Shame has dictated a life
that you left to shadow: you are not clever about starters.
But that ringing is a step, you aware, as you know
you are not so concerned with holding the whole metaphor
entertaining away from incest, to be explicit.

Those sounds are not spiritual when silent
or shouted. "So do not be fooled in between," they say.

His Dental Picks

I don't like words. The pain is inversely proportional
to trips to the moon. I wish I used

swirls. I still don't know what my voice is—
what's here underneath. I am so brave with my

vulnerability. I surprise myself
and am poor with it. How do I capture a sense?

How do I build a raft? Like this?
Phone wants emoji: a twist.

Sly Sin

We drift into making more signs for the public, discounts
disguised as photos of the moon, you see,
posted by global stars and introduced
to a young mind who finds behind them only their own

lustful nature nakedly prolonged, though it's the thought that counts all
the new spirits up, unable to accept
being dragged down a cul-de-sac they are sold
as growth—the new anonymous equality form—

blind like an iceberg towards which we are size-
able unsinkables performing experiential luxury
on a sea of psychosis joined together
by a child that cannot count playing dot-to-dot: they actually

only remove commas, breaks, hoods underneath finding everything
in masks where we only stick our noses—or sin slyly—hardly anymore.

Stop Whistling! You're Supposed to Be on 'Oliday!

Creatives keep me honest
more than partners ever could: we fall through
collecting up content like coppers
in a penny pusher arcade game until it collapses
(win fall!) all over ourselves and we're delivered as victims

with parental first premises, western cannon fodder
waiting for him always to get home
and get his money right; and when he does

we will all be self-actualised and ready to hold
the game of falls with a bitter mouth-
ful taste at a wedding where we hear chopsticks again at 2am; only

now it will be sweet. We are all attracted
to the inaccessible bridesmaid and our 14th collection
suddenly comes to us just as our third wife again gets up to make us another plate.

Amazing What You Can Catch in a Few Split Seconds When You Pace Past the Homeless

You are a glass half-made so you fill up your plate like a mother whose
lower three-quarters are compensating: she knows what he did. You
touch your face and it has cool layers too; and you do not feel like it
in the mirror. Still, you'll head out later
and sleep with her again. Where is the rest of that glass? You cannot find it
at the bottom. There was a Roman battle he was fighting beneath dinner and you begin to see
through it: your top quarter
starts to feel scars. Though you cannot keep that momentum now:
there is another loud party of shapes to distract;
you toughen your layers dancing asleep alone with her barely asking
what it means, whether she's optimistic about
your chances—what her father did. But all the no questions
make the bellow of you hungry: you pay a visit back glimpsing what she served
over the scene as the scars cut further and he's snoring in a chair like you reflect him dreaming
you here, you dishing out his spoils, you still not sure who he was.

Trek

Fog. Ogle.
Fall. Ology.

Society.
Maggie.

Me.

Part of It

I turn my phone off and my friends come out. They all look like me. It's everyone else

doesn't rhyme nearly enough: I go to the fields

with my frowns and teeth passed out and yes, everyone is obsessed with us. Today

we think ugly and I still need to peel all these broad beans: everyone's

blurring into me; I don't know anybody I knew:

I lie in the grass and they all stop walking their dogs; and there I am

lying in the grass. There's no sea here but the sky is blue—I'm not having it: I feel better.

I can't even go home to an empty room now.

Live Live

A hard coating with growing pains
forming an identity around childlike
solipsistic narcissism the pangs like
phantom branches falling in a road in a storm when you're
going too fast with only a minimum
means of communicating what's going on: sounds

bad, doesn't it—she crashes in silent shock and all the lovers
gather round in hi-vizs learning how to care
on the spot as they stare at the soft centre
left visibly quiet, beyond understanding for the time being, a twisted

martyr held firm by those pulling themselves together
and apart through the wreck all mushy and slow, aching
for what was there the whole time, ghosts
of her and their younger selves harvesting newfound sinew.

Locked in the Bathroom

Science is too slow with it: we want to open the units;
we want to ban the mirrors. Think of a pink elephant.
Do not think of God. If the wind starts talking to you

go for it without saying anything unless
it is something you know is wrong, no? The formalisation

being the issue: we were taping each other up
on instinct, then we painted it and charged.
Yet that'd come down to the same thing...?

Who knows; it's too risky

after all: roll on two today, this morning star
still not a sin—I don't make the rules—
unable to speak.

Finally

The louder they are, the less
you trust the noises—what it accords with: like a sweet child

you try harder to mask the multiple musings
making minds inside this minx of a parade; yet it still shouts

at your frozen body which twigs
mid-flow: an earlier tree has fell; you were not

manufactured only for so much awarenesses
and trickery: "Let us all calm down

and ask questions: do you even really like
the person next to you? What is that feeling?"

We went askew at some point, didn't we.
So I am not sure how this can be redeemed: "I'd say

get down. But if I shout too?" Therefore
we finally have Homer: the lesson is, never try.

2023

The window cleaner on the high rise
covered in suds
in the reflective cladding they want to pick
the right ones and measure
how high they feel against the glass, scrubbing
for the right sheen to be picked again
to clean, to then fall

down when all is finished, the changing order of a stroke,
a mixture of tactics on each window getting
higher and hung-on-
a-minuted, not being home for years,
not remembering how they're up there, all the staff
pressed against the windows
watching, seeing
the cleaner outside in the quick rain
sorry for the choice and the glare; as it
was supposed to be sunny
this summer—a forever summer! My forever summer
without all these typists!

Cyclical Imminent Falls

Outside the doctors without diagnosis: I am a sheep (we were suddenly rich).
I am a cultural catholic saying nothing. We were pregnant but not ready:
having beaten the algorithm she turned me into a big-headed
Corinthian figure and used me as foreplay on new dates forever: me and my big relic!
I refuse to argue with the yoga teacher as I'm not in his head.
He refuses to acknowledge his implicit, synonymic use of "presence" for "sertraline".
I am on my own out here, like a boy crying.
We stopped that happening again, us prophets. (We know he's putting it on—that he doesn't
believe
what he says; but we allow it until he bridges the space
and gets it all. Then he'll stop writing.)
We did it in the woods! We spoke through the trees!
This, finally, getting done. O yep—the hard work paying off. Getting some gigs now. It's like a
performance model: right! No talking between curtains.
He's read a few confirmations: what can I say.
God you're doing really well. Don't mention it (she's missing nothing).

Child Mumbling to Himself As He Runs a Toy Truck Back and Forth Through the Mud in the Garden During Half Term

In your fence! Boosters falling off!
To the moon, alone, with the manual.
Something to keep it going early.
Split-off bits with no colour—and colour—
like a gravity like a weight: a stomach knot. Too avant-garde
already, the message applied, the pulling back
hard to hide, find, be in future not much but you will
have better kisses now, in the morn, above the mud
roll-eyed and not a think. I cannot make you
make a sound. Something else playing

being put in the book as little more
remove from the awareness of time, not
that I'd say oh dear. Where'd I keep that?
Flicks over that dirt. Stone face learnt
so we all mirror, shame. No peck? It'll be a little grimace
or pain! So many voices
as if they a formal syntax make.

Die-Dah-Lah-Yada-Yada

You are in the water, downturned, turned down.
I am splashing I am splashing!
There is an endless maze.
There are candles burned—wax

drippings. No new myths. But I am splashing!
You cannot splash—ha
ha ha! You basically have bunged
up ears. You are... I am

splashing! There are no new myths;
we are out of the lake, rays,
maze with no pens. I am splashing!
Fine—you are splashing.

Just Getting Back to It

Awkward silences filled with kisses like spades, the cards
being dealt—a start—silence not feeling funny

to begin with but we need "Well!"s
and windows to climb through, seas to swim down

as the water rises to the sky and the pain
passes numb side to air, no longer there, weight

outside pushing in like gravity
on a gone moon—you picture it—wanting to gladiator

or Roman boy: it is only a realisation of love
to meet on the pull-up bar, the bucket,

the wood you knock as you're nervous too: don't dig; we hope
the needful is done quietly

without a chunky word like “theoretical”
anywhere, labelled

as romantic as it sounds: I love you too; I ideally want you to feel space
after slices of ink. So ask her

to hold you! And the wind comes through
that blind just right, no cannon,

no message from above the well: we were joking
about spades wanting to kiss

the whole time and be held as we barely
count the years since we danced around the sand, masks off

beyond separation as you cry in my arms and time and
the breeze can be coolless, veiled.

<u>Got Me</u>

“What I need now is stories, it took me a long time to know that, and I’m not sure of it.”
—*Samuel Beckett,* Molloy

Don’t make me talk
about the power of stories I am in my fog, the hardest
anyone has ever had it and the main character, took off—floating—unable to fall into narrative
as I would never stop,

believe me—I have so many; you should have seen it all—the protagonist

watching options jumbled in cafe: to have stories
you need much tool before order—a worked top—yet this
like noise
in cave like cave art or pots and pans
coming out dishwasher that you harmonise
to find safety in silence in noise:

that’s where I am; it’s a slick move and a story not
like anything to follow as a portrait, here too much

he is—here is. Chips
and blocks and shoulders and salt: it should all
go over like an old tale: I am too not stimulated—
I’m too stimulated—sorry!—

and making a rod for my own back
despite what the helpline will say later about the causal ontology of blame, another arc
to unpick, that's all: we are looking at possible plots.

Trust Me I'm Very Aware

Looking at yourself in the mirror so much, the hair falling well today.
The date didn't care for incompleteness. Where can I take it?

(Give me time, whispered.)

You are the right amount
of performance today, performance for less harm
outwardly expressed in a way that is not frowned upon
in a gallery piece by the outer form of a high street jacket
dragged for a poor show of themselves in a week's time.
Once you are adding to the pieces in the sea, you see
it all as the same rubbish being merged into steps
to get a good view of
said steps: bring a comb.

Milk Wood

Milk Wood appearing so as to say, I have forgotten—
that was minutes ago. A cliff
on a bend for the last possible venture
from not of. A kiss for the sender.
Two doubts from a memory. Six beers
for a nested concept twice removed
by peers that will just not see you through
the twilight of their long long long long
childhood. Spurts of a goat. Tricks
of a lamp. Ever

ever ever noon. Love for the underdog.
A spirit for the all trees as one, smiling
never missing which wants madness as codified
in a loss mind... pulp? If I had other language...

"If I had other language," says Mr Wood,
"there'd be no separation between the sea and stage
of what could be so much easier."

Yes the Committee—I Forgot

You want to sound
You want to sound like Method Man. You know what that means.
You pretend to enjoy
You pretend to enjoy but I cannot say that about you.
You think this isn't poetry. You know it is.
You know I fizz. I want a rhyme.
There's only one character it's mine. I sign
nothing. I make no hand movement.
I dance with my hands—fair.
You don't like it there. You tell your friends you do.
You're still after you.
And me too everyone too.
I want to sound
You want to sound like Method Man and make them jokes you heard about stereotypes. I
remember. You see you.
I mean there's multiple characters. Countless genders.
You pretend you had to fend
for yourself you slept your way out of it like we all do.
You want to say the word, word. You want to be your cousin to annoy you.

Manic Strugnell(!)

A little drip of a sentence, the drip.
Say whatever you need
in unanxious tones, then kiss me.
(See! Dripping away.)

No comparisons, like love.
Holding in punches, or born
under punches: no trauma (love,
little drips——spaceeeee——

there we go: fireless;
nearly new worlds).

More Plans

Creating characters so I'm amiable in public.
Creating characters to hold myself accountable.

Hard talks while I cook. Walks side-by-side conducive to the thing.
Liberal clothing for the streets.

Confusion building a dynasty. Pleasing who is slowing me down
less. Tension wrote on your face

like it tricked. Malaise taken from a screen.
A shock end when the characters turn malignant in real life.

Softness underneath.

<u>‘Pataphysics</u>

Maxwell
Baffled
Shooting on sight.

<u>Stay Away From the Man in His Balloon Stage</u>

How do you experience time? But you surely
cannot ask her that. On a first date?!
A balloon instead. “Ballooooooon!”

The balloon is floating down the street
with a taste in its mouth and a shiver
really blowing and the girl, with the scars
chasing it down shouting, “Ba-

llooooooon! How do you do that?” as Balloon’s mouth
is stretching across rubber and the path
is nothing but underneath with Balloon
concernless about looking at its watch. “Don’t ask, baby, but grab

this here string
I rarely use for anything more than a shado...

Lead! I meant lead.”

<u>Dirty Laundry</u>

Pete closes his laptop. “I need
less of them, the talks
I have with women
online who are really
ironing, though they do
save my life.” I look up
from my own board. “Are you sure
you can handle all this

without that?" Pete says
he can. "Only you must come clean."

There We Are! Lovely

Making a saucepan of myself: I do not feel
in that way though for you
I could, if we only get the right level
of salt on this spoon and salad
on these days pretending
I am not hesitating on the future
after this heavy lift. You look regular

in this light but you have turned
to kiss me right, left, side-
to-side and I am just going with it, you knowing
me already. Now take-
off all that dressing and let us stir
the pot, forgetting
the thoughts of those times in Wetherspoons.

Simon & Claire

Simon's line manager, Claire,
shared with him on his first day

out of school, in the office, details
about her husband's childhood.

Simon
immediately walked out the office

to live in the woods; where others—also
out of school—collected more and more.

*

Five years later he returned to the office: Claire
still hated Simon.

Morsel

We would keep her to the side
rid of matters and silent and throw them off
our scent by ducking down when the measures came

to check for her, the first mother of our land
not really needing a measure, since she
had always escaped the nets
buying well first time, doctors at bay,
the ponds dredged regular. How we still hid
is beyond us, as funny as the time was. Though something grisly
about that turn when they appeared with the measures
the measures having the bad instruments
like bats used on us
early doors: we still
panic, wince, dig about, coo
for a meet of a few times, dances
with the first mother still needing to be guaranteed: so many
ask! So we did what we did ducked down
from the measures and no one noticed, us still benefitting
from her slickness at booking those clean.

Poorly Said

"Rule or that it's applied haphazardly"
—John Ashbery, 'Melodic Trains'

A name like mine with an ever tallness
and seriousness of name, spread
through so many fields lying down, there no other way for it,
tapping its head with an empty hand to shorten its legs,
lying to farmers. The simplest method for farming
is to say all the grass is in Spoke's hands
if only he digs, or a similar method. Let them be all those forms
he says to me as he puts his feet away
earlier than I thought with a yawn, the clouds
added to the sky above me in the basest of manners, the fringe
opposite—the wall Spoke sees for itself—a critical barrier
now he is back in one field. I will always... perhaps
not always. I will at times miss Spoke
and what he stood for, some; but if there's fog
enough with him I am not sure.
Spoke now waves slim targets at me
from those fringes—me with my gun;
but it is already all put away, Spoke, and I am sitting
by myself without start or end, that very wide space for us
all over, the mistaken noises, the exercising
considerations tidied and everything
without a witness...? I wouldn't do that without grassy knolls:
this really was to be a mountain

to the fields. Spoke feels himself rise again but I am all for it, it
being the fields blooming, waving,
cresting a wave neither of us are sure of, as if there are
surprises now: Spoke has a hat, and that hat
is worn out from him chewing it: the best we can do.
Now he's off again
I hope I can make more of myself. Could I stop?
Could we not plant? Someone must see me, only I cannot look:
my medicine. I peer over the wall
without the good joins and I feel the gun
release itself into a cloud—no danger—formed
of looking straight ahead at no targets—at no novel
fields—because the whole time I must have been sweeping
as the neighbour spoke my name and the grass is tidy again.

A Text Message

We bend
two satchels to the love of our roof, the mixing
of termites awfully granted
when it's the weekend—we
are wanting something spicy
for a turn in goal; as in

I assume it makes us look cringe.

Fighting the Church

I am at a numb today, says Kurt
From the wall, and so the poems cannot be faffed, the deacons
The two, trying to climb through the window—
Appearing at the window. Suddenly for me
At the window. Available to me at the window for
A slightly different offering to what Kurt was not aware of
He knew minutes ago. And then in the new cave
Down below because we move all the time
For reasons, there are always lower floors for what is numb
Kurt states: he thinks we don't see the change he makes, the deacons
At the door with fires in their hands ready to give, Contrast
They say. Deacons! I cannot be sure!
For all I know they're leading us astray
Especially with a draft like this. Kurt—just send them away? And so there's now thirty.

Sometime Later

The last person is at the end of the story
at a desk, with a lamp, with fossil paper weights

unheard of, deciding to feel more
through whatever it was without tables

or puns or the same streams
twice, in a choice

of movement and light—less particulars—
with some real effort at holding the old bones—yes;

though without unhelpful points. We know
where it comes from and how it sounds

to many and I can be close
to my very own thought, but that is fine

and casual if it takes me to the lamp, myself
not seeming so bright but clean

and away from sometimes, we go.

Compatibility

On the point of understood, Thea therapist's
caffeine sunk and left only brand
at bottom with which to stick the forehead, word,
of forms lost, the clients storming out without process
yet their own external measurements. "I have dried up

on explanation," says The, "this table to my mind
being today gapped: there's interruption through
the unsided more of myself." Thea walks to the kitchen
to take a bite of unreplaced bread
filling left by her partner the snuck scaffolder, who is not one

to support punchy blueprints: "Could you" his note
says "draw for me what you think it is I do
for a living?" And so she grabs the pen
from behind her third ear and mimes a garden.

Mains(!)

But you absolutely need putrefaction, David,
as something to try and come back from, well in
to the formal stages. He looks at me. As if
you used “fossil” earlier. I am not quite separated for this.
I wonder if we could go without our faces.
I had not been thinking about Dave—the stages
of death—until the very tip of my future—
designed by past—came in as a lie
just now; so what we see is an attempt to create a whole
which is never a slice all the hard work has done
for enjoys. Maggie—you know?—hates this. Us with our chops;
the meal of a kind studied. We surely weren’t to be blown
from the shore to make haste for the restaurant,
Dave always on time, me and Maggie somehow together, guests
waiting for us so long, nibbles pouring in.
On arrival, I ordered what we had last time. Can you remember?
That was me asking Lucy, Lucy
sleeping all over the place since our last visit, she a terror,
me too dipped in the seating plan: let’s just say her dog died
hence my earlier comments. The waiter
you are not going to believe, is checking itself in the mirror
outside across the street in a sports car with no concern…
drove off! I am unmoved. There is a paper weight on the desk
reminding me of Maggie as Jasper
removed from contention. I am so numb at this meal;
have we not ordered? Hands
fiddled under the table as if no one worries about the lack
of stares from the other diners (diners!) or if
notice need be taken: I can hardly speak. We are usually articulate.
There is to be counting… You would not…
You would not believe, but to be counting
out thirteen sets of cutlery when so far we have only accounted
for how many guests? Where did we get these nibbles—these ove-
Not to be mentioned, I’m told. So when are the rest
arriving? O please you must stay!

Writing From Tulse Hill

Reflection of beauty. Reflection of the times.
Reflection of the dance.
Reflection of my city, what I feel will work, much thought but not.
Reflection of me.
Reflection of an age within an age. Reflection

reflections.
Reflection of charisma.
Reflection which cannot.
Reflection of danger, danger,
danger endlessly repeated by
reflections in terror. Reflection of
my beautiful multi-faceted painting. I am pulled in but grimy,
nosed with. Reconstituted. Answerable?
Answerable of reflections, billowed from dishes.

But I am inside the painting, surrounded
—warped—in colour and light,
bettered.

Mind of a Paranoid

I am now on Molloy, not Molly. Very convoluted jazz
in the morning with extremely strong coffee
having worked hard and deserved a lift
in circumstances and my lot is clear
to grow, seeing the old boys now and then
out the corner of my eye on the street; though I have worked so hard to not have that double way
of seeing things, like the mind of a paranoid,
something we used to say in the wood
training. Not that I can say anything about that.
Then there is the mystery of the car last night
which I can feel you getting out of me, not that I am obliged
to go further as I be
clean and away from the riff-raff of that, convincing
none of the need to stay out of my business,
coffee choices or the boot of the car, a long night
though it was, the jazz meeting with my fate
I can feel a bit too much: I won't go on ignorantly;
but what am I to do with what's in there?

Don't Say You Haven't Seen Them Out and About

Corpy with an extraordinary organ to be urbane.
We watched him, Mass and I, travel to the matinee
with it so high on his truck it was a wonder
to the working creatures of Murnt Farm
how he'd pitched the grant. With fine
lace of my grandmothers, said Corpy,
ordinarily voiced on days of markets
we sensed the tense back he was hampered by

in the photos sent over by Pringie, once
talk of more salsa was done, we all tired. Fancy
a scold on the coals my friend the Rat
has set up upon the other large piece of equipment
we are making a commitment to introducing
to the nuisances inside the mice lab? Yes, Corps.

You Must Have Tried That Surely!

Severance coming: I hear pans;
there's a snake in my noose.
We would—never—have felt so disconnected
if it wasn't for those risky nibs: olives;
all over the bar; the ex-wife's favourite;
my losing prattle. Always saying so, too,
about my jerk words was Cough, frog
stuck on his boat right when I needed him
to take Jude's goose off the rope: they are all
coming home, my soft righteous rumbles
of winter: if only you saw my screen! Hundreds
of new ones to Oslo, it slow
around these ways when you sit on your hands
like a teen: it's like someone else doing it.

Just Falling Over

Where did all my stories go?
I've lost all my Trojan horses.
This cloud is lonely. Result!
I can't talk about something else. It's hilarious.

Back in yonder folds of the evergreen
evergreen, we burn sage for the car boot sale
(I didn't want to tell) and my friend, Synth,
said if you squint, "You can see

the Ritz!" Synth is typically operated by my keyboard.
This was nearly, too, an ideal cycle
for the production of even further heat, but we left the boot
wide open for our own book, near misses

all the way home just how we like it, not to mention
not to mentions with the stable... stable! Brilliant.

Anton and Gregory Balance Finally on a Tightrope of Bread and Sex

Wonderful ciabatta! What's beneath us?

Isn't it just? I haven't looked. O!

Me neither. I haven't done much

since you. Still

shall we get off

and do this down there? At least on the net!

It would be easier.

A Contrived Set

"Pretext for not coming to the point"
—*Samuel Beckett,* Malone Dies

We know what they'll say, the many of us here,
the soup through the wall,

the rain as if countable, a contrived
set of characters for an unaccounted

for babble, spiders all over our windows
and each one of us trying to get a look in

but the director is falling, so we need
no voice: not soup

for days here just good old-fashioned
togetherness—a quick-drawn heart.

I Like My Coffee How I Like My Triptychs

Number Zero

"We're sublimating
I'll write a hymn again"
—Tennis, 'In The Morning I'll Be Better'

Soft rain against this world. Soft snorer. Both soothe.

Someone drifts in sleep and I

haven't thought in hours, beyond quiet. I feel held against.
I feel that way pouring through

our window and these are the moments
if we counted them

beyond time, these freckles the only specks
of life between rain. And the snore

carries away cloud and makes
me smile

afterwards, like redemption. Like kissing
when she wakes.

*

Number One

"Well, nothing happens here"
—Rolling Blackouts Coastal Fever, 'French Press'

Rain for days. Hibernation, poetry.
And then

breaks and shakes
and snow? I don't think so: sometimes

Girl with coffee (and the rest!)—warm skin
beneath our coats; me thinking

God knows. Little. Bad weather?
We don't cover up but press

through shivers into ourselves, with jokes
about a French one (and a large

iced decaf pistachio oat milk
latte?): we smile. I am thawed.

*

Number Gone

“On to the next saga
Focus on the future and let the crew knock her”
—Kanye West, ‘Guilt Trip’

Rain for days. Hibernation, poetry.
And then

breaks and shakes
and snow? I don’t think so: sometimes

Girl with coffee (and the rest!)—warm skin
beneath our coats; me thinking

God knows. Little. Bad weather?
We don’t cover up but press

through shivers into ourselves, with jokes
about a French one (and a large

iced decaf pistachio oat milk
latte?): we smile. I am thawed

temporarily! Read my diary (another one!)!
Bad Girl (and the rest!)!

Number gone.
Back to poetry.

<u>That Us / Rather Lazy</u>

I sit in the pub, he says. I must be divorcing.
That must be why I’m here, meaning I can travel and see
the store we met in, or something like it, us meeting
where I can’t remember but this place must be related. And the shelves
are empty while the man leans against the wall, the King
I want to impress but cannot say I feel warmth for, unsure
what he represents. And I start to feel better
sharing drinks I didn’t know I had, the cheese grater up my back
rescinding. I say to him or him to me
at the bar, supposing he looks like my friend on Wednesday,
that we have forgotten what to say, this being
the whole exercise even though we thought we had much to share
and we enjoy the American shops: we put things in; we should have seen them

empty. Though now I am aware
that I am just trying to impress one of them, seeing the distance of that in this cloud
around the bar and store: it is not amounting to much; he can recognise the gaps that were
there before, the shelves
as they'll stay and the highs being tried… we knew to pull back.
It makes nothing good in conversation. I suppose we both saw
her then walk in not unexpectedly, but a little cheaply, ready to end us,
holding all her illness in like we knew she would. Is this really the kind of trip
I need to make my back better? A future
I know he sees—under the store—but not fitting too nicely… staggering
how I would say that and yet still talk on a whim
that moves itself into what is going to happen: the shelves
fill up, and she is outside in the gutter hysterical
thinking she's between us, me and Al-Amir. But I can see
he feels released by the split, the King against the bar
nodding? Cooing? I cannot tell. I don't think I'll see him again, that us
rather lazy but we found what we needed, the soft clay
of all those memories we had together flying past, he says,
along with sprinkles of the earliest of drinking days, holidays,
near misses, delayed sickness. It is all here now being squeezed
not just out of his back, but mouth, too, under the light
of the bar as he tells me about the store, his little clerk job
across the water which is quite a commute, I tell him
smiling, but he is getting happy without ordering me anything, us awaiting the King
knowing there was nothing I could do for her, standing up stiff
with a noise that was cursory—automatic—
Al-Amir laughing as I heave myself back down: Not now.

Another Fucking Hero

"Oh I'm sorry, I'm under a little bit of pressure here. I don't have time to suck your dick."
— Tony Soprano to Detective Vin Makazian, The Sopranos*, Season 1, Episode 11, 'Nobody Knows Anything', 1999*

A flat landscape—sometimes
a brisk walk up a mound; sometimes a barbecue
in a garden city—being the last and best of us
unpleasured, after our father's hard work on their own land
to stop assault: all those myths and monsters
and mothers projected? Behave! That was all;
we want a plumb depth, an obvious line

and hot coals—yes; but in that barbecue! Now what do we do
with a numb analyst in this state of maturity? Wet wipes
and a cabin like Thoreau's (just tell him

it's a cabin like Thoreau's) and a fanning of his arduous journey
in hallucination and making up time. See what I did there?
Yes clever boy well done. Shall we walk
around the block now? Erm, no—we're definitely walking: take those crampons off.

Figures in a Dream

I like to take the antique porcelain figure
off my shelf for minutes on end and hold it close to me
then I don't look at it for days. I remember it being there
from a very young age, it representing
a mystery that I hug to me now, only I am then

disgusted with it, confused
denying of its existence without truly hiding it away
from its display on my shelf: I just do not look at it
pretending not to see. I have formed many
ways of being and seeing through Figure, all the agency

controlled by myself that I leave between our holds. I want to write
or drool all over it to leave more of the pervading
mystery of what it speaks to me against itself, at times. But I also
want to leave it on the shelf—their innocent mouths—forgetful
of us ever taking them down.

Lovely Murray

From where Murray sits it is extraordinarily
severe. His life could be described as "good". He steps
off kerbs. Health has held a gun to his head as seen
in journals. Awareness. The softness
of his voice. On the face of it his
face has a warmth as embodied within our earlier
"good". He is so small in his vast depth
of saving and saving space. He has no dreams. He
begrudgingly enjoys pleasure and thinks of you
without yours as he does so, that including
any previous times that you did not have pleasure
or at least relative calm. Awareness
and wishing you are well are Murray's
always, having known and therefore now nice.

Variations on Tates

After James Tate

You'd cut her in half (this could take off)
if you didn't choose another fate—another

Tate: fancy

a hug and a boogie? Eight sugars?
A laugh at ourselves?

Told the sad man at the bar
he's beautiful. He now says I want him

like, "The good ol' days!" (and he's
nervous: "Is he…?"; but he also

thinks he's beautiful, for a moment. We feel it.

Like she was, too. But oh well. Time flies) Knew

this would happen—he's bought me a drink: Tea!
With a saucer!

We're flying!
And fine! (See.)

Chiselled Bricks

The phone box, the edge of the town on the sea
to the hardware store—the conversation—
before the waves came and the water
streamed pieces together for pages
again before wave, meaning, we feel this talking

to ourselves through the loud noises, only loudly
when quiet in the night, wide
awake and fidgeting after too many gear changes, thinking
alone it is the substance of a song

not of ourselves; yet it breaths through—
phone box, edge, sea, store, talk—
into how we are on box, plank, whatever

we are now, like a hope of springs
without needing the trouble but bricks to chisel.

An Orange, Guy, Would You Not Say So? I'd Say

"hunching toward canary-yellow"
—James Tate, 'Toward Saint Looey'

We'll give it go! Out back
over the dunes of Lego bricks
grown big from the machine we had, fifth removed
turned into gimmick: we blew up
over in new countries without the word
"new", yellow all round. "Ain't it 'bout time

you brought those kids in, Guy?" Six
new gimmicks on a porch
we built in blinks, no reasoning given for the wood floor
the sad little touches to the corners, Wendell
becoming Mary as she wanted juice
without spirit to get us through, her hunting

creating the best supper this side
of where we supposed we born. "I ain't
got time for any entity outside myself,
Mary," my comrade said carrying
seven of the little fellas from the now-level
dunes, him so pretty on the steps. Three us

be living a good life with these to's and
fours to make up the lot, number one
slipped down behind the fire place, a hard
days graft out in them fields with
all the noises to ignore since the mine
gone closed and we smitten with this floor

we did ourselves. "I'd say that's more
an orange, Guy, would you not say so? I'd say
I'd prefer it that way, you hard workers
standing there in it, it bringing
out you boys' eyes
real nice."

Already Lying Down

At the recital a big mouth was about to open with lead poisoning from the mine
basically: it had several slices of toast instead, waiting

for something else to come. Here I stand
awash with washing and ready to do something different
with my lines, the stage hands
standing open handed and wide-eyed: How did we get in here? in those unicorn
costumes assumed as if to trigger ex-partners. Don't say
we didn't warn you—Strongly!—of this get-up: on the advert
we said there could be an enormous set of teeth released
on the world, the gates were, into just the right timing: that's what the dove
on the string
begged of me when I was a lad. Beg me to not eat this bread

and you will find out little: collectively, us crew turned to the staged fans
and said, Have you anything to clap? And you'll never guess them
saying no, us
now on our knees—Bobby! Turnip! Finch!—kissing the floor, it unbending
our current partners free of a pencil. Plus to kiss the floor I'm already lying down.

Spiky Weeds

Between camps, laying slabs, Beaver and Fibs.
One is a husky voice sharing with the onlookers
come to, to jump across all moody, readily-guilty
from the complaint about grey coming: "You can't park..." Fibs
turning round and round again, until she's at such
speed they fly off her back, five of the drifters:
she only keeps on slabbing. Beaver looks up

and down the road—the many crossing: "Have we built all

it's full! And it's Friday so we may as well...?" Fibs agrees
without a single divergence about what they've
left in the boot on the driveway of the home
around the bend from Nonna's house: "Get it done, Beave!"
Beaver rolls in with a big big truck
of concrete for the entire land, the slabs, giggling
as they take the spiky weeds they won with 'um.

An Art Documentary Has Been Stolen!

This piece is also important
because it leads to a new period. At the same time

it reveals the passion
for the textile industry and the importance

along with many other people: we can see
this evolution of forms and fields

of colour come to life, cut-out, shaped,
silhouetted (in rhythm) forever

fate sealed: there is a stain, the walls
bothered by stain and placed over

the interest adding second, third, everything
from the lagoon like a composition, birds

as seen here, different kinds,
a play on words—stars as stars—

the sky and the sea put together
in the same plane; where there's a single

theme of dancing together
within a marvellous frame.

Resolute

The body in the incubator received the opening lines
from the queue of suits. Each one it received
it experienced as the suits went on their way
back into the world without the experience
which contained the emotions as induced
by the opening lines, these always
having been written the night before. The bodies
were installed in every town under the new
government. This government had taken away
ring roads and placed incubators (garden cities
were fine) the opening lines doing all they needed to do
to save the suits—Just. As.
They. Should. said the slogans; and productivity
was really something and there was none of this, seriously.
Statistics released yearly about the body stated that one
in every two hundred and seventy fifth
line made the body smile, while all of them, including the one
mentioned did make shivers, even the smile—more so the smile!;
but it never caught up, and they needed new volunteers
and smile lines; though they knew how these
were fairly kept back, if placed at all. So instead
the bodies became fires as demanded by the suits

as agreed by the body monitors which were square
monitors created in the last "Movement on a Push"
until the new government
opened stages and there appeared a strong correlation
between the prevalence of these stages and the tensions
in the square's communication
to myself and the other plinth standers' minds; but we remained
resolute in silence.

Soup

"Half of it
is disgusting, a passed down recipe.
The minor ingredients move in and out

but it's still the same soup." He ran his spoon
around the edge.
"This is the cooler

part but still
the same soup. Still disgusting."
I stared at mine before stabbing

my spoon into the middle of it, up
to my wrist. It burned. "Use
one of our new

napkins. And don't worry:
I'll tell them you liked it."

Abstract Hero

It is OK: read me. I went out there
in nameless to build small steps
like smudges of relief over stars
and mud you seeing them

in the airport or the farm
or the other end in the clouds, sirens,
cars talking to you and parents
unlike other film, the song

too loud as lyrics go through you,
you the space flyer. Jarring
with a sense of seen and road back

you do not stand on, notice,

but define in darkness faith
enough. Walk with no arms out.
Grab no one.
There is nothing there to bring

or do until return.

Railed in a Sundress

The sea, once, brought back in with vision
of petrels we found on definition, two moons

of a dominion yelp, seconded by sharp,
knifed at creed, jammed off soon,

basically on a date with a bullfrog. After the maid
had been added (out came) June

so uniform if not a normal, normal stage
like horse loin. Now. Beaning for a glove;

seismic for a double. I was being brave
and corporal and out was a huff: I heard it; I heard all.

Ever ever ever been branded trying.

Easy Peelers

He didn't flee. I saw him going over the mulberry bush, two tarts
of orange filling pushing it close to the church. How I admired him, me in my hot-air
balloon overhead yet only for seconds, as he climbed
too. We could have worked out well. Couldn't we
have worked out well? It feels so.
I myself had left the town because of the wild pies
of the parade and the climber... well... I'm not sure what to say: how he
held them, the pastries. If only we'd have
perhaps got lower? Was that my second divorce
I'd left? I am drooling—neither of us ran but escaped
a life of confusion and worry maybe
saving each other, apart; but longing
for spires of less inspired
existence, certainly, the silk
I dropped down from the basket—cases of it!—clambered regardless.

Willard Tool

"'We can't say who it is. He's a paranoid schizophrenic, and if he finds out we're doing him he'll come and kill us. I want to cover some more points.'"
—Andy Kaufman in 'Was This Man a Genius?' Julie Hecht, The New Yorker*, 15th November 1999 (https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1999/11/22/was-this-man-a-genius)*

With the soft demeanour
of the well-therapised
and an eye for
particularised manipulation
for the good of humanity, Norman
Tool got the croissants
in this morning: I know all
about him, me wearing
his briefs. After eating
I pretended his games and squealed
and nodded and meta-
rose with the top of him
that he topped off multi-times unawares; and
we just kept going, it must be said
well. Norman Tool cooks
as if the first learner, and I
created self-portraits like
a humouring exercise
for who I'd rather not own.

Now You Can Turn to the Left and See the Ostriches

One long performance piece pretending love
didn't happen, like a Buddhist, but no

deities then deities today. More
narrative and imagery.

(Here we go) less hate and so pain
but more shivers.

Having stared long enough with doubt
into the soul of a scaffolder, I see the frame

he builds inevitably wanting to hold the house:
it never does. That was too fixed.

We must run through song, art
words but not syntax as if they are flowers

grown only for us; though we must remember
to then leave the garden for someone else:

you never existed there. There could be anything
said the wise man or the dog?

Or the sun on the grass, the laugh
the beat? Piles of books: give over.

Telephone Fish

"get used to the thought of the casting-ladle"
—The Lean One to Peer Gynt, Henrik Isben, Peer Gynt

"You should have seen me, side of the stage, death the other side
obviously. It is always so obvious! I had that toy can
I'd always had, the one that disappeared,
the one that wasn't there,
the one they said me, the one they said I made
and played on and got much older. Of course I was watching!
I was watching from the side of the stage!
Now you're making me think: was it a can?
A jar? Not now; I don't have it. Not sure what happened.
I used to stare, there, at it and it'd disappear
I must say, or turn into mermaids,
or call me on the fish. Or the phone! Yes.
I was high with the can or the jar in those days.
I was performing but never out on the deck, yet always
on the deck. I am not explaining it well though,
the can. It was a toy but I was never sure. I knew
in my heart of hearts where I got it, but I also
was not sure of my heart, in those days. These
conversations come out so clearly now though:
I'm glad we're friends. I haven't seen death in years.
How could I have had such a prominent...
Actually I'm not going to talk of it, the jar or stage.
O I have made it a jar, haven't I! That's me and my changes.
Me and my big decisions at some point I am sure of it.
At some point I was sure of it.
Some of the shows were OK, but I was a mess playing.
I tried calling a doctor on a fish once, you know: "There's a toy that
I had—I had had—you know," I said. But I only purposely

sound like that now, to you,
as I trust myself and you are dear to me, like grist,
fish jars and marriages.
I haven't told you of that? I got you right there: I was never married;
there was a toy can—though I was mostly
performing in spite of it; with you being
so very handsome, the protagonist, I'm sure."

Later Yoga

Sad narcissism struts out to the studio
atop hard floors, propped up on the queen's nose.

When I stop I have to pull out
words from stories with meanings I cannot yet explain,

the sounds mixed. I breathe in
to a body that isn't here except in competition

with losers. There is no wonder, my previous sad eyes
too, seeing the mirrors of birthwrongs, the paradox of point.

When I pose I feel my best silence
upsetting no one with what I must place afterward

to only continue with days as if a disciple. I make
sense from nowhere, as instructed,

but the speaker is confused in their
there, childish wander now out also in

all this hoarded material. I should not have stopped,
pulled out. We put on different socks

with optimism for what we held, the ego
frowning.

Creativity

I walk through several of myself
up the garden path, it taking a week, once there I'm home

for now, confused as I was, truly arriving back
like a loser's walk, I mean a victim celebrating

being shot from a cannon
and landing with a pen, a place in my huge huge slice

of history, all these flowers now growing
so brilliantly as I look: you should now

grow flowers also—as I could not recommend it enough
as something

you look like you'd really benefit from.

The Long-Anticipated Narcissism Wars

Love was going past on a tooth grit, Tommy
watching with coffee on his chin, frozen, me
waiting for a new tone to come, anticipating the

push of it as seen here: down goes the phone. Until later—

there we are. I have lied, haven't I, Tommy.
But I can float away like the love
of a bad… love as the one we watch
together on the sofa—the beach—as unconnected

to me as Tommy: announcing Agent: slick fella;

was nearly Gent. Also could be watching
a love fall away in the morning as he always does, playing
them through… other agents with some hesitation
for the hesitations too. Though we love them

all from afar until they are far enough
away to
never say love's simile.

A Segway for an Advert

I am not sure what to read, the libraries,
our phones full of stories. Struggling with trust, too, but I suppose

no one has ever stitched their trousers to their leg
with a typewriter: I put down my needle

and think something up about fornication, seeing it
change to ovation, so above myself

I am in a remove from the act: this thread
hurts, and it makes no sense that I went to my knees,

but at least I didn't read that out: I know what fornication
means; only I kept misspelling it: my phone

doesn't even believe me!
So I am going back to the cross-stitch.

Get In! Olly Pint!

"Don't you be using my voice
to make yourself feel better." Olly Pint
from Leeds to me while he's fucking
my wife on our bed, her
on her back with her eyes
rolled back as she massages her fingers
into her hair releasing butterflies, once framed
all around our walls now flying, the sun
coming through as I hold
my book open, now closed
as I drop it, lying back
too with the programme: I aid
the crawling b'flies that cannot rise
off the bed. "Eh up,
son! There you go." Olly Pint.

Take a Hike

Forgetting causing begetting
and begetting and begetting as he stops

and walks with every stare straight ahead, welcoming
autumnal spiders and dark

arts for himself inside without touch anymore, seeing,

hearing the voices of big bangs in old doodles
in the margins of locked journals, parents
in the park, insects around the gates in matching coats,

the pain of the rings of the trees, the spin
of the webs. Delicate silk

past the park gates
without a glance but a nod, more seasons brought in
through wind with eyes closed, louder drums

inviting a view from a bridge discovered to know choice.

Everything But Intimacy

It was almost before breakfast, the man
stepping me aside and waltzing in...

but he is only walking after the hosting
of a removal van, an impossible event
after all, the outcome being not bad, which means another part,
which means he is lazy and I am not, considering he did
just pick me up off the floor to carry you off, though not far this time, as it is
a timing issue—and I can feel that
bubble; and so I calm down, him with the edge
of what used to be a barely accepted shift, I'm not sorry to say,
but certainly embarrassed. O he loves
loves loves this dinner plate, not that I'm sure where he got it
and why I cannot eat with him. Not so steeped
in freedom with this lift after all, am I? It's because I thought about it:
do you see how I hang? I barely respond to or as
him already like watching the news, or grilling a pupil? You wouldn't see that
coming back in my day as we hid the flapjacks
under our chip butties—him? Me lying about labels,
batches for the dead centre. So we must know where we're going
together now so as to achieve nothing post-coital? That wouldn't be a peak or a
half or a middle or a word, would it. Who's to say:
we'll keep the cliché in—there. One of us will be honest too:
we are not sure where to go, other than the number,
or how to keep me contained. I was sleeping
without helping myself. And what did he admit to earlier
this far from lazy. Do you know what he will do
later? He is desperate to say and this is the problem with the van
moving us—as it should, yes; but we never actually know...

and of course some part of one of us does until
the end, as a matter, but not a fact, feeling
the conjunctives collectively demonstrate themselves
honestly as they are on the page, as themselves,
but though as more. So I will ask the question:
are we tied in? Is the result
he always knows as a filling of a hole, as what I thought of here

just? Because I think I not sleep and miss that meal unable
to delete, though least not lying afterward feigning the wanting of contact.

Such Static

Scaffold high like mountain of toothpicks, no metaphor,
great noise like alone, drum,
echo through forest of own garden. Build they came
like scramble up a god on elevator
to first breath, sigh,
release all richness
and life of planet, scaffolder stand just

cry on station. Sudden train? Rain
not under cover stick out from
balcony and story of solitary make, many way
of speak—your ownership of world;

fate—not one like me but
better than all open. Walk home less tears.
Expect wife soon with touch of more full.

I Never Used to Like How It Felt in My Mouth

You become one of those diminished line drawings
you judged on the front of poetry books, sleep
like they never admitted to, a note in the played key
the rain made that time, turning down the offer of rare,
the discovery, finally, of "death" as more than a place
you must now teach the difficult spelling of to everyone,
it unteachable, you showing them that, the light around it,
you turning it off early unable to finish the course,
you sitting on a smile that used to say "anti-real metaphysic"
not that you'd say that: why are you crying?
the work easy and the steps hardly seeming down, a patient
glance a senseless shrug but you allow a nice sound, us
being the ones that nearly made it out and through the trick
like how to speak of it with the same words.

Read It Slower, Then

After John Ashbery's 'The Picture of Little J. A. in a Prospect of Flowers'

Dick and Genevieve laying stolen clay pipes through a fairytale wood
photographed differently through the surprise trees of one by two and two and two

and/or fear in an invisible set shaving itself—Ricky: “I mean pairs
like “partners”, you still rummaging for safety
as the name of me was picked first.” G considers
as she joins with grey why he speaks so far away from himself
and her, ignoring how she is deep in the forest
herself in-between cracking brown leaves as if the firecrackers
exist but for same sounds, sounds
like trees themselves if you are thinking hard, Ricky at the end
you know if you are enjoying yourself making
a snowman! G is manically working
with the blowtorch just about managing on bad seals, ice
in her breaks to cool then back to the fire, Ricky
miraculously between the two, too, his foot
falling raised to look like he floats above white to her,
when only his hand is out from his chest, the air,
the part just touched the animals the overhanging
seeds all the same… “What do they call it?”… temperature. Enough?
“Speak for yourself. I’m not going back there.” Ricky
picked up the hammer he hadn’t used in years and smashed his thumb
and went back to actually counting those seeds and making
a little
organiser from the spare clay to categorise them for a while, ignoring G’s advances,
though it no doubt helped her understand his ways, he
hers. We all enjoyed that more
around the water fountain waiting to turn the tap on, set to the perfect
temperature by Ricky for sixty-two percent of the staff living quarters’ median preferences;
though I am looking
from the window with you, clearly
at an old winery we’d just visited
wondering how we all get on the same boat when you’re in that mood
down the pipe if we don’t separate ourselves
first, and quickly. Then we could all swim together at the runoff, G’s cracked joins
wormed through and past, not being the be all and end all, Rick
had us thinking with his tool: “Get your own pipe and trees, G.”

<u>Itself; Therefore Themselves</u>

The shadow shutters itself between frames of itself
spitting colours on itself with, “There! There!”
There there, a view-master tugging
like a son stirring the bowl-mixture with satisfactory conception, though a firm grip,
though a loose grasp, the shadow shattered, view-

master off in blurs between clicks
deciding now game, new shadows pretend paint

meeting back in name play later. Who is a toy?
They grab hands and step back to consider
the landscape around themselves for the first time, point
and shoot and land on further, “There!” glare out

at the studio they themselves have rebuilt staring back at
the artwork as if they were staring at themselves.

Searing Lines in Patches

Burnt crumbs you find when you pull out
the bottom of the toaster we notice
everyone’s dark bits around light specks blinking
and missing and scorched hot
too quickly inside like a silver spoon
over the element held to the neighbour’s dog, an early kink
unrecognised as it was your spoon, the family
album knowing which way round the number settings work.

Those elements—searing lines in patches—
are important you would agree but they do not look like
the ages they told you to play or remember so as not to repeat, so close
to the rescue pet next door that we almost
wonder how we’re separated: in our house
we never dared put the big light on.

Me and the Ants

“Me and the Ants” love it when you leave
them crawling on my back

them jigging on my spine releasing
the fire of my pain through the yurt of my heart

as if there is a drawing pad
beside me to hold our old

ideas of make pretend of copy of the holidays
I am out there as too many things

but in here I come back together
as you have taken that living room away from me.

What to Put Down First?

We brought the floor with
us unsteadily, a struggle to keep balance. See! Horrible
grandfather clock I carried and marbles
stuck to the bottom of the shoes I was born wearing, honest.
Would you like to play? On the motorway?
In advance I decided this was undecided, though something like this,
and something to represent the difficulty of the surface
for one to stand on, as if it is some wider
thing, not a moving day, my partner
refusing to carry my timepiece and games. Is this why I squint
to think what to put down first? Not that this is really
first. We have been struggling with getting it all together,
the walkway. How do they do it in the great manors?
The joins look nothing to do with study: I slip
on the little pieces of what should be concreted higher up
above the roads and faces of time (the same as a coin face, eh?);
I know we should never be aiming to make it too right, but how are we
to stay together if we don't break down this still ghastly ornament, a manner of speaking
I try and pick up for our sakes.

A Lid

"I'm a little teapot blowin' off steam"
—N.E.R.D., 'spaz'

It isn't very distinct, but it is a flash, a squeeze,
A buzz like an anticipation like a long long story

Reduced, the clouds being as they always were
Of sums and images and young desire

Of individuals in the cultural sphere, shapes
Being there also (how I miss shapes) it running out

Like it couldn't possibly have felt so
Large before (as if I can refer back to it

With "felt") the divisions being only
Something else I am not going to buy into; but looking

Was different, like it appeared endless and

Unproblematically magical (words I may have used).
How does it build if it isn't there? It can only ever be

A-keeping being pulled—so what's this here? The pan
Boiled suddenly and made me sick; but I have found

A lid with a steam hole works perfectly.

<u>The Driver</u>

You say and do innocuous things
as newfound peddlers around you conceptualise these as so, them having
your back

skin tight in grip as they enter you. More things grow
years later as can happen to anyone, rushed
in images of innocuous—the innocuous!—you shouting,

"The innocuous!" in an old universe, you reading new science
since then, the growth covered from your speech, the darkness
in this room only being what was always there, you feel,

no peddler now to speak of, dead or to speak to: they made it off your art.
You talk to the help who nod and stroke your head at everything you say, which you know cannot be right, as
you still laugh in your skin about the birth

of innocuous things; until the boy in a suit between meetings—his, "Get a grip!" echoing
through the growth like a mind/body/time problem—walks in
with a smile, of all things, daring

to still flex his muscles in a tree pouting—even with the flowers!—
an attitude to kiss your belly hovering out of view so you aren't sure you feel it: "Awful
weather. Good day to be a duck! Though I used the driver."

<u>Serpent Returns</u>

"That shit cray"
—JAY-Z & Kanye West, 'Niggas in Paris'

"The demands of the unconscious act at first like a paralysing poison on a man's energy and resourcefulness, so that it may well be compared to the bite of a poisonous snake"
—Carl Jung, Aspects of the Masculine

"Just a little pinprick"
—Pink Floyd, 'Comfortably Numb'

No no no I am doing it. Box of serpents. Perhaps it would be better tomorrow.

As a warm up, I will remember the epigraphs. Bear with me. Done.
Not a voice I know. Not enjoying the tone yet.

(The first is a risk.)

I am the serpent in the tree, the trees
what I wrap around like this and worry for myself,
the main trees having statistics on the human condition, or this here. Can I warm?
Over the top of ringing is little, currently. This must be what it is like

Why would I want to bring anything back to make excitement? The dreaded content.
I could make reference to my own life
directly, in ways regret; and that small drop
may be a breaking of go. I hesitated over, but I am the serpent, this form
important earlier on in the gym, exactly
as it sounds. But it has coiled back, this kind of thing clever.
Why induce the pain? Obvious sounding. I was
on wave and open and perhaps moving (I will;
big nods inside myself) charge of a chance... I shall not do it;
serpent was going with noise (stay here). From here

in tree I see the groups going to pubs
as singles and grouping and looking for saviours
in panic between a quench, the boring
serpent which would be a fantastic lover, safe house,
consistent bet being jeered, no one admitting to saviour—
no understand. I parked lines above the thought of my trip
to High Tatras, not a finding but a lift and big falls, serpent lurking,
him lost in the masturbation of the condition (other possibles
but only becomes condition) stopping more caveats: best check the chips;
a sneak; a noise stopped so thank him, me still serpent. Not anything I really enjoy

yet. Fair to say this completely used
to make my mood? And benefit from? Do keep thinking of her
as if exist independent. Different than whatever time ago,
ready to question that. Something special was here, something

that could have been seen as more and not just done selfless work
as I am serpent. Should I have trusted her more and parked myself? How raised
as snakes? How wrong am I (there is a shaking) to be
joining a clever, joining a clever of what was once an anger,
something I now remember! now!
feeling is now a whole experiential thing we move through
as snake round tree to bring century here (could be going now)
not century but a lot of time, pulling through,

stop the bad by just forgetting, amalgamating as a building or whatever,
it will slither off a touch but now it is no use for it, look,
all being a move through without name, hence the saviour-
wanters are never here, because if they were
it would be grump, violence in four days I know it. Blame on a snake.

No longer scared of you, me with no arms. No longer think of whatever I think, mistake
made and pulled in, you, the memory,
pulling in sometime (dross) him about to eat which will really
be an end. Tomorrow? We were to pull in much, play,
drop so many incredible things. Imagine if meaning made

by a psychot? by a psychot? by an opening? by a new world
out of doing mad bad, old atom action? how do you own disorder
was another. No we are not asking the question here;
behave as a snake. I haven't even explained the garden! The tree,
the biggest tree expecting end of a re-cord, us
at our most manipulative, snake
hearing circus from here, not a bar. Ask them.
Ask them if they see the serpent and if they discover more afterwards, bodies
piling up unready and a new formation, a category at least
or just the little slap I can see, hear. No one said

it could be like this, so serious, several places at once, tempt-
ed but refraining there. I was seeing her too much anyway
says serpent, sure. Hope my reappraisal is without these.
Does it make a special thing? fing?
What is a better than any? Another lang? Could go all low but no (short);
several whispers. An unspoke normal it is working; I am free soon!

(The exercise.) This a trick.

Handled it for a bit in my worst place plus two-ish; it a progress. Don't guess. I was a postman
says serpent. Serpent stopped in kitchen and stopped
this and discussed, not interesting, now a trust piece? I am a trust piece, but not this piece,
longest? that would be interesting. Nothing like we ever sound;
a vessel to deliver whatever we like is the film and such;
the academic sleeping; these unright. When was there everything we needed to know? The
coffin
fallen and the arm revealed: yes the snake is watching that,
own self. I get here and forget how to uncurl;
moments all come back together to cohesively explain little
and the thing shouldn't be pushed

Keen In

A great idea made into jumpers for goalposts.
We repeat, the Sistine Chapel scraped
into a tub with some thinner, hoping it works,
seems so, and poured out in one big grey
pattern to annoy the parents as they want to watch play,
that being only a cover, like packaging the babies prefer.
We refer now to the alluded spruce up, ringing
stepped away from to the stage, a slanting stage
built on memory foam without the sleep as you slip down
in more ways than one with various bumps
with various ways of saying, Ouch! (can you guess ours?)
the ringing nothing to do with us, even though
you may also predict that we are the stage hands
I don't know how to spell, when I give away
that it's only me here in goal: if you've heard
the ringing and seen the stage and laughed (with me!) at the bumps
finally, then you will appreciate the chapel whilst somehow allowing
for the thing enjoying the package to be screaming over the ringing
in more ways than one, also, one or two
a bit grim while three's a game, too,
no one scoring past me anymore, though your brow sighs
you ignored me years ago and only respect authorities, sneaking
out when the last sub came on (think): We are indulging
your senses on the tour today, this being
where the players bathe, their dirt
running out there to water the flowers you'll see
back down the slope where the fans enjoy a glimpse (but I must tell you
today, as it is my last day
and I am tying up whatever this sham of a job has been, that we usually
only send out stunt doubles over the crowd of the noise).

Bad Poet Apologising

"I am sorry I had to express it like that
in that moment—if it happened
like that, in that moment, that is; as we agree
our conception of the expression
as we recall it, may be accurate
or not, between us; though it is that
regardless, which this apology
is premised on, I believe? I *know*, I mean; though I also
recognise further—predominately!—how it may

have landed with you, what I said, with your experiences
too; so I acknowledge
the need for this all round," he says to her
at her bedside at her last, reading
what he has just sat writing
in the car park, for some minutes, looking
at her once
he's finished, for response, unsure
whether to grab his notebook, for further, talked-out
analysis, her
struggling to form words
in her condition—her, pointing
at the window, he decides; her
struggling to sit up, with him
seeing the point from her finger: the flowers
from his sister
on the window sill. "Yes!" he says
screwing up the paper and dropping
to his knees, in tears. "I see
why you point out
for me—for me!—the weather
and the sky and the flowers
and *life*: you are asking
me, to regard, as usual; you needing
no words," he cries. "I am such
a fool and you are leaving
from us—which! may be deemed selfish
when you are ready to discuss this maturely."

<u>Eight Year Old Boy Locks Self in Bathroom</u>

"He don't know, so he chases them away"
—Pearl Jam, 'Even Flow'

You do not stay here very long. The ringing must be what it's like not to build, the plug end
of the prophet spectrum, peace,
where we want to drain everyone. O even I liked that here
in the twinging static
around the ring I keep myself in
by keeping myself in by walking into the room again
once we know what is there again, the understanding sufficient
to cover empathy now: I am making myself sound
just by doing this, you must begin to realise. As you go to get chocolate
after the successful day of not too full and the makeup sex, the doubt
pushed back you are bursting with hope

in every conscious feeling and thought, that walk
to get the chocolate, around ten-fifteen p.m.,
being everything, we must inform you. How was it there? The plans
and memories of them forming already in the ideas
of their romance which will be seen back, when focused,
as flashbacks which become experience, in due course,
conscious or unconscious without many hairs to split, everyone
in the same boat at a certain point with all the authors' names able to be swapped out,
rubbery sewage in a pipe in a swamp always still going, us resting on it,
climbing back and forth, no one winning but some
knowing what's coming first: it might be you.

Those Underground Racing Circuits

"Girl this whole thing is pain." Did I really say that?
I didn't. I saved it for you. Two cars back

on the circuit Joachim
from Wyoming says, "What am I doing here?" and all I could say

was, "Kid—you got a lot to learn. It's how they boost
around these parts and sell junk

from late night blinks that really gets us going, is it not? Because ain't it
just a little bit of a tease

how they turn those thoughts of the heartbreak—that they don't
actually feel, by the way; picturing the manager

outside the boozer where they can have them
for clear up talks and pretend they don't go upstairs

that way: where were we in all this again,
Joey? Not being considered: I'm aware." You feel me out there? What did I save

ever buying anyone but myself a drink? Am I smiling? Sure am—
Joachim: these be some slick moves you just flogged.

Spring

"The loose fates serving our acts, with token smiles"
—John Ashbery, 'Summer'

We are not going to look at the thick end of it: let's pretend
we are a French film, thin like them, the Polaroids sounding good,

the performance of the hot ash backed by a vacant stare
premised on a lineage break that knows I'm the bottom feeder.

Don't go! I shouldn't have said it like that. Oh God—
your God? I should have said… Am I listening? Yes I should have said
that you look like that actress and that I've never tried this
before; and that the barren pine pot

you've got, is mysterious? Yes I was a soldier and shot at the Russians too
(she'll never know) much fun I am having on the way down, the way down
we always go, baby. Am I fantasising again? But can we both not? As we all
surely understand by now

that what brought us here together in this alleged hotel room—that I am sure
you own—is not a chemistry from the conceptual
up, that you've designed, but from a murkier place. Or can I say
mysterious again and get away… O indeed I can! Baby!

Manifesting

Tapping on window from bird that is of not, my fingers
too early crawl across keys that were
once keys, cards, bumps of bags,
diversions of the undergrowth that now be covered

by trickery of bird at window, windowless
is my room when I close blind, blind
is my body if tap keys too early and engage screen
of world of faceless, further, if I unfurl shapes

unreal too but for good of Irish exit, them (in bathroom)
creating this rising, nothing like phoenix, more like
cock, blame be put outside on tap
of ashes from before… Aha! The founding

of the journey! The resurrection of the fowl
under growth. Many myths to be had in this state of disrepair
brought to you by taping too early, idealising scroll
of the non-poetic feed, flashing of keys

in bowl of blind, folded, appearing heavily-cut cock-
tail as only fill time, empty, looking altogether
in horror at old, the grab of key screens, as told,
sealing a wrong turn in morn of funny

turn when looked on that way, the shape
never next to me no more allowing for more fall
into myself, too, if I do not find—and make!—
further long tail from what will always be… a bowl? Barrel.

A Bit of Irish Technical Narrative

We were at the gas station sunk in with stacks of
of knowledge, tossing books
about the place—out on the sand—a real cloud up
around the impending issue of paying the attendant: Lucy
flashes a bit of Irish technical narrative, and we stuck us
out for some road, her tattoos
making us easy targets for lambers, the pages
giving signs to every investigator this side of any water
we wanted to cross. I hadn't cared for reading in years (I'd been quiet.
She'd felt good filling in my childish blanks) and what else do you need
with a girl on your arm with easy-to-find
marks for the catchers, as I didn't want to work,
out here all dumb. We didn't eat for days, Lucy
reading me sentences she called snippets: "All you need
of me, boy—of this world"—me
finding empty things to hit like drums
when I wanted, but mostly stealing
what I didn't want to afford anyway, Lucy
too sweet for bothering more, dust up
about our tracks and hair and denim, something I'd never wear
without you: little old me
at a gas station? They won't catch us, dead girl.

(A version of this poem was first published in my pamphlet L'etoile*, October 2024. Redacted copy available here: https://ashleydunn.co.uk/letoile-redacted/)*

Anything Will Do Foundations

You will not understand this wall that was once only floor,
you will not see through it, and it is not for us to explain
why, as we, at Right-
down Construction, are only the builders, this being your bread and butter,
the walls, after the placing of strong foundations
by Anything Will Do Foundations. They also have the garden sub-
division, though I have heard they only do dated designs. What we try
to create are walls which are just a little bit
interesting, but are only able to be climbed by those
you want to be climbing them, the others being put off by what they think

is your crassness. We do do sound
solutions which include playing bird noises from only
your side of the wall, which people can interpret
however they like, but it usually keeps the right ones out
further. We also do Peeping Tom holes...
but of course that isn't for you. Though it would only be
to check eyes: right. I must inform you
that we do not rollout this level of campaign to everyone, so you should think twice about
what you are considering as these walls are the best, and Anything
Will Do are fine, but it is really about what you're building on top of. So give us
a call! We may change
name but the number should be the same. We are also
always considering other options also, and in that case we'll be glad to have met you
by then, whatever "we" could be by then—like a ship;
though this is where my last company went wrong; and you noticed
didn't you. And there are other contacts out there available
which also provide peeps to leave your ideas afresh afterwards.

Kick! Kick!

Becoming the negation of any expression
is the pirate's life for you, you on
the plank all the time shouting, Plank!
Plank! which no one will correct in the sea
beneath you, keeping caring mouths
in a line outside the dingy they see you in, as you regard them
as resting iceberged faces, before someone
goes under to not come back up and you watch your own death
as everyone shrugs
under the water whilst changing their faces for you, which they do not
understand, cannot possibly, for you. The captain comes along
and pushes you in and you believe him
for a few years; but how could there be two of you
in that dingy, the primary school chair that it was, the plank
like a cliff then a kerb for you not fitting every time
in hindsight. Yet you knew! Even then! Which becomes
great as it is for others in the sea, goggles sometimes
used to see shrugs which also make the landscape
blurry, the boat, the captain... gone?
stars? actors? the waves
surely not all rolling into what you know not to say
anymore, like you seemed
to even know at the beginning—great: you learn to float and splash along.

Now What's He Taken?

"Could you hear them? In my room, they were,
stealing, saying I was stealing from them, as I was

stealing from them, what of it, have you heard
I cannot steal from them anymore, and they'll say

I cannot hear them? They'd be right! What do I do?
This is bliss I have to ruin, this is what I do,

making a mole hill out of a mountain. The impossible? As
I can at least see how everything is so quietly

created out of little trivialities from here, if that's
what it always sounds like out there. What the hell is in my hand?

Who the fuck are you?"

Hooks, This, Shepton

"What does it mean to use a "hook"
like "this", to go outside with
to bring the sheep in, to then
throw "this hook" in the bin?" Shepton

the collector of sin, we used to say,
on the farm, but now we are without, "Hey!
You've done that wrong!" as we have only
pulling in and forgetting with song

before we stop singing, with thanks to
what is also in the bin, considering
we don't know where that rubbish is too
and what we considered wrong before.

Long Scrub Times (e.g. 10 Minutes) Are Not Necessary

You are going to have to undo all that one day in pain
in your adopted doctor's outfit, your old
crusty mask stuck to your face, your vocabulary
fit for a chefs, your choice of menu having so many dishes
that you've put on, meaning no one is going to know which one
to pick from what you've put on. Though maybe it's not too bad

being a plate to be ate off? We wouldn't

put you there anymore. So be

the architect that buys the property for the land
to start afresh without many plans
for the home other than trust

in your own hands, as your face is far back
in the cartoonish sketch you drew of yourself dressing up in a hurry
due to the poem cooked up before you came: scalpel.

<u>It's Behind You? Doubtful; Look Infront</u>

They do not need civilising, said the ogre
in a suit, who is not that wind instrument. Yet you see

how you make me surreal, in my use
of other languages: it may be you—back

the sisters go to their uncles in the sticks
fiddling, our hymn sheet

only able to be thrust under-
neath them as if it's their own tune; hence

the ogre in a suit: I am

sticking with it, it playing a horn
after all—very distracting—like a pied piper

without the relapsing into... how do you say...
gratuitous percussion in the home; like all the cymbals

can be tapped, by sticks,
and don't need whacking by an ogre in a suit, weirdly.

<u>Sometimes... Doesn't Matter</u>

There are always these
that could have been wall tapestries.
I wonder how I had any before
and where that boy was in the field sowing.

I couldn’t have known there was a farm coming close.
O wasn't this always my home, even
when it was loud like there were an outside
irregular, the kinds of things that happen

when we find out the big trick that’s gone on
with the flat… do you know? Yes it’s all flat. How did you know?
Should we be talking?
I have found myself again

with less of the noise. And I would back this
over a hanging.

Nearly Back!

There’s no silly bloody time and you have nothing to do
but read about bloody wars, something
that never fit with you, but their formats
are fitting for this newfound float you have found
to be. Will the casting ever stop? Maybe not; who knows
without question the descriptions of these battles being almost poetic
so you have forgotten what you really wanted to find out
about what you were forgetting. You would feel
ever so uncomfortable fighting in those conflicts, is somehow right,
but you do not necessarily feel what you would have chosen here, which brought
you this sickly chair, which I know you don’t like. Yet here we are, oodles
of fighting to go. Let’s place you on the battlefield:
you have won, and wasn’t that easy? What will you do with your
winnings? So we’re invading again? Of course! I was somewhere
else thinking there was something… I was considering…
I was nearly in the room! Fishing?! So where are you thinking of going?

Fruit Stones

As I come down to earth and build my snowman I must tell you
of the showman you are being on the lawn
which is no lawn, my child, this here
being the adult which was before
a child that flew—how I flew!—
but I now return and you will find, as I
show you—in the only way I can—

what is here, which is little, you
being fooled by the mower that was handed to you
outside of this world which is only your own, the algorithm

of which I can say
of little but a whisper in the wind that breathes
on the ice as you are cold-hearted I can tell you
and you must learn to land cautiously in the down of flight, I have shown, as flown.

Good to Go

You drop yourself in a new world, different decorations,
gendered i's and t's deconstructed, woolly noises
from the future direction you hope to impress
on what it brings, novel intercourse which is not like...
the old things forgetting, going, memory
and by-the-by: what was... what? unsure

sound, gross taps and clicks like the fridge
readying itself or the radiators
implying they are heating; but you are in control
you think, the lights or pulls

or down-sizing you dread to think, though do anyway,
taking you where you need as you have stepped
regardless of the colour schemes where you once were, tape measures

redundant! It fits without you even trying! Meant to...

better not go near that; what is brewing
in this new old, left in the freezer
by the previous mover, as there could be such a thing. This could be a new unfolding;

see how the day goes? You are nervous
about the impact of the rug
pulling the old pets out from dank... no dank,
the dictionary reducing without it being dictatorially
forced. Can you feel... which is enough.

There is not a principled need to argue; we can accept
that you are not disciplined enough to stay here—fine—
but you are not as rash as to place everything you brought along with you here, either, so you do
create or something and sulk about the cloud walls, like cats timidly passing,
but you know, overall, with a pad,
that you are the civilising agent of yourself
leaving behind—if that even makes sense! but there is no logic for rehabilitation
like a bad mood still—leaving behind
whatever it was. What will not be remembered,
revisited. Will you now be naive enough to want

to prove something to those “saved”? Not in
good time. Solid, safe, consumer time—a god send. All this
to get here. But it’s a new dawn! A new dawn!
Brilliant weather and then the season coming? You see;
got the new MG? I never understood what it stood for, you
here standing for uncomplicated solutions to the problems
of the youth, working hard, saving
for a pension and trying to drag up whatever it could have ever been—what a mess
that was!—with your rise, which is actually a growth spurt,
which is actually a decriminalising grip away from all those postmodern splashes... a risk,
but we do have off days on the road.

Ah, a Cruise With the One, Finally

I don’t know how we did it, me and the Tyre of Nots,
but we beat the voices over the tannoy, calling for
a break as we beat the realists too
and the anti-realists and left the canteen
and/or the front room where they had the debates
and the lovely trinkets were settled, the arguments
used as bait for catching foreplay? the drinks
put down seemingly at the same time without a noticeable slam, the trees falling
apparently, love coming in, O love coming in
and carrying you off and taking you aboard

a ship floating on rubber then? Yeah alright—
floating on rubber where you cannot see the sides, ends,
the building process on a small blue plaque
you fiddle a screw on as you wait outside the loo
for eternity, having not even noticed you forgot to put your watch on, the tai chi class
postered on the deck now looking decent: “You know, while you do that workshop
which involves the wheel”—shouted over
a double-flush—"I might go to that.”

What if I Dupe the Editors Just as Much Though? Then What?

Can you edit the plants? Is this what it comes to?
If you are going to come in with that kind of energy you better think of a good way of extending
your stay, because I’ve had it
with energy. It is something like all this

so far I would say to him—I would say, Take that out, as it is nothing
to be intelligent out there, too far forward
if it isn’t on a pulley: I wanted to make

more sense, him saying something like that. What was my idea?
I was being inspired and my face is actually quite neutral at the moment; but I did think

of sting, twist, jab, gurgle
of a discomfort within myself only ten minutes ago: perhaps

this is what it all was. So what's going to come next? Something
to appear didactic, we are sure. But have I introduced

her? And all them there

outside? But they are now

in here? That is only surprising

against my refusal to postulate more than a shave, seconds ago

us understanding.

<u>The Rack of Glasses You Bought at the Flea Market Did Not Fit the Shelf in the Fridge, and Now</u>

you are low, after the high
of anticipating them fitting (that it could!) because

you could have neatly slid them into place
and taken one glass and poured a drink, and drank, remembering

the time they went down on you as you smoked, which
you never remember, though you tell people

of the act, as you watched, in the same way
you'd have told people over your shared glass, "Someone

once went down on me as I smoked!" the fridge
saving you from the effort, again (or was it

the future from the flea market?) as it knew
you did not feel it, the high

and bump of the ill-fitting prop now easing
you into the storm of an overworked door, left open, the light

glowing the edges of the room.

The Riff That Was Discovered Just Before '(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction' Was Written

Rubbing my eyes deeply seemed to do it this time: I'm staying up here.
Not for long; were those necessary? There was probably a longer pause
due but we must think of so many things
and not be aware of them depending where you are
in the long line which is once you have seen
alone, mostly dependent on your appetite. Staying
yes sort of between like there's a link all the time, until you...
notice? How is it notice? How many things must there... what is this... I'm... because if you know
and are smiling you know it isn't that; and I know
you are good at it
if you are seeing and smiling but do not care for
it as much as you did even though you could please
all the frowns and end up being stalked
for minutes before they have an eye rub
type-scenario themselves whether they do it or not, it looking
like something loud. I could
have been married for decades
still yesterday and today I would not have recalled it at all; and I don't
find it improper to suggest that it has taken you far too long to consummate this marriage
that we cannot remember putting here?

Minor Conflict—Move On

It is perhaps against international law that so many
suggestive meditations, dream-like-
so-sounds-nice are included other than here, really hard and difficult,
breaking news, children being killed,
and all I can think about is weaving and with that
I know it isn't dreamlike, ready
to stay loud? I know the type of person
who'll pretend they understand me for no other reason
than what they'll understand in time—time!: exactly what the clocks are four. Come on—
what do you expect from anyone? Have you seen the screens?
And this riles you? Who doesn't care?
Staggering how they bring out the former ones who are now
less impartial just to deliberate on shifts in the tone
of the conflict—phew. Ogre. Yes you'll go with that
slip. And just like this war (?) I am unsettled
in every conversation outside my own retreat
into the dream which should leave me quietly—but I am too
bombarded; so could I sleep in and care? A probability
different from sh-ushering myself.

This Definitely Requires the Listener

No! No we are not friends anymore:
I saw my funeral in a dream. I now brush my teeth
at night. I know how lists can work
full stop. I understand Cormac more slightly
(I see). It is strange how it works paradoxically

as my funeral would make it all pointless

to a former me who is positive about question marks. Not me

today. Where am I going to lean
now you are gone is a mystery I clearly implicated
as unanswerable. Unsayable. Brushing my teeth
is an action I take and not say. Do you know where he wanted
to stay and in the darkest of hearts and that smell
in the morning which you did not understand
was a dirty trick and I enjoyed it for a time and that is why
I saw my funeral and it is not a paradox as I must
survive beyond you regardless and
(I see) and you being pulled
and there being an irritation to it being strange and how it works

as I do not want to beat it—no—but improve

the dream and more teeth before I go,

and for that I do not need you and though I clearly do
as you are here, I know it.

Edges Itself Together

Having left the other one open
for now, the placement of a fictitious love
to so obviously dupe arising to lower itself
across mediums we cannot be entirely sure of why
with mistakes hidden, and blemishes, we are born
die born and so see the end knowing
it is not so unlike an optical illusion, like a child
being served at a bar talking to me with that face
as if I am me the illusion, balancing
just like this ready to turn or not, me lying
to the man to not say that it matters, but show

like a hand on a back very confidently
in the middle, not that I am doing that really
gripping on to the wood, which I accept is just there
without demonstrating both hands anymore
unlike the love again, ready we go into forgetfulness
like a hob left on as we make love without a pan:
the order doesn't seem to matter if you're smiling.
Have I found it? The boy shakes inside me
like he was never at the bar, in love, able
to justify ability mixed up with response. Do I need to include
another? Yes and no, us out on our own
knowing where to not do but a movement
like a growth without a style for brushing, too away
but funzier, an atomic habit or the best you've ever had
you hate, not that love. Am I ready
yes, so closely together it barely needs saying, removing oneself
more and more, read into them
then no do. I will not remove, so do do
without a slight hand like an edge to the prom land, stepping out
afterwards being unlike formulating a question, let alone.

Like Going Down on Your Sister

The portal of the day was wide
allowing the tea's existence
to allow me to enter the cleaning apparatus
disallowing me to make sense of the airless, hence I have clogged it. My memory
of you is not to be taken lightly here as it goes way beyond
here, a bit plainly and reductively,
something I take back from here to explain, not that it helps,
several feet forward into the future too,
infecting future, one way
and then the other. I could sit here now and polish nowt, but my need
to demonstrate the fogginess of this tea
that I am switching back to, it appears
for the moment can induce the resting stage
of the fluid bedding in? lifting the stain?
We are not entirely convinced, just because
it is that testing stage, perhaps, especially
when it puts a love heart, around it, of the old vacuum. Can I get away with this
decaf dream at this time in the morning? what about that?
No I am not reading the bottle! We do not pay
to know how it works, only to be reassured that it does
by the front.

Meeting New Neighbours

After the darkness
we found some consistent light

without this!!!!! or the big light
anymore; having learned

both how to soothe ourselves
and the correct phrases
for our new neighbourhood
and how they concur

and balance the books and provide no dimmer

switches
or false alarms or shiny

surprise jewellery that we cannot explain, looking
gold-plated: not a lot underneath. What did we learn? I said

nothing at that first dinner, nor shall I
here—forget it. Low crime rates.

And Yet We Return

I now know what you are, barely a who,
stringing parcels together for the frenetic energy
thinking they at least look good
in more ways than at least one, we hazard, voice
outputted like a smoke alarm, that flat,
when we've already contained even the possibility of a fire. So I do know

but never get going, unsurprisingly.
The present is handed over on Christmas Eve
eagerly, though with one long "erm" from a forgotten—one long string
tying it altogether. They could teach me a thing or two
(down here!) about wrapping gifts but I don't even know

how to place
my hands in a such way to hold it tight, to stop
what I know of this barely reaching you.

Houseboat Days

After John Ashbery

You did not appreciate it when you were there
in the teacup, why the beach was irritating. Her bikini bottoms
were so tight on her bottom but the sun was too revealing, nothing

to do with that teacup, her teacup,
your old crass ways and paradise photos
on the social media of your bedroom ceiling: what

am I saying? The teacup
was removed from its storm—or it
from the teacup whatever this is regarding

the matter of clarity, quiet,
barely anything and not knowing what it was
to be there after the brightness demonstrated

your tight analyticity. The photos
are everywhere? The tea didn't
cool you down in the heat, but you insisted. Staggering

what is revealed in the peace
of your own private beach; as the waves
wash albums up all over the walls and floors

dripping into what you're trying to read now.

Considering a Masters in Creative Writing for Therapeutic Purposes

"In my brain I rearrange the letters on the page to spell your name"
—Courtney Barnett, 'History Eraser'

He wrote the letters of the alphabet
on the board, and said,

"Write a story with that, whatever
you like," and I was recently divorced, so I was in

a bad mood so I knew what he was trying
to do to me, so I let him have it: I typed

“alphabet” wrong a few times and kept getting
“slap her”, chuckling to myself as I did so, knowing

it was short lived; but it was mine
for that time—how I was now yours. The man

next to me was struggling with the exercise, and in the past
I would have helped him: I would have been

remembered for eons by the group. But I did not turn to him
today, instead
staring straight down or ahead
into my work
or the future as my spelling
seeped into me so as to be rubbed out, indirectly
instructing stories outside. Though I was nervous
suddenly about what had come out as I had only
mixed up the “a” and “p”
seeing what it could make
unmesmerised by my own backstory, wanting to leave
the group as I would not normally make such silly mistakes: I
froze. Wooden.
Wooden in a chair in a group. What was

this? There was no choice
but for my little finger to be lifted
by the man besides me, to move

the letters in front of my eyes as I looked through him
and saw the alphabet in a reimagined way: my ex-wife
walked back in with her new partner, us all laughing, the obviousness

of my situation, almost disgusting
for this stage
in his career—for he could spell: he was just tired. Could that

be all? Why is he here? Because you are
my child, not that you'd really get that

from this: I left the group
grounded, not speaking for her or the rest of the group

which took me a small while to gather.

Tax Doesn't Have to Be Taxing

Why are you putting the phone down like you're in the series? And I see
you have come here with all that stained glass... but no! It is scripture! At least
it looks like scripture and it sounds
very robust from the back of your throat, saying nothing
of how it connects
beyond that. Is that what you came for
from the start? Because of it?
Stop it. I do make myself blush! How
have I got so good with these flat
pack boxes, of which
yours was full of glass, as you said. Tell me—
how does it feel to bring it all with you

now, as the models have gone
disintegrated into their own little huddles of dreams, whereas we
were going to break them, but you
attempt to stay joined to theirs. How are you reading this?
How could you be here

after all? Because there is faking it
and there is faking it with a low hum of ignorance
for the connections that are coming, unique to you,
unavailable for your children. Will you do the same for them,

after all? Or will you put down

that phone more sensibly and break up

that glass box you came in, as I always saw through you,
and I cannot hold this any longer without giggling

at those books: my word!

Quick Shower

For dry
damaged...

hair! A sham-
poo poem! They're everywhere!

And it's because

I'm now set up for life. Because I was set up

for life! So shall we now add
a conditioner? Yes! Well done! Good boy!

And there we are, soft and clean again.
"Yeah well—it's not your best

wor-" No
chance! As it all comes out

in the wash, after all: great effort!

Like a Swamp

You didn't just pull the cover over the pool and build a character
on top, did you? But it was filthy! Like a swamp.
You remind of the man

who created the most elaborate fiction franchise in the universe
only to call it "Silly Billy" or something
ridiculous from the start so no one could say anything about it, let alone

to him: we only winced. And he couldn't go back and undo it
afterwards, the first one thousand
adaptations all having sores. They'll probably be more, too! Or

you are like the long distance runner
who didn't know she was running
on similar sores as she mocked

all the other runners. But would she listen to me? Not at all, these others
being just as fictional: who would build
a character on top when they can't even stomach

talking about that kind of thing? No!—you can't take it off
now. It's all solidified below and millions
rely on the flimsy tarpaulin that a few of us only mention

in a whisper, beneath the *plasters* on the sores.

Three Variations

It coming as a senseless, the songs
whispering to you on your wick, the fire lit,

you only feeling burn. Why? The madnesses
over there rubbing against the dynasties with money
sitting in the shiver, thousands of arms out,
Not God but I've no other vocab! civil-
isation sounding strange with all the options around
to keep getting coal for Christmas. But what is that?
You never enjoyed sprouts; we are sitting still on the clouds
flat-shaking flats with no front or back
covers to offer the sense formed, both ends? No—you want to trust that hand
and it no like being bitten anymore: we know the lyric
did something, as they intended. It stung. It felt.
Let it take you. Be civilised.

—

Behave! O you are. That's all you can do here in between
those few and far between
indices? Because the rest can be nonsense;
a gap in your teeth? More like the inverse—ha ha:
did you say you were behaving? You must be
as Santa still comes and you have freedom
as noted in many articles, us the silliness
unless we write them. But even then!: good heav...
Not God but I've no other vocab. Civil
disobedience with what exactly? The lines
you are towing? Can someone open the windows
and doors while I pray it's a high building
in the clouds? Not that I'd see a thing: all this nonsense
coming up from the streets, like weeds, bin fires.
Pull your arms in! They still bite
despite the cold hard cash.

—

I like it when they don't make sense to me
for some time, all things passing, shadow trains leaving tracks
that we only have to back over and kill fully in the future anyway, like something,
like something repetitive and easy to place and kill, like a leaf,

its shadow underneath wishing I was as low as the leaf
on the so-called ground, as then I wouldn't be high
and understanding, like a bum. From here
we must get somewhere, but where? There was an initial breakout

and breakup to allow the initial flood in—of what—vocab? And then

we might have cause to say things on concepts, but my point
is not to need such sense, gone in the memory,
a force of stop of not even stations. So there

do we have it: could this “this” be it? The final
venture if it is even possible to say: what I become, everything
external always making me feel invisible.
So why am I waving from a wind that does that horn gesture?

Unlock Requirement

“Forget it, Jake. It’s Chinatown”
—Lawrence Walsh to Jake Gittes, Chinatown*, directed by Roman Polanski, 1974*

Screeching in
on a growth spurt, breeder trash
head over the hills to the city
as sheep and lamb for a venture
with a slum project who gladly
stamps, pokes, sticks to the script
of Bo’s mid-youth crisis roleplay game of rockstar
administrator, Baldwin
and Beauvoir quotes at the ready, the voice-
overs remaining intact
for phoning home to ensure the money
is safe with the placeholder
who filled the gap
Bo’s forgotten about already, synthesis
the kid taught before they hung
themselves out being just so close
all the time for Bo: surely
she’ll square the misadventure
of that refused coupling framework
with these new clothes, no? Bo
can forget that too, as she returns
home considering the project
dead, hiding, recuperating there
before she takes the wardrobe production on a run
of a new city, far away, only with different
voiceovers, split clothes, more
projects hanging out as well as an anti-
thetical deposit below the belt
from the RAM.

Hot Coaled

One step for you, and two steps
for me. Now put that back! OK.

One step for you and two steps for me.
No! Put it down! You couldn't make this stuff up:

here you go. Clever clogs. Now let go of it
now. I'm taking everything away!

Honestly! It's so unfair.

You really couldn't write this stuff.

It Certainly Travels

"Dozing off underneath my sheets
While I cover both my ears"
—Vampire Weekend, 'Holiday'

You try on the big backpack in the mirror
like them. And it looks the same! This could be it!

You book some tours with all the right settings.
You go on many but don't feel

the same
as them, like those

out there. So you come back
after trying every corner of the globe, except

her
putting it on and doing it like that first flight, the one

you'd forgotten about. And that works! What a trip!
Yeah I've done Rome. Was alright.

Pirate's Life

When will he return to deliver the original pieces of eight
year olds, as he is currently too many eight year olds. Yet you should see him
read that over

checking, checking, sounding it out,
smacking it like the midwife you don't deserve
releasing your good girl: too many threads
spank together in retreat: maybe you need more activity

rather than retreat? Can you read this
there? Come back! He needs you to buy his new eight-stitch
voodoo doll making set perfect for labouring over
mindfully. I don't know what else to say: are you feeling
better here? Can you return the children bring

them out the chest? Me? Evidently: if only you could
feel these shivers (you will) hand on all that cheek.

Few & Co.

"He who fights with monsters might take care lest he becomes a monster"
—*Friedrich Nietzsche*, Beyond Good and Evil

You say, I want you here, and she considers
when she last bathed, a look
you aren't meant to evaluate: she is still
signing an agreement

in all this—steady; and now we have a play conceived
just like that, in some way: it has been suggested
that this was how you were born—the character
to my right for the play: Few; a mixed bag. Inside him

here is everything you will pull out from
when you get yourself up and away from these walls
that are talking, you lost in the collected works
of Few & Co., turning both of you inside out. Until then

she shakes and there is new air, life,
spirit: it's not what it all used to be. Though your wages
should have gone up with these inflations, these
walls having a lot to answer for—the lot of you.

My Cell Mate's Friend

"Lower highs and higher lows, I suppose!
That is what we all came for, isn't it? If you can get here?

Don't blame me! I've never had any complaints.

Fine I possibly have, as I went missing

a lot, off bulk buying something somewhere—
or marrying. No listen: then I'd be slashing at myself,

but in the head. I think a lot about some rules
I read on what indicates depression: they said

being too stirred by music
can mean it: conductor's fingers. And I don't understand.

And someone said I was their song once: I ended them.
It took away the edge for me quite finally—

I've got away with nowt since. How
do I feel? I believe in the seconds

around me at a push when I'm chatting like this."

Chasing Your Spine

Open up! We know you're in here. We can tell by the lack
of memory: what was the title of the last poem?
Gotcha! One of us knows you, see: that guy at the back
taking minutes? He's been with you: "I made you,"
he says. And he knew you'd keep coming back

to finish some job you were never too keen on
looking at. But you need it, now, don't you: the tapes!
You got away with it this time though: the things he could say;
not just another a minute taker, eh, is he—no.
A percussionist? What are you saying?

Get back here! Put the notebook down!
You didn't tell us this could happen! And how we changed
the sound of it then, too, to be
more smooth for the target to be wound up, flicking
pages. Remembering the outtakes? Not another one!

A Little Walk

Down by the river, rain, my new coat,
let me check it: along

the river, raining, inside

some layer or another, rain sliding off, water

flowing past, down the stream the next place, I planned
lunch: perhaps it's closed? Who

knows. Why did I go there? Better here
waiting. And this man has an apple!

Own it! No don't keep it. What did you bring
on the journey here today? Apart from the apples!

Cool. Sounds like it could be lovely—nice.
Someone said not to say that? Oh well;

I cannot remember. I cannot remember what I came here for.
I was up there, there was rain,

and now I'm here, making sense
to say: how do you like them? Silly!

Nothing bad will happen, but around us
it's falling.

<u>Stagecoach</u>

You see the damage walking down the street
like a creak on the stairs: let's get off
at this stop and walk to the next, staying
at that one for a while, watching
everybody go by
like they've any idea what they're doing!!! the lifts
going past like synchronicities
we point at, saying, "Synchronicities!" before
we look at the board
to find we'd actually walked back
to the last stop: "I don't even remember...
doing that?... Wow! How did we say it
in sync!!!"—more
going past and getting off—so many!—
that it's hardly worth mentioning
with respect:

I run to the next stop and get on and pull away and keep going and watch the view and point and
laugh
'bracing myself.

“Thank Goodness!”

...still along
the river jagged edges of flowing beams too close
to others, an agent,
a spy meeting to be frenetic, picking up leads, placing down
hesitation how we always did to pass out swamp
by fiddling in the swamp, floating down and on me
a moon, a step to bring me to, still after rocks

with this meeting we get back... along... the font
greater than and lesser than eyes looking like noses
of the two great conspirators: will they get there? mirror

work of their last training, eight letter name in the mud:
bring it to me. and can I get a coffee? row boats
slow, silence folding itself into the drone they found the previous night
on another river pointing clues, waking them up,
me taking notes: there’s no body?

Update on the VRI

“A very practical strategy based on the belief that there are profound limits to what the formal mechanisms of retribution can accomplish”
—*Malcolm Gladwell,* David and Goliath

Going to tell them just enough
to keep this and that foggy you know
how it is. What does it mean
for you? We don’t know who you are
as much as I do I think
I said that a lot during that
fog too much, totally out of
the fire into the frying pan
I made of lemonade, parenting
a child! a carrot! in the dark (you’re lucky
I changed that).

Lupus Salutation

Your ancestors do not like your dog so
stand up and walk it out. Though it’s too late

already, if you missed it: there’s no

lead; you'll come back next time. Still here? Bend
over backwards—yes; but run, also

to rid yourself of this confusion
of always trying to make four

someone else, in doubt
for their children too: that's how you do it—

big jumps: need I remind you
of what we are forgetting? If you've made it this far

no, pushing into brain fog, clutching at
relative comfort of what seems domesticated,

though it's actually half-bred.

Not a Grizzly

With the doors open
and the dust still settling you see through the glass ceiling
down on everyone you came with (and so from) them obviously
seeing you too? What vines could keep these plants there for us
up here though in the garden, all relative to grizzly bears
we want out for now, because look at them,
just look at them, the poor things. The bass is then louder shaking the branches and so leaves
and rain
and shakes and waves of the animals—how do you do?—
before back through we are crawling with the poor, before
we do that bit a bit more, back, forth, before we then then see
that yes it is glass, and that breaks, but yes it is glass
and it breaks and so unless you are doing some damn good work
to impress me with nothing too heavy visible to anyone else
and no sharp edges you can stay the fuck down there, it being what it is,
the dust plain to see from here now, no bear with.

The Committee in All Their Glory!

"All the strangers came today"
—David Bowie, 'Oh! You Pretty Things'

Cheap razors cut things ugly; but with money
we can guide you through the equivocal matter as if on a luxurious ship pulled by a postmodern
Sisyphus; only don't
hold your breath, else you'll be on your own, on board,

without a paddle—yet
still on board: actually sounds like bliss: could you grow a beard? Back we are
in the impossible history
of the history laid out correctly in a load of Pollocks, something we
at the returning committee have been looking to place for a while, dragged
along as we are by impaired vision, all the better to nudge this with, for there may be no paddles
but flapping, both ordered and chaosed,
and yet the most basic sight too. You have been here
the whole time wondering how it got to this, this pile,
this scab we are using for ourselves and each other
to try to stop you working and guessing; but I guess
I'm just as guilty, never admitting to the gods how I love
it down here with the marble players who endlessly cruise
through deliberations on who's cutting who in hysterics.

Internal Poetry Systems

up
Avant-garde, though cheap—look:
and down

(just nod
else he'll have a tantrum).

My vision? I am only trying to reduce these blackouts, take
down those floating shelves… and not

be cheap, Simon-
tenuously? (He at least
said so: it's working!—

a bit:) when does this stop?
(When you stop feeding him.)

Spare Thoughts

Spare a thought
for the thoughts we were forgetting, as thought, now forgotten
again from the days we stared at walls, replaced
by a continuation through which we can finally
communicate in our collective, *The Days of Wall Staring*: did you think
the world had forgotten you too—would never find you
so far away, as we are—the correct lines
hardly real in Continuation, what remains, the questions
lost for blocks used to build as the early walls

had just, the calls, producing you from agog as
persona between Real Walls, these people
down the fibres providing breaks, distractions—fine—
until we speak as we do now in gesture, trinkets
on floating shelves we hand to each other
without much conviction, thoughts
you might like these—doesn't matter or follow that you will;
but you stayed without thinking about It alone, the very corners
even able here to bend, some cheeks at the end.

Direct Communication

In this different feeling, hardly knowing
where we're standing the mixed messages come out as two anyway, so we pull
where there isn't one, imagining
it's a circle unlike the recycled angle of yesterday
to square exceptional sports performance strategies
with a novel tap in the dark to take the edge off, feeling
out the new feeling—this added in my honest assessment: I'd want to say this is something
more

as if I could trick you as I trick myself, nothing
for the ground that is level unquestioning about independent whatever, as I am furious
and able to marginalise myself rapidly, hoping another potential little psychopath
relates to the Tasmanian Devil-esque noise
guiding them too? Of course I am joking
with the delivery of the content I am directly experiencing; though you must agree
that you question all of my other characters? Fine. But the movies? As I enjoyed the turns here.

Relating to "Guide", So-Called

Guide is rejecting. Wrong deliberations so the light seems annoying,
one less syllable to contend with. It is these packets,
though it isn't the swimmers between only makes to the omelette,
wasting much spit from Guide—wakey wakey—to
releasing all this to the right, morning reflections
for becoming a Spartan…? For the short story collection
who are actually real people but they churned in other pictures
packets new styles of not enough, a vote. Guide is making me sick,
knows not to call doctors and to feel the pain, paste
out itself for the coin dispenser, me beginning to find its methods
now; wonder if ever face. Can't see even voice now as it taps on what I do, waste
of space?
No!

OK Now I Get "Guide", So-Called

That's it! No that's it! Keep going you're going
right up into the edge of the feeling
where you'll be able to... God knows, mate. Huge sigh. So close!
On closer inspection we are reviewing such "problematic
self-conceptualisation"s (up for review, too)
from our sofas wrapped in blankets like Grannies (though
these might also be ravens) who are never Grandads, as
we have it on good authority
these can be kept out the brackets, as people
who've previously kept the Grannies in place while they sow
the wide fields and the flour mills and the self-concepts
and O my dear: now can you just get
a little closer to where it is? Perhaps *who* it is? God knows, mate. I'm doing alright though. But
on
good authority still? Yeah!

"Poem? I'll Give Ya a Poem"

You could sit quietly with a new number
neither here nor there in your bio as you watch
the characters developing around your racism pull
its flimsy foil apart, their faces becoming those
that either made you eat off the floor or measure your genitals, the sheets
burnt to the baking tray in oil or the first
good sex you had, seared in, on fire: your loosely wrapped sandwich.

Or you could wonder what is going on
with all the imagery and demand an even more thorough examination
of the foliage, in bloom
around those troublesome market towns. We insist on this latter development
that provides a further justification for our future proposal
that is to come—the committees—which'll be to
divert all this traffic to *again* another holding queue for the inevitable crises on the end of the
line now: he said *what*?!

Stage Four Variation (Stop All the Cocks)

"Just wanna kill myself for you"
—Limp Bizkit, 'It'll Be OK'

"Put down your noose, I'll hang myself"
—Metallica, 'St. Anger'

“What good's it gonna do against a man that strangles himself?”
—Eminem, ‘I’m Back’

“Strangled by your own rope,
Self-knower!
Self-hangman!”
—Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘Amid Birds of Prey

“‘Cause I'm a piece of shit, it ain't hard to fucking tell”
—Notorious B.I.G., ‘Suicidal Thoughts’

“Trust in my self-righteous suicide”
—System Of A Down, ‘Chop Suey!’

“You’ll think I’m dead, but I’ll sail away”
—Pixies, ‘Wave of Mutilation’

’“Ash, ash—
You poke and stir.”
—Sylvia Plath, ‘Lady Lazarus’

Dear I have done it
with all my thorns—some of yours—

hanging in the loft, I am, my body
cut down as I watch them cut

me down, my own myth finally captured, which now
is in your loft forever too, the new

narrative of yourself, above—finishing off—
whatever else was there—what I’ve fully

replaced—your memory
forgotten then as now; as I had to do

something, for you, you hating
to understand I know it. So feel

what I have given to you instead! What has gone
from the bottom of that

barrel
of yours, because in cases

like these they'll simply say
that he folded of his own accord, selfishly

or tragically. But I made this body of work for you! So you have the result
of all your treatment (love!), a celebration

out of the blue
left behind, not

as a note, my
suicide—my present—but as a letter

that's touching and certainly not
a footnote, as you can

recall me for many happy returns over and over for years to come. All my love sincerely yours
forever Ash. P.S. you just don't listen to people.

(A version of this poem was first published in my pamphlet L'etoile*, October 2024. Redacted copy available here: https://ashleydunn.co.uk/letoile-redacted/)*

New Neighbours

You have come as from beyond
with too much tattle and width of song
to make us downright fuming, us not being...
what does that say?—"Psycho-
analyst"s?—and of lesser natures to care of your name tag
on other than dogs that lead us
astray, Mark being OK
now since the accident: we heard you laugh
with that cello under your arm, farm
noises from our in-house? for entertainment?
You don't even know why you laughed, you

my new neighbours, for we have tricked you, me
here on retreat with funding from the committee's
funds, as collected around
the town, nine pubs called Hell 0-8, all clever,
still in pain and decentralising the concept
of funding, because Mark was actually off
working hard with insurance so now who's smug, you fiddlers
with protection just like us, some
matters making you sweat there, Auntie

Marcie's Ouija board sensing your taste.
So are we now poets? Go get the children. Markie!

Up! Go get the children! This set of sleuths'
powers are continuing (I see how you pin
that name tag on) and he's just stood
in the driveway of this wretched estate, never once
saying "wretched estate" and he let me have it:
not even a bite of a chocolate bar. Smart
but umbilical like a babe should be
from those schools of... what are they—thought?
Jesus Markie would you get the children!
We know what they're like out on those paths, their choruses
of hoods—those goggles attached.

<u>March for Progress</u>

"You are now about to witness the power of street knowledge"
—NWA, 'Straight Outta Compton'

What does your sign say? Though I can obviously read it.
"YOU CANNOT HAVE THE EXCLUDED MIDDLE YET!"
Excellent! Mine says "I WATCH MY BODY. EXPLAIN."
I know. I can read it.
Are you going to the...
Yes, outside the Queen Anne Revival building. Care to walk together?
I should be by myself, but yes.
...
What does that sign say? I can read it.
It says "I FORGOT MY BIPOLAR SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO!"
You're laughing!
Yes. To gaslight them.
He's spelt "history" wrong on it. Good try.
A vivalist.
Have you seen the floor?
No. No we can't do that that'd be too much. I'm still getting this down.

> "Good afternoon. At the back! Thank you.
> There is to be an announcement from the Vice-Chancellor of the University to come shortly, not that it's coherent for your cause. Of course, that means they won't be appearing? Apologies: I am only just reading this out as I am... reading it."

Result!
Yes!

And no more celebrations in the inclusion we have condensed int-

"There will be no condenses either. I am also just reading this."

Where's the history sign gone?
You don't point at it but you knew that trick.

Getting Back to It

Now you have beaten everyone in the pubs
at making things up, you discover, both

that you have been making things up
and what true ideation is: faintly

what was putting words in your mouth
rises—who you've put in your mouth; how

you don't like any of this: everyone
you've beat. The poems you've built. Feeling the beats

of your body for the first time your tight throat
having to consciously take breath. Having to grab air
and force it in your throat. I could die. Let it happen.
I am a coward. You close your eyes and find the tunnel, balancing
between watching and being there the room distant,
you passing the library and him crying in the corner
having done it and the panellist
all at the same time, an orgy between screens
dreaming of the disintegration of time, the one
both gone and half of you released, down the ladder
you move along as conveyor without flight, just enough pressure between your fingers. She's
always there before the man
before the light. The man
crying was pitiful in his role, and he is again,
but you have to transition and love and lose the need
of hate. How will you ever find him again in life? We must bother.
Space in your throat and shoulders. You will clean yourself tonight
in your ideation: we know. Dreams of release. Hundreds of bodies going past
with no protagonist you watch
from fingers rubbing together the pub
the furthest thing from this mind, hard to place love,
Grace arrives but it may not be its name
reading out veiled apologies like plasters. The philosophical couple
you didn't know how to believe. The best day of your life on those swings,

the joke with the midwife delivering you but you couldn't say it. It didn't feel right. This body will
return
to the bed and fantasise about new love on all sides, being held
and helped in the light at the end. We wish you disappear before. You didn't
have to say all those… what were they? I feel so close to you. We imagine
a stage it floating by.

Focus on Sanity

After Ornette Coleman

They come to the screen looking all over
you aware but unsure how to land, northern sounds
coming from nowhere to replace a carroted pause,
talk of lights and children being embarrassed, how most
get through the daily aches: Coleman is switched to. You try to hold firm
and not be here and there wasn't a call—they'll say
there was a call: a Winnipeg community
radio station and such an old show: no idea that was in Canada. It's in the archives.
There *is* another show! No it was a picture first
like the one you could have painted. They could have painted.
Riding shotgun on the things before breakfast
to find this very painting your name attached
probably just because it's more popular here, miles
away from those psychotic faces
strongly matched with rage they need to feed soup, how
judgemental you are yourself, not keeping your heart
with all diligence. So the show is for you
if you listen but there is yogurt from the waves
to rest, a long and cosmic sound odyssey
sent through ten years ago—your birthday: "We are
the high and mighties." How could it be? We aren't all hungry;
it's going by, the origin of radio emissions
on commission from circular streams: get yours! Like babies
with histories, they were. I deserve a big helping.

Another Ultralight Scream

"I can feel it, the scream that haunts all logic"
—Kendrick Lamar, 'FEEL'

"A transitional stage; it won't last long"
—Henrik Isben, Peer Gynt

I am something of an arrow word: can you see me?

Stay on this page. Go no further, the music playing in the background,
the oblivion buried once not built: this is for the trap,
talking to my bowels. I do really feel nauseous: this jungle is tiny,
pitiful: Jung! Joyce died for our tins!
A cone in the road. I need to wake myself up.
There is no way to end without noggins some days, all days. Whether we see
the financial unacceptability of the works, the urge
to O. I try so hard on these roads to regard the control
wide enough for all kinds of services, though a "though" is enough this time
if only you hear it. Yet over time: no nauseousness,
hunger after all! The cone—a mere rumble! Ruined
by "mere"? It was not answerable before it was given:
the settling of a stomach without the need for noggin. I will tell the doctors.
Still obsessed with the cacophony, mine gone linear,
a togetherness not to be demonstrated with talk of roads,
feet hardly said to be touching: it was the honey. The honey is better than the salt on the new
table.
The cone, myself desperate in our former positions
to explain the outpouring of the wretched
cone they have replaced, but won't, they
being forgiven, the lack of dichotomy being a dick to spell
for cone—the last one—apparent in the closing,
open highway: I have changed my mind
as he wouldn't: he touched her: I cannot stay out here like this,
it always coming in and ruining my walks. Isn't it good? No.
Would rather have a story of how you were helpless, in the way
of me clearing mine, copying characters, staying psychotic
with all the other constant talkers—and I totally get it—
riding over whatever you don't wish. And I'll never be able to say it explicitly,
so here you are, the sim. I now feel relieved
momentarily, the perfect sentence. And it was. I would love clouds with sides,
them to stay in the way. How much of you is repetition
still on the line? I wanna hold the father inside you.
I wanna stop now, this torment, it heard in everything, busy
pretending free. Masses and masses and masses
of rational boxes for the sore head, when really,
you just don't like who you're talking to: dig it
and feel it. All of them disgusting and discussing themselves. Painful. Pained.
So much pain and masses of blocks in the way
can't even cry. Can't even feel. About to attack me.
I don't want to sound like this anymore. I don't want to sound like so many people,
things. I feel the blocks and it is there that anything
can circulate, looking clever or dissonant or fascinating
or dreadful, and it is all dreadful, what is it? Why bother?

Why have it all broken up? Lose yourself in it certainly—it helps. You grip on and scream and survive.
And you need to come back from it
without too much thought. You need to feel it so it disappears. It has to disappear.
Wish them so much love and forgive yourself for being there,
for that being part of the world you continue to live in,
from there it all silently improves. And I am a major dude.
And I can help myself. Charge me with a rational box, schizophrenia,
fine. You don't like your partner, and live
in a severed existence: outrage. Don't tell me you have a solution, mad
when the flaws in yours are highlighted. Incredulous. Look at this method. I could tell everyone everything anytime I wanted. Excuse me.
Something was moving through, a feeling,
a feeling process. Just a little tease. A restless feeling,
would you rather me slaughter them all? Slaughter them all. What was I thinking?
What circle would people repeatedly shouting "Authenticity!" be in?
Tell someone! Tell anyone! Tell a stranger in the street. Better than this.
Better than channelling it through a character, a character
of a character, a cunt within a dream
body. A feeling body! It never comes together
if at all. Cannot feel a thing. Ginsberg: can't you tell? I'm myself again.
It was the Big Sean song—'Win Some, Lose Some'—that amplified the feeling
of "life as a feeling process"—the lack of need
to intellectualise, the shooting out from the screen
being a rewiring mechanism in and of itself, one
we may not have needed a break for, and there we don't have it. Cover all your riches:
makes me sick. So full. And yet we are stronger
in my invisible depression that you must
see straight through, a habit
had of cupid in a gated community, the longing
delayed and tied up: we no longer need to even listen
once met in a crowd of single figures splashed at you.
There is also the experience, as we continue on our scavenger hunt,
anyway, I'm grateful, I wanted to show it,
why make things worse? Been waiting all day
for that plant. Those momentarily here
can now leave. Turn it in
to something else: another one ticked. I feel what may be called a peak
without a top with my eyes closed, stoic. More tabs
closed.
Then a sneeze and a gurgle. A relaxing. Stop letting them
rape, then not believing them. Their hands are up. Stop letting it happen.
Not just rape. Little digs. You're doing my nut in.
You spoil all my fun. Little glances. Infantile them—
so weird. Without reverting to that academic dip

it should be said to be rage creating the Schopenhauerian unfolding
right about here, bursting out as Maris
Pipers on people's backs which causes them to do
and say all sorts: do the mash potato. A whole character
responding to years ago, all the better to sleep with you with. Yes it did.
History repeats itself. You can't catch me: I'm the crumbs. Every blessed word is true!
I'm sure I don't know what I am! Everyone knows it is
Kaiser Peer Gynt and his thousand retainers
shameless, looking within
to find the well of serenity, perhaps Ye,
covered by a plug of your mother mocking your penis size,
your father gritting his teeth how you never saw
from the ceiling. Shall we delete the rest? Am I close
enough to the well to say "I delete"? Call that a plug? It is a butterfly
and you are full of untapped potential!
Our research shows that after practicing the Walking Meditation for one hour, it's possible to make significant changes in our brain and body that translate into other areas of our lives.
I am converging and being unconcerned with font,
though must differentiate my walk to yours
or anyone else's. Right now
I know I am sitting here too much. Still a fan
of Steely Dan? I didn't do it but I'm not sure it's the right time.
Tao Te Ching and inadequate language/translation
different translations of the Tao
Verse 20th - 'drifting not knowing where I am'
'Mine indeed is the mind of an ignoramus
18: 'action arises from me heart'
These steps are like those ones at that campsite in New Zealand—no.
There is some deep reflections on the human condition
and the observer effect on the observer's affect,
Maya also being the name of Gautama Buddha's mother: ignorance is a choice. Everyone's doing it, science
being the language but the first six years
determining the bulk of your experiment: awful! Is it bad
to feel bad, to sound childish, to go back? You can literally become someone else.
Why are we going over all this for?
Hafiz: o someone should start wildly laughing - WD 103
Wayne dyer
14—walking meditation
Eurydice—singing to her?
orpheus in limbo
"(That why Dante didn't mention him so much. Related too much.)"
The other name for Eurydice—Agriope something—like spider argiope (angiosperms?!)

Francesca “weeps and speaks” ‘cries and whispers’ being the only possibles that we not how to
be true, yet feel. A little touch can take a side, a word slipped, an order made to an
inconsistent logic, or a closed fog, the calls
programmed from the off, brilliant, that’s great, if there’s anything else
please do not hesitate
to continue the formula, this filling as well as the Arthur.
My ankle
The CIA gots the tapes. And the BBC. And us
carrying the weight—damn straight. Evidently. Locked away
all Dr. King’s secrets with all the real killers,
I speak to them. Another Seth. Then they go quiet
and I don’t know what to do, then I forget I was quiet,
then I remember something about that but it shouldn’t be mentioned
else we end up here: what am I doing? Who have you been spending time with?
I’m going to check your phone: another wife! This is the grand awakening
where at least the Old Testament goes, at least
doesn’t capitalise itself—Jesus! I was a god:
jesus. And I’m about to go dumb again: I will not add
anymore to the boy’s growth—and so poem
which makes me sick as I’m getting a cold
beyond a sneeze, so it be making us healthy—
after today. We will work with what is in the notes.
We will build a heaven with what is left,
mixed up tape. J’aime marcher! Duo
you pesky thing, whatever you are. J’aime jouer! It’s so easy.
(Only me! I feel like I’m getting somewhere.
Imagine what it was like when I was gone.) Fuck off!
The bloke in the changing room at gym
Lucia Joyce should have got into ancient aliens too.
Dante
TS Eliot—ash-wednesday?
‘Something not yet born’
It’s rather Seinfeldian. The language is past description. Potter is the guide after all.
I wash my hands
and close the tap. But it is not a closed
tap. Or quite it is, though it is a closed
scenario, of keeping me clean
momentarily. Further knowledge was here and gone
with the bubbles around me—in my ears—
confounding change though I am between. Afterward
we have internal validity as brought about
by the shower that was washing over you, disconnected
as we were: I walk down the street to feedback,
O waves no. Flagrantly unfocused
in derivative directness, and so above the waters

that grab at continued flow as watch, awareness,
I look at it subfocal: I knew I would get there. No again!
No you do not see what I am missing. I am on the street—
believe me! I am not sure if the fit
of myself also on street with what I witness
at distance, especially with what could be dashed across this floor. Which one I cannot
remember
the meanings of this digressions: I know you are leaving
if there is anything to remember, as mountains
with pilers, pillars, too far
over and away though you stay on the earth—delicious—
peppered everywhere. It is working as I can see myself walking balanced for this period
the run around so space around me doesn't have to
as we never find.
Gonna write on in baby words because I need to be seen
because no not suckled, big holiday
to replace small miss. Now all this. I don't know if
imagination or fantasy broke, but definitely no effort was made, only I feel somewhat gooderer
on reflection. The barber cuts my own
hair then I say I did it: I'm lying: would you even hear me
fall as I clutch at branches with a fade like this, your Irises'
very cross.
But you mustn't stay there: in the well
there's love.
It may take time but you get here.

Returning Eye Twitch

"One might almost describe it as a living being that uses man only as a nutrient medium, employing his capacities according to its own laws and shaping itself to the fulfilment of its own creative purpose"
—*Carl Jung, 'On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry',* Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 15: Spirit in Man, Art, And Literature

I have been running the show and now you return to me: have all this, all
you have done. Yes you. Yes you have done it—these semantics
are challenging: you wanted
rest so off I kept dis-
integrating as you bubbled with the baggage, you enacted
to feel all the pain of me
left behind. Now you cannot even remember who was running the show
the first line. What was so strong
looks not to become a question. The forms
float move. Where do you grasp
at us how you pressed against pages and shut

shelves down. You feel every niggle as you have
returned. I am going but we are
together. But you are falling apart.

A Spade

"This land, cut off, will not communicate"
—W. H. Auden, 'The Watershed'

O let us go back
to being cards, dozens
of faces, suited
for any joke regardless
of what's on the other end, at least two games
we know: snap
and shithead again. For nothing
do we want the rules of poker, talk
of rivers unable

to be whated? their partner's name?
Cuz I'm writing the cards. Well no one
else is going to do it, are they! Our hallmark

of happiness returned to, for we literally
cannot deal.

Poetry

I return to you
a centre, as if I had not visited this morning, your size
apparent again—how do I forget?—the only thing that wakes me
to those out there, no care
really for what: I want to make noises. You splay
out and I reign in. You are like the little innocent thing
with the world I want to swallow, too short, knowing
I'll never be near. The state I am.
I am too here but my body cannot die enough, it burns
to come apart to fall into you. I do shoddy work.
You are like the veil in that too short touched upon
we cannot quite prick, break fingers in a vice,
press thumbs in my eyes deep. Sweet was the swing.
I am not fallen in your caverns again. You terror us.

The Book

“Always afraid to say more than it meant”
—W. H. Auden, ‘The Letter’

The door behind through which all was
made sense, in a matter of fact way—like dark marks
in space who put that there?—but we don’t have behind
or doors here. Nor here. Us not mattering
here, strings to go back like synapses touching sometimes
like the spines of pages, stapled
of the gone world. Though we don’t have words
so we don’t have space, for pages: stories
get hard. What’s left? Some of us
pushing against nothing into ease
they’ll say: behind closed ways—hands
hovering to throw back the gate it tries to sound painlessly, the matter
stuck to the book, searching around,
making a window frame and no one else is coming.

Initial Risky Text

“See then that ye walk circumspectly”
—Ephesians 5:15

We both know
that if I let her hover
long enough
on the end

of the phone begging that I will eventually
allow her to come
round to mine for something I will then be held responsible for when she
changes the call in future: look at that! Turn

that frown even further down and get the fuck away from me.

Take Note II

“And I heard
Without ceasing for a moment to kiss you”
—Ted Hughes, ‘18 Rugby Street’

On the third date

Her: “It’s inevitable that I’ll kill myself.”
You: [leave]

<u>“How Does Practicing Gratitude Impact Your Thoughts?”</u>

“What your life like? Bullshit and gossip (This shit hard)”
—Kendrick Lamar, ‘N95’

““‘You’re forever spouting Zen philosophy … If anything, it’s made you supercilious and condescending’””
—Philip Kapleau, The Three Pillars of Zen

“And keep one step ahead of yourself (I’m catching up with myself (goes on, goes on))”
—Talking Heads, ‘Born Under Punches (The Heat Goes On)’

...and then everyone was dressed like they were from Alaska, creating
AI gratitude—whereas I clearly needed my lunch. Though before I could take

a bite, I wanted to stop the sign
from also lying: “Remember you are never

alone.” Could I take it home
and turn it into misery? I mean!—I am thankful for my creativity, quackers

paintings, railroad journeys that are not appropriate and this quackery
comes back around again: the carriages

in from the villages are full of ugly
fucks: I stay with the slogan, starving. Only when does *my* hart

fill up? As I am looking for love
in this station, not algo-

rhythms I keep coding from far away
in the cold, struggling

to stomach the trashes, not helping
the self in all these heavy-duty

overalls. Though it’s some honest value finally.

<u>Holding the Front Page</u>

We are not journalists. No we promise we are not journalists: we are from the mine where the canaries are eaten. You heard about it? They distracted the coal. O please

ignore him and his device: it's just the air. They were floating
down there like downward-facing dogs on SS-

RIs—we can promise you that: take our brochure; this is what
I wanted to talk to you about [takes potential customer

back inside their home] without him listening: the brochure is empty, because
you can't see it yet. This is your home? Now look: you'll see

it's in there in the pages in the now. Yes between those.
And I couldn't have touched it because we are not

journalists, just… there—see. What did I say? Just ignore him! I mean
excuse me: he slides down the door like that. But we're inside! So we're

fine. Ha! Now why would you think that means you?

Self Talk? Be Nice? Some of Them Have Lighters!

"I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free"
—Michelangelo

You are in a deeply narcissistic fog, solipsistic,
that appears to be bounded correctly via the handful of things that you think you know, yet it isn't
even a fog already now and there are certainly no real excitements
in doing what you are doing based on what you have forgotten, all those embarrassing actions
you perform just to tell people that you do not like
or respect of those very actions so as to embarrassingly align your behaviour with their own
performances that they do not choose to do either, causing
blindly repetitive destruction that you only double down on
in repeating and justifying—loudly—after the fact before scrambling
in your own self-centred woe that seems disconnected—on cue
days later: track it—from how you are operating
as you appear to yourself to be engaging in more reasonable narratives for how the woe has been caused
outside yourself by agents operating on you
that you cannot remember inviting in
in the previous excitement you labelled as "excitement" yourself, even if
you will retrospectively consider that to be not what you were really doing eventually, though it was
what you said you were really doing: do not have another strop now; feel it so it disappears.
As you currently have no values and think and react reactively
in a highly emotional and defensive manner to anything outside of your self-imposed block

of deluded grandeur and entitlement as you carve through your tiny, pathetic, immediate world.
You are currently disgusting
and shameful because you are full of those things, and as you act from that
you consistently destroy yourself and a multitudinous amount of life around you, though the life around you is commonly as disastrous as you are, granted, and this is always only on top
of more filth you feed on and into and propagate.
Underneath all this is ~~so much beauty which is uncontrived and caveated on nothing that you won't even need to mention it. Hurry up.~~ more to work on.

Got Lobbed?

I am *Begriffsschrift* in the streets, and Dali
in the sheets, only

I use that example for your sake, having
now placed you out there

as one: it cannot be beaten, the shadow
of the single figure looming

down as if there's a circle: is that the goal?
which is based on the approximate

reasoning scheme being followed from symbol
to turn, ruining the spirit-levelled progress of all time

because the material looked good, a whole
plug from the analysts—not saving

this dire run: you wanted to come! yet I keep
scoring because you find it unreasonable to stand up straight.

Why Do Some Characters Overlap in My Document?

"I know you want it"
—Robin Thicke featuring T.I. and Pharrell, 'Blurred Lines'

"I think there's been a rape up there"
—David Brent, The Office*, Series 1, Episode 4, 'Training', 2001*

"Rags and tatters. Rags and tatters."
—Radburn, 12 Years a Slave*, directed by Steve McQueen, 2013*

Why are you laughing? At work, a paper

was submitted by a student which had overlapping characters, which meant
at school there was a student, and the teacher
try as they might, there was no resubmission. They gave up. They left.
It was concluded that the laughs
cried out could have been avoided if the submission was ignored, as
the student couldn't have known the teacher was upset,
the marker was getting annoyed: they decided against
I don't know why you're here
the visit being the best option as upstairs
where the problem lay: couldn't just get those arguments correct for the assignment! Still
crying, the students
found humour in a mix of things that seemed funny
to no one else, would it be so hard to be acceptable to accept such an assignment
or here: my colleague's just had a night terror
to be so irate by now. And the younger student: stupid fuck. She couldn't read afterwards.
Psychotic little cunt. But we wanted them
to keep making the effort. Go on—keep submitting! Keep going! Why are you crying?
And these kind of submissions
are rife and we're *still* here trying to mark them: they tell me it's just work; but I reckon
she could offer more than this *awful* attempt, bless her.

<u>Notes on a Portrait</u>

Jamesian. Incongruity contrast. Fog obscuring?
Reminiscent of Prufrock, wasteland. Intimacy
immediately stated, imminent
death—a dying—they're dying hellish. Reservation
a move forward as always checked. Innate sadness
in a lady's desire to reveal, sense
of desperation, implied, unsaid,
desperation and unease is palpable. Asserting
importance. Nightmare.
More violent tone. Tolling of the bell—sinister.
Staid, forced. Difficulty of reconciling sincerity
love with stifling atmosphere. Girlish. Imminence
of death again sage wisdom. Condescending arrogant. This
is real, voice of desperation returning again
passive in waiting for death? Reply: his voice? Prurience
then doubt, passing of time, seasons;
developed relationship yet entirely undeveloped.
Sadness, social politeness. Flares. Cowardly. Gutters.
Pressing the matter perilously close to its "crises".
Obscuring smoke. Prison-like.

The Third Ring of the Dunn

“This is not my life”
—Frank Ocean, ‘Seigfried’

“Was there a voice unkind in the back of your mind”
—Jeff Buckley, ‘Last Goodbye’

“This is not my life”
—Slipknot, ‘Three Nil’

We’ve got it! Siegfried—we’ve got it now!
We can share it now! Before the nap!
Before the break! Siegfried! The play!
Siegfried!
        What?
We can do it now! Are you ready? The play!
        Not like this. Not like this.
Can I pull your lines
back through then? You can nap. I’ve really got it!
        Yes I’ll nap. You pull through.

We are stars or in caves; and this is the play!
We are stars or in caves, beyond
where some say we should be—there should be—
in much conflict if low. And we must only meet forward
reorganising the minds not for an enclosed
health but for as near
to here as is possible
to stop stars and caves.
            [Horse trots by]
Only rides can circumvent the impossible, blowing
off past animals unknown what to name
this devil: “Halt! You in that certain stride! No devils
are to me first. Are you for this present?”
            [Former horse neighs]
Then we have done it, potentially
neither play nor poem, but an automatic process
that tears gap. We thought-
        I’m back! We thought…?
            [Both now together]
            We thought thereof none, and so it was settled: be of the pull
            and of all your might and bring yourself here
            silently. We have budgets. We will have stage direction!
            [They turn to face each other]

Our names, brought to, despite our broken heart.

[redacted] at the UKCP

"Man: "Settle down, my dear. Tell us something legible."
Woman: "Legible?"
Man: "Yeah. Tell us where your mind is.""
—Out of the Blue*, directed by Dennis Hooper, 1980*

"This is what the world sounds like"
—Kendrick Lamar, 'We Cry Together'

"[A] special strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unlivable situation."
—R D Laing, The Politics of Experience and The Bird of Paradise

"Truth and beauty, perhaps they are inseparable, and so lies and ugliness."
—Alex Pheby, Lucia

"But who even cares, in the unreal, derealised universe of psychoanalysis, where interpretation passes for reality and fiction is taken for truth?"
—Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, Remembering Anna O

"Nothing new for trash like you."
—Old Man, Gummo*, directed by Harmony Korine, 1997*

"Good speech. Well done."
—Michael, Festen*, directed by Thomas Vinterberg, 1998*

"I don't think he thinks it out too deeply. He's just reacting. He's in a state of reacting."
—Robert Crumb, Crumb*, directed by Terry Zwigoff, 1994*

"Ahmad Ahmadpour: "Did he look at yours yet?"
Mohammad Reza Nematzadeh: "No."
Ahmad Ahmadpour: "I did it for you.""
—Where Is the Friend's House?*, directed by Abbas Kiarostami, 1987*

Pace [redacted] at the UKCP

I practice an integrative form of psychotherapy, which means I draw
from a framework of different therapeutic models, theories
and techniques using them creatively and flexibly
for each person. I haven't done this for a while
on this screen. We used to watch them acting so innocent,
caring, at the bar. Does the flow of the surroundings concern?
But still, the groups enter trying too quickly for them to sense

their bodies, which is why I borrowed the body-mind, siblings
rumoured to be a joke. O already I am reminded, even
in the training, of the even worse abovers saying “Wholesome”
at the watercooler
wondering why he hit, why she was attracted
to the anxious one she could dominate all the time
looking past, those pure souls
where there’s less attacks, heaven
just being in heaven, crime unreported, the strict materialists,
no movement without concrete: something to learn from. Dragged you in!
Now open that book. Why you so hung up on correcting what you keep
staring at? You like them there, don’t ya,
so you feel better and have pornographic content writing all those busynesses
up. You don’t know where the consciousness is
do you, but you got to. O you
gotta; but you wouldn’t dare speak like that though. Wanna act like
your “trash” and then trash others with a big ol’ prayer wheel you spin without knowing
what’s inside, leaving
trash outside. So what—I’ve been at the cooler—
so what? We all look—all human—
just trying to make it all a bit healthier: you want
whatever the wake up on the day outside wants? I bet you try finding some ways always, don’t
ya.

The ringing! That ringing!
It burns! *Do* something! It burns into us—those
out there!

What will they think! They’ll be ringing from the bar
where they shake, detuned
from climate! Kate! Ana! Daniel! Nats! Bill!
One of you best get that phone before I gets ya
because they think I haven’t got any class. It’s why we hit right.

Your father? Huh! Tell him—
you tell him that 14 year old *bitch* been calling here again, and that
you had a go on her too, cuz I knows you did. And I heard
through Dills, you tell him,

that he been enrolling on courses—that psychotherapeutic
business—and if he try any of that

on us when he out then he got another thing coming. Wait wait wait wait wait!
And I been with Dills and it was great. We didn’t think nothing
for four days straight. Those days when you was eating

from tins! Wasn't hard to figure.

Put the phone down. He be laughing down there, though we be rooting
more than they is and we excellent carpenters
with eye movement approaches that may upwardly circle

to create a lasting change in your internal environment, which reflects
in the external. This is where we see the most enduring progress, which,
if fostered and allowed, can continue to grow and remain
readily available in any scenario one may find oneself in. No problem

at all, father—I thank you for your time. Mother is cooking spaghetti.
I shall tell her. I now need to remove the trash. You better believe
they still look down over the road: joyous! O I forgot.

To tell you! I have a job! Taking jugs
to independent businesses! Private offices.
Damn straight I nick me some of the paraphernalia: you be hearing

your girl talk? You think I talks likes this
'fore I gat insigh?

"Look, I'm an asshole. You see this? You see me? You see that?
But I'm not a motherfuckin' dumb asshole!"
—Don Barnes, Out of the Blue*, directed by Dennis Hooper, 1980*

<u>Enanti</u>

"Laugh if you can, but you will have to leap"
—W. H. Auden, 'Leap Before You Look'

A subtle but insidious and dirty feeling that is hate, judgement,
not too near so it's aimed outward. A toxic belief system
to cover it: the shame turns itself outward: we see demons
and feel demons in our sleep trying to triumph, yet move towards saving
without the power to eradicate the demons inside those that we go to
at night, the unconscious, external draw to use our power
to kill more hate with fucking, frenetic fucking sessions, the release
ecstasy, exorcism not being viewed for the power that it is, not being respected,
all only ever material material; but it intoxicates
in ways facing forwards or backwards—good or bad—
whether acknowledged or not. And it cannot be beat by ignorance.
It cannot be turned away from or acknowledged in percentages. It attacks,
defeats in metronomes equal measure, good or bad. The intense sessions
can expel but who can continue to do that without respecting

what it does—what they hold? We all know what we are doing all the time.
We ignore and split and decide in short-term moments to act, say,
be in a limited way with quasi-justification. Then it comes around
again in ways we see but try to ignore and externalise. Yet we did it;
we now bear what we put in place. We hold the horror of what we released,
what we may have taken and held for others. There is not an escape from this system
however it is divided up between the inner and outer. What is yours, hers, theirs,
past or present or future. What you turn away from
appears in front again bigger, more powerful, needing more intensity
to battle. Endlessly endlessly acting regardless of your confused desire for it to not be
what it always is. Therefore when you laugh at me—either way—I grow.

Hard Work... I Mean! Work. No! There Is

A Working???

Poem

"Nor has its author made any conscious effort to ... unwelcome to everyone but himself"
—Carl Jung, 'Sigmund Freud in his Historical Setting', Collected Works of C. G. Jung, Volume 15: Spirit in Man, Art, And Literature

After others

I am now
pure consciousness... No! How can I be here?

There *is*
pure consciousness
unconcerned with the material: earlier there was a watch
as that was earlier but we exist
distinct from that, my little hands
creating the illusion of them? But we remember that feeling
this morning: we were... pure; there was
"pure consciousness": that is how to put it. We exist
outside; we are of and not of
finding these synchronised materials, one essay
and one poem of the same title: "In Memory of Sigmund Freud"—of which
we should not be reminded, there being
no remindering but rhythm to take us
outside of, though not at all judgementally
leaving the others—not of
self too—inside. There was a looking in a mirror, if that is
its real name before breakfast, connotating
rabbit holes of the garments being necessary, the looker smiling: I am making myself

materially something unexisting, only the looking
and arising not being like that at all. But we are here now, all these
little matters again—Paracelsus,
like the flowers I am sending (that I let myself be)
merely "brothers" ensnared in a treatable malady.

Invidia

"Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?"
—Mary Oliver, 'The Summer Day'

"I prayed that he would finish
But he just kept right on"
—Roberta Flack, 'Killing Me Softly With His Song'

I am nearly old now and I was wild, so wild.
I will not make it much further because
I was wild. I felt nothing. I have little memory.

And like I said it was a riot! O the times
we had let me tell you. Though

I cannot remember—I told you?
O but then there was the time

I felt nothing on holiday I cannot remember where I was
or who I was with. And I sunbathed naked. Yep! Yes I did. And the whole world

stopped it did and it seemed to be looking
at me and most importantly I got to tell the boy
living in the bedsit back home who loved me all

about it, me being naked

with another lover on holiday while I was feeling nothing. I didn't tell bedsit boy I was feeling nothing. I didn't know. But I got to annoy him
which was all I thought about as I lay there naked. I'm sure I felt nothing. He committed suicide eventually but I was a rockstar that day and O didn't I get under his skin. He was broken in the bedsit though I had to get at him. I watched myself always. I achieved nothing. Felt little.

Morning Routine

Desire is placed down, the objective,

what it is—specific—targeted. Then the birds come,
the green yellowy bellies and blue… fins?… things

I'll have to Google as they stay around the window, putting
down desire: these can now be studied
squarely (I'm not judging you) feeding these scenes:

the bird feeder had been there for a few weeks, and though
there had been some visitors, most
had left as I'd looked: I would try to take a photo

as I had to capture it! Now—feeling safe—one has just hovered
fluttering in the air

as this and that went past my page, my skies

clearing and colouring, rosy cheeked
in this wind: this is something to do every morning.

<u>More Redecorating</u>

"Therefore, a preface gives one a preview of a text without a firm identity due to an endless play of identity and difference with a text"
—*Carl Olson,* Zen and the Art of Postmodern Philosophy

"In the beginning there is ruin"
—*Jacques Derrida,* Memoirs of the Blind

For we want a fresh start
all the good bits taken out and new bits
put in. You cannot imagine the skips. Honey!
You cannot imagine the skips. We don't have them here!
I am so anxious about getting this done without them.
In the future, there we go, an idea was planned
of the blueprints before we took the extra outhouses off, kept aside
for the other buildings I'd now like to build elsewhere
and probably will have to. I haven't even begun here! My fresh start
not being recognised with the blueprints!
Just the cream paint is good. Thank you. Thank you so much.
It makes it feel so much lighter, doesn't it? Skips? Yes—skips;
use the skips
out here now in the wide open space: what a vast
space we have to play with. I hadn't noticed it before.
Hadn't given myself the chance to appreciate the steady movement that was available to us in
here. It is lovely. Do we have to fill it?

Skip full! Skip full over there! Didn't know, did I! What are they
removing? But those were antique
books and seats
to stand on! Just to stand on! Why not!
Because we had to, honey—that's why. I bite because I meet you where you are
in the skip, on the chair. Fair?
Something for you in there?
Yes an ugly corner with that formal… just take it out. Wasn't that easy? Decisions
without care. Scary. Layers or circles of hell
was it? What book? I was thinking about the sex dungeon.
I now calmly ask for a divorce as I know where this is going.
I know we are in the middle of redecorating but it's what we both require, my love.
I'm sorry you feel that way. I'm sorry you feel that way about my commitment to this change
but I do not feel that I have changed: it's this house;
it's us. I'd be inclined to think it was you. An inch
I gave you. That skip nonsense. I said give away
or rearrange and I could feel it changing somewhat
in there. What do you mean an animal is signalling to you? That is
a feral being
in a skip. Is it practicing the guitar? We
only have walls painted—barely touched;
and I must love those blueprints I know we needed
for you to have designed for us, honey,
so I am conceding that the original idea
was a lovely dream. We have those other projects leftover from the wider
wider rough sketch—yes! Our little world, honey.
O it is all in here: I never threw your things! We knew we would find each other.
I don't care about that! Let them talk! I just want you to fill me!
Dungeon? I have changed
for you: this house was all I needed. Look at the animals outside, now
my lover. This baby! How did this happen!
Fine: go out; kill the mood. If you need a seat
they are animals. This is so familiar in here I'll make do without you. No—I didn't know we were
renovating either but I am trying
to adapt to the process: you are leaving
again on that? But that would be truly awful.
Fine. I tried. I feel like I never knew you. Me neither!
What do we look like!

<u>The Thought-Fix</u>

How about a snake… No! A soldier dragging himself along
on his elbows! Though that's too much energy—a mud slide

down a small hill

and the mud is smooth

melted chocolate-like consistency: there we go:
lovely. Either way we are on the ground-

ed going along... smoothly... being less
lively as we wave at the headlights...? Too bright; not that flat; instead

we are waving at the rainbows (lean in)
floating by without a single argument

about grue (phew); but then not instead! But just
whatever: do not explain—"We won't": I nearly

wrote this one ourselves: getting there(!)

<u>I Heard It Was You</u>

I rest on the journey, recognising
the dissonance being produced
in me, by my decision
to listen to Steely Dan

on the journey.
                But only a fool...

They are coming from the car
besides the lake, this lake
I rest at: the waves of their music:
I cannot refuse it,
                the twisting

logic of consciousness
making me think of us, as
absorbed in a movement beyond
our comprehension,
                my travels

not being a backward
to a forward, but a
                where we are cornered

<u>Respite</u>

Purchase this short anecdote, an antidote

to the system within the system: sure

ithasbeen done
before—though not with that slightly

compressed version, available to you
NOW, circular

la-la-la-lee: the theme tune! Accessible
as a meditation. Of course of course. Twice! No system? No

see? This is perfect for you!

Still Needs Title

"I can't do this alone"
— Radiohead, 'Exit Music (For A Film)'

I wait for the colds to come, shouldering
the burden of confusion like a sponge—but not the colds—as I bend

the chills off my back that you hand to me
with folded arms: these

slide like a duck's also involved
in a manner similar to the way already alluded to. It means I am sick and wide

of the centre, mark, grin or grimace,
punch or caress of personal trainer, saying, One more, you maggot!

One more you maggot. And it is here that the sweats
really come: *you*

are it. Enjoy my fun.

Following My Breath (Fugue)

Running (the race is the goal) we come upon Han Doo-
Little the rabbit of the wood
we slip through, no word of saying we're hungry, how it changes
the sight of them across the room: we are hoping for fame
before the race ends; dots and Doras
appear before us dancing inside our sleep, rigidity
appearing strongly until there is just me left

training with miles banked: I know the house
she appeared from. I could knock.
I could dot and knot this future further, another
vision there tricked as “vision”: I try wiping
the air. Unlocking the home cushion
I am coming down to without you, a priori
possibles: the goalposts neither jump nor forget where next across this frozen ridge.

Over the Top

epiphenomenally: isn’t it just
the war. We were firing off at random
Lee without thinking, peering through curt-
ains at Lee with their perfectly satisfying postal strategy, shrapnel
about. So lazy I was I came out of the trench
without thinking further perhaps the barricade
fell. I didn’t want to come inside anymore. I’m on my own.

Lee stayed between the lanes
on the journey back as I collected sneezes
containing what was never needed—shame
I had to place them snootily to ensure more: was it Lee
through the curtain? I was myself
without weapon living in a fantasy world—I agree—
out of the bunker, shooting—again—

at letterboxes containing secret codes from higher up. They’d never let Lee in!
Through the undergrowth I went back
like lanes I couldn’t especially see as I had been
moving above, just aware of it being murky, ready
to find out where the redirection was going
(the meeting last night: I was dreaming)
cannon fodder all around on this route

until I stilled and saw the coda: that’s what
was sent—that’s all. My clothes were in a state
as required for what we see in each of our own
wars: the opposition with dashforks
erm excuse me that’s not right: it is
now I did not consider them speaking,
as we are building a safer world above the actual ground: Lee—he always loved you

after all: the postcard! From the front! The curtains waving
with no one staring but ourselves’ barricading
as long as stray ammo

turned king imposing itself upon… but that was ages ago:
the big parcels are done. The battle lines feel safe
though shell shocked I dare not, you know—put down
what was in the tissue I dropped to start it all

together sharp: Lee. Please. Return to us. You never knew you were here.

Mu!

"If you think "I must not understand" or "I must understand," you are adding another "head" to the one you already have"
—*Philip Kapleau,* The Three Pillars of Zen

"It is true that if you try to think how you are to talk about particulars, you will see that you cannot ever talk about a particular particular except by means of a proper name"
—*Bertrand Russell,* The Philosophy of Logical Atomism

"Unless, that is, one is setting out to produce confusion"
—*Ludwig Wittgenstein,* Philosophical Investigations

"("Saying 'Elephants are our friends' is wonderfully insightful")"
—*Daniel M. Wegner,* White Bears and Other Unwanted Thoughts

"Do you think the ivy grows?" And he hit me
hard, with the baton
did the crystal lake skated

about time someone came here and disturbed
the birds out the way, flying
too synchronised: "I understand I could never rise

like this," I said to him, rowing. But he'd left
the boat—gone under
the horizon meeting the oar; as I lift

the eagle, touching
seen at this angle. Four times we had spoken
on the phone smiling always last: baton!

I went in with him. Afterwards I went in with him
seeing the creatures and crying
at calls; and I saw how it grew: "Not cruel?"

he said. I was soaked coming out
wrapped in the ivy

the lake glistening off where he stood to its side.

The Police Called Out the Blue: What's a Boy to Do?

Yo. Grist for the mill?! O yeah—sorry: Chris for the kill.
Yeah I was expecting you. Yeah I was just confused!

So I want it to be long and drawn out—with a pen
to the neck—because that's where I've had it up to. Don't put it in so deep then! Wait a minute:
am I paying you or are you paying me? I have needs, you know!

Wow! That is inventive. Yes fine—do it like that. Easy! Hardly
a drop spilled that way too: I agree. And to think I blocked an hour out for this call!

Final Written Warning

"He had become his own Sphinx; he was answering his own riddles"
—*Leon Edel,* The Life of Henry James, Vol. 2

Sergeant! The peppers are ripe! I'm so proud we've grown them. But the soil is split! I'm seeing
onions... darkness! O that's carrots.

Private! I'm listening. Just wait. I hear music. I must sing!

It must be! Yes it must be
that we are floating
in the greenhouse—yes! I guess
we never knew we were born—yes!

Private! This last line with me!

We never knew we were born.

Excellent. Would we be on a sub? What is this business we are embroiled in?

But Sarg—the peppers?

No time, Private: look at all this! No time.

Presents

"Nothin' unwanted (Who can I turn to?)"
—*Kanye West, 'Father Stretch My Hands Pt. 1'*

White bears in white noise

in white snow? There are no longer any blueprints
nor project managers to see through the floors
for laying such ground other

than in this way: the bear standing on a plinth
in space with its headphones on! (If you don't ask
then I won't. An album cover? Great idea!)
The bear is coming at you live

from its very own trunk O so very nearly: does it matter? It's only
from the stomach anyway: borborygmi
weened from ourselves' mind; which is—after all—
only a fluffy thing's squeeze

right from the centre of the mothership: the pen
sounds "read" the noise
is not actually static; but we are floating, me and the bear (you got me)
in the middle or whatever you had before. Yet you came

and spoilt it too! making Griz write a fifth: "Krishna Krishna
borborygmi... borborygmi!" "Ahhhh
but Ash—that's so much better again, my fur
hardly visible in this light—up here!—the dusting like stars."

Insufferable Guests I Shouldn't Have Invited Over After the Workshop

"We do not know what this sounds like
only what it sounds like to us. And these

further silly noises—Dim Dam!—are not
anything to do with us and we do not know

what they sound like, how they came about,
how they fit in and how and why this works (if

it does: that has nothing to do with us either; though
we are confident, not that we know why

either (who?)): we do not know
who "we" are either and the sounds

of them are right on the tip of our tongue
and nibble, always. Why? What is it? Could it

be making the blanket warm for us more

than it was? We then share the body? Dim

Dam! It is almost horrific! What is it? They are just
there but not like this at the same time endless. But his face is so serious now, so it must be
something

completed: what is this choice of phrase? Why does it sound like this though?
Why are these things talking dreadfully like us? Are there others besides

those earlier "we"s and "us"s? Tim Tam! Maybe?"

<u>If Nautical Nonsense Be Something You Wish</u>

"Don't be so scared of changing
And rearranging yourself"
—The Seekers, 'Georgy Girl'

These paddles and chia seed puddings
Were bestowed on me when I left the asylum, child, and now
I gift them to you: all better?—safe in the knowledge
That you will safely lose this knowledge
Once your backside and gut have adjusted.

I understand the initial cognitive pain, for I too
In the asylum was King of the Fingers Extended Outwards
To and from whiteboards for poor form, while I still bore
My very own greasy battered bits on my back
Along with gaps between my nighttime pennings

And daytime mumbling... so for now, child (as we
Will stay: no dual citizenships here) you should try
Easing in with a little less what-the-effing up your creek, instead more
Over this chair, your breakfast waiting there afterwards.

<u>The Cuts</u>

I had this idea of visiting you
From the future to say
How I meant it all, though not really
Also, that the pieces
Are cacophonous on purpose. Could do
With making this something
To hold meat: there we are.
I made all these cuts for you
So you can try anything. Sorry

For the sauce. Sorry for the dish-
Washer being on that is
Scheduled. All this
Time travel for some meat, eh. It won't
Age, nor make sense with those greens on the side.

“Why, that’s my dainty Ariel.”
—Prospero, William Shakespeare, The Tempest

“Modern art has taken a wrong turn in abandoning the search for the meaning of existence in order to affirm the value of the individual for its own sake.

What purports to be art begins to look like an eccentric occupation for suspect characters who maintain that any personalized action is of intrinsic value simply as a display of self-will.”
—Andrei Tarkovsky, Sculpting in Time

just cos